



# **RSPO NEW PLANTING PROCEDURE**

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## GLOSSARY

<b>Terms</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Abandoned agricultural land	Agricultural land (including livestock ranches) where no development has taken place for more than three years (at the time of NPP submission).
Associated development	includes establishing mills, kernel crushers, nurseries, housing/camps and offices, roads/tracks, permanent boundary marking, drainage, effluent treatment plants, fruit collection centres, terracing, earthworks, scheme smallholdings/outgrower plots and any other development relevant to the operations of the new oil palm development, whether carried out by the grower or any other party.
Carbon Stock	The carbon stock of the land is defined by the above and below ground carbon as defined in the RSPO GHG Assessment Procedure for New Planting <sup>5</sup> . Refer to Annex 2 of the 2013 RSPO P&C for RSPO's definition of low carbon stocks.
Carbon Stock Assessment	A component of the GHG assessment. Measurement of the carbon stock in the proposed new planting area following the recommended basic methods provided in the RSPO GHG Assessment Procedure for New Planting. Only carbon stocks in the above and below ground biomass and soil organic matter in peat soils are considered. Soil organic carbon in non-peat soils is not considered.
Conversion	In the NPP context, conversion refers to the process of clearing or degrading any non-oil palm land cover to be planted with oil palm.
Fragile soils	As described by Annex 2 of the RSPO P&C 2013, and national definitions in RSPO National Interpretations (NI)).
Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)	Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is the right of indigenous peoples and other local communities, to give or to withhold their consent to any project affecting their lands, livelihoods and environment.
Groundtruth	The process of gathering primary data obtained by visual observations and/or measurements, usually a validation for remote sensing e.g. satellite data.
Independent (in relation to assessments)	Objective and free from conflict of interest or perceived vested interest. Always undertaken by a third party.
Land cover	The type of vegetation, rock, water or artificial surface covering the earth's surface.
Land cover stratification	Classification of land cover into standardised categories as specified in the RSPO GHG Assessment Procedure for New Planting by carrying out GIS analysis of remote sensing data.

Land preparation	Any action that prepares land for oil palm cultivation and associated development including the clearance or degradation of any existing vegetation, alteration of topography and drainage or preparation of soils.
Land Use	The type of activity being carried out on a unit of land.
Marginal soils	As described by Annex 2 of the RSPO P&C 2013, and national definitions in RSPO National Interpretations (NI).
Net GHG Emissions	Gross emissions from all GHG sources relevant to palm oil operations minus the removal of emissions from the atmosphere by carbon sinks. For details refer to RSPO's GHG assessment procedure.
New oil palm planting or new oil palm development	Planned or proposed planting on land not previously cultivated with oil palm.
Participatory	A process characterized by involving people; especially providing the opportunity for participation of any potentially affected stakeholders in gathering and providing information as well as in making decisions that affect them.
Primary forest	A primary forest is a forest that has never been logged and has developed following natural disturbances and under natural processes, regardless of its age. Also included as primary, are forests that are used inconsequentially by indigenous and local communities living traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. The present cover is normally relatively close to the natural composition and has arisen (predominantly) through natural regeneration. (From FAO Second Expert Meeting On Harmonizing Forest related Definitions or Use by Various Stakeholders, 2001. National interpretations (NIs) may provide a more specific definition.
Public Notification	Informing the public through notification on the RSPO website or local notice boards. Requires satisfactory response and / or relevant action from the oil palm grower to any comments from stakeholders during the notification period, prior to commencement of any development.
Replanting	Oil palm plantation developed on land previously cultivated with oil palm.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ALS	Assessor Licensing Scheme
AMDAL	<i>Analisis Mengenai Dampak Lingkungan</i> (Analysis on environmental impacts (Bahasa Indonesia))
CB	Certification Body
CTF	Compensation Task Force
ERWG	Emission Reduction Working Group
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HCV	High Conservation Value
HCVRN	High Conservation Value Resource Network
HCS	High Carbon Stock
IUP	<i>Ijin Usaha Perkebunan</i> (Permission to undertake plantation activities (Bahasa Indonesia))
IPHK	<i>IPHK (Izin Pelepasan Kawasan Hutan</i> (Permit of Forest Land Release (Bahasa Indonesia))
LUC	Land Use Change
NI	National Interpretation
NPP	New Planting Procedure
P&C	Principles and Criteria
RSPO	Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil
SEIA	Social & Environmental Impact Assessment

## SECTION 1: Introduction

### 1.1 What is the RSPO New Planting Procedure (NPP)?

The RSPO New Planting Procedure (NPP) consists of a set of assessments and verification activities to be conducted by growers and certification bodies (CB) prior to a new oil palm development, in order to help guide responsible planting. The NPP applies to any development of new plantings, regardless of size (ha). The intention is that new oil palm plantings will not negatively impact primary forest, High Conservation Values (HCV), high carbon stocks (HCS), fragile and marginal soils or local people's lands. A successful implementation of the NPP ensures that all the indicators of the RSPO Principles and Criteria (P&C) 2013 Principle 7 are being implemented and therefore in compliance when the new development starts.

One of the outputs of the NPP is a report that proposes how and where new oil palm plantings should proceed, or not, for a given management area. The NPP report is posted on the RSPO website for public consultation for a duration of 30 days. Planting and any associated development (such as road development) can only begin once the NPP is completed and RSPO approval is granted.

### 1.2 Background and purpose of this document

The NPP was proposed to the RSPO General Assembly in November 2008 and formalised in May 2009. It was approved by the RSPO Executive Board in September 2009 and came into force for all new oil palm plantings from 1 January 2010. The NPP was introduced with the aim to provide a framework for the responsible development of new lands for oil palm.

The RSPO P&C is updated every five years. The most recent P&C was published in 2013. The previous NPP documents range in date from 2010 to 2012 and were in need of updating based on the new requirements introduced in the RSPO P&C 2013, in particular:

- Criteria 7.3: amended to require that a land use change (LUC) analysis from November 2005 shall be conducted prior to any conversion or new planting.
- Criterion 7.8: requires that new plantation developments are designed to minimise net Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, taking into account avoidance of land areas with high carbon stocks (HCS) and/or sequestration options.
- Endorsement of the High Conservation Value Resource Network (HCVRN) Assessor Licensing Scheme (ALS) as a robust and credible replacement for the *RSPO-approved HCV Assessor list*, which is now obsolete (as of 31 December 2014). The ALS is effective from 1 January 2015.

This updated NPP aims to (1) consolidate relevant requirements into one comprehensive document; (2) improve the clarity and effectiveness of the NPP process, as well as (3) ensure consistency with the RSPO P&C 2013 and other supporting documents. This NPP document may be amended when required based on new documents, strategies or decisions produced by RSPO.

### 1.3 When does the NPP apply?

For new oil palm plantings **from 1 January 2010**, the NPP must be implemented before a grower commences land preparation, including any associated development. See Table 1 for clarifications and exceptions. In case of not submitting the NPP in time, sanctions will be applied as announced.

- **RSPO member planning a new development:** If a grower is an RSPO member at the time of the planning of the new development, the grower must complete the NPP process detailed in this document (see Section 2 for detailed steps).
- **New land acquisitions by RSPO members:** If land clearing is actively occurring at the time of acquisition, operations must cease completely and the NPP requirements shall be followed for any area that has not yet been converted.
- Where **RSPO members have a majority shareholding in and/or management control** of subsidiaries, those subsidiaries are subjected to the NPP requirement (Refer to Certification System document).
- **If land clearance occurred after 1 January 2010:** If land was developed after 1 January 2010 and did not comply with NPP requirements the grower has to ensure compliance with Principle 7 at the time of certification. This may be the case if land clearance occurred before the grower became an RSPO member or for any new acquisitions where clearing and development have already taken place.

For new plantings between November 2005 and 31 December 2009, the NPP does not apply but the grower must comply with Principle 7 which includes requirements such as FPIC, Social and Environment Impact Assessment (SEIA), and HCV assessment.

*Table 1 Different scenarios for new plantings and understanding when NPP applies*

<b>Scenarios from 1 January 2010</b>	<b>NPP</b>	<b>Certification Body (CB) Verification</b>	<b>30-day Public Comment Period</b>
Conversion from <b>natural vegetation to oil palm</b> or from forest plantations or agroforestry to oil palm. Including for undeveloped areas of any new acquisitions.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Conversion of abandoned agricultural land</b> (undeveloped for > 3 years)	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Conversion of existing agricultural land</b> (including land under livestock ranches and agricultural crops) to oil palm. Including for any new acquisitions.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b> , 30 –day notification only but no comment period
Replacing oil palm with a subsequent oil palm crop is considered as replanting and therefore not subject to the requirements of the NPP if the previous oil palm crop has not been abandoned for more than 3 years.	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>



For <b>new plantings within an RSPO-certified management unit</b>	<b>No</b> , as this case will be audited against Principle 7 during surveillance or re-certification audits	N/A	N/A
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#### **Box 1. Smallholders and the NPP**

- The NPP also applies to proposed new plantings by smallholders (including scheme/associated and independent smallholders) and outgrowers. If a company leads the certification process for groups of smallholders, then the company is responsible for ensuring the NPP is complied with. In the case of Group Certification, the Group Manager is responsible for ensuring the NPP is complied with – this includes coordination of assessments, verification by the CB and communication with RSPO.
- All of the assessments are required in the case of smallholders and outgrowers, including the same reporting requirements (See Annex 1). RSPO recognises that the assessment methods may need to be adapted to the smallholder context and the RSPO Secretariat will provide the necessary advice.

### 1.4 How is the NPP implemented?

The NPP is implemented through a set of technical assessments and stakeholder engagement (including an FPIC process). The findings are synthesised before producing management plans. Once verified and approved by a CB, a final NPP report is submitted to RSPO for a 30 day public consultation period. On satisfactory completion of the 30 day period and resolution of any comments, the RSPO Secretariat will approve the proposed new plantings.

The area to which the NPP applies must be calculated based on the development permit or land deed (i.e. total area considered for oil palm and associated development). For instance if the permit is for 1,000 ha of land, an NPP should be submitted covering the 1,000 ha, and the different assessments must be conducted for 1,000 ha. The area (ha) of a permit or land deed cannot be separated into several different NPP reports. For a full list of steps included in the NPP see Figure 1.

### 1.5 Integration of NPP processes with national legal processes

RSPO National Interpretations (NI) will give guidance on how the required assessments can be combined and carried out, taking into account national laws and procedures. The NPP process can be initiated while national legal requirements (e.g. AMDAL in Indonesia) are underway. However, when the NPP is submitted to RSPO, the submission must be based on finalised assessments.

Completion of the NPP does not necessarily mean that land development can commence. All relevant legal requirements must be met before land clearing activities take place.

In cases where assessments are a legal requirement, e.g. AMDAL and SEIA, the assessments must have been approved by the relevant authority. Note: In the case of Indonesia, the NPP can only be submitted when *Ijin Usaha Perkebunan* (IUP) and *Izin Pelepasan Kawasan Hutan* (IPHK) have been obtained.

## SECTION 2: RSPO NPP detailed process and action steps

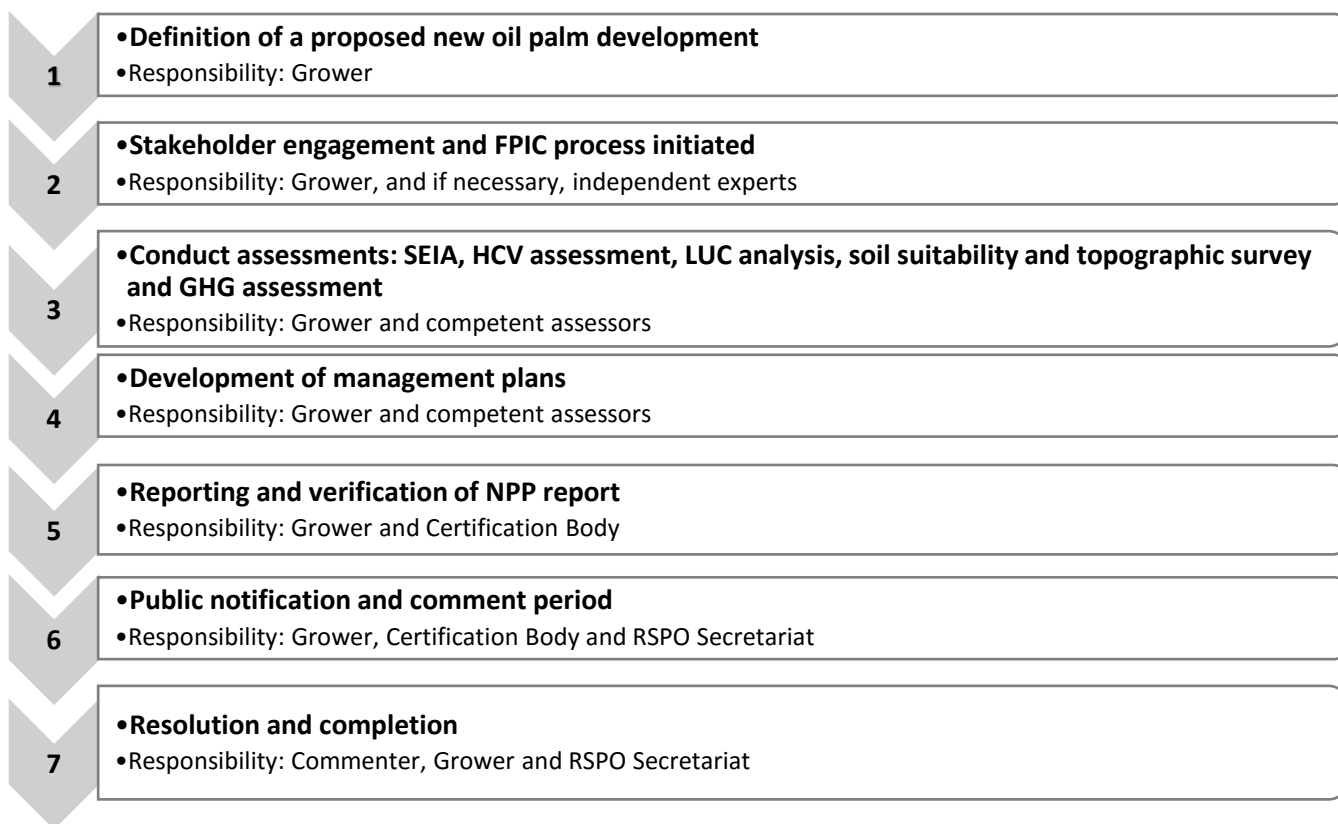


Figure 1 NPP action steps and responsible party. Note that the grower has overall responsibility for NPP compliance.

### Step 1. Definition of a proposed new oil palm development

The first step in the procedure is to delineate or map the areas proposed for new oil palm planting and associated developments (including clear boundaries with GPS coordinates) of the proposed new development, as well as its position within the wider landscape. The area (ha) must be calculated based on the permit or land deed to which the NPP will apply (i.e. total area considered for oil palm development).

### Step 2. Stakeholder engagement and FPIC process initiated

The NPP is meant to be participatory, with meaningful involvement of affected stakeholders. Therefore, relevant stakeholders in local communities potentially impacted by the proposed oil palm development, need to be identified with the participation of those same local people. Throughout this document, the term local people encompasses all members of local communities including indigenous peoples. This is the beginning of the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process whereby local peoples who have legal, customary or user rights to the area, have the right to grant or withhold consent (say “no”) to operations planned on their land. See RSPO guidance on FPIC.

**RSPO Criteria relevant to Step 2**  
for further guidance: 2.2, 2.3, 6.2, 6.4, 7.5, 7.6

The FPIC process should be carried out by qualified (FPIC-trained) company staff, group managers, or private land holders depending on the context. This is because the grower needs to build a long term relationship with the community (and vice versa) and consultants will not be the parties to any agreement. However, this does not prevent the grower from getting advice or training from third parties.

Growers need to be trained to respect the principle of FPIC and to understand that FPIC is an iterative process. This includes adequate training in: participatory mapping to determine the extent of communities' legal and customary rights and areas of land use; awareness of how to conduct a land tenure assessment; appropriate procedures to allow communities to choose their own representative institutions and; how to mutually agree a procedure for negotiations over land based on the provision of full information and without any coercion or duress (see RSPO FPIC guidance 2015).

The grower and the communities shall mutually agree on procedures to:

- Identify the communities' representatives or representative institutions;
- Identify the extent of legal, customary and/or user rights (e.g. participatory mapping with consent of local communities);
- Document the FPIC process, including the granting or withholding of consent.

On the basis of this stakeholder engagement process, the boundaries of the proposed new development may be modified prior to commencement of the various assessments (SEIA, HCV, etc.). Local communities should grant permission for assessments to be conducted on land over which they have legal, customary and/or user rights. The community engagement and FPIC process should continue during all steps of the NPP process, and local people should have free access to the results of the various assessments, studies and mapping exercises, which will inform their ultimate decision to grant or withhold consent for the planned development.

It is neither realistic nor desirable that, at the early stage in plantation planning when a grower submits the NPP report, that the grower has completed the FPIC process. However, the following minimum building blocks for an adequate FPIC process should be in place and verified during the NPP:

- There is evidence that growers have been informed by the communities of the composition of their self-selected designated representatives and or representative institutions where land acquisition is planned;
- There is evidence that communities have meaningfully participated in the elaboration of the SEIA and the HCV Assessment;
- The HVC Assessment has clearly recommended which areas need to be managed to maintain and enhance the full range of HCVs including HCVs 4, 5 and 6;
- There are plans, mutually agreed by the grower and the communities, as represented through their chosen representatives, or directly in broad community meetings, on how land tenure assessments, participatory community mapping and negotiations over land will be carried out.

### Step 3. Conduct assessments

As part of the requirements for the responsible development of new oil palm plantings, growers are required to conduct or commission comprehensive and participatory assessments, for inclusion in the NPP report. The required assessments are 1) Social and Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA), 2) High Conservation Value (HCV) assessment, 3) Land Use Change (LUC) analysis, 4) soil suitability survey and 5) Greenhouse Gas (GHG) assessment. The requirement for these assessments applies to all proposed developments, regardless of size; and it also applies to smallholders.

**RSPO Criteria relevant to SEIA for further guidance:**  
5.1, 6.1, 7.1, 7.7

There is some flexibility in terms of how the assessments are conducted, as long as the results are clearly provided and reported upon according to the templates and guidance in Annex 1. For example, it may be useful for the LUC analysis to be conducted as part of the HCV assessment or for the soil suitability study to be included in the SEIA. It may also be useful to combine vegetation analysis done for the HCV assessment with any carbon stock studies. The grower is encouraged to facilitate the sharing and synthesis of findings from the various studies and assessments.

It is the responsibility of the grower to select and appoint competent assessors as per the requirements in Table 2. The points below give more detail on the various assessment requirements under the NPP. For all cases where the NPP covers more than 500 ha, independent consultants are required for certain assessments (e.g. SEIA and HCV), however, where the NPP covers less than 500 ha, growers can perform internal assessments. Details are included below and in Table 2. Note that the NPP must be conducted for the total area according to the land title or deed and cannot be divided into multiple parcels (<500 ha each) to avoid certain requirements for independent assessments.

**3.1.** The **SEIA** shall be comprehensive, participatory and led by an independent consultant compliant with the national requirements contracted directly by the grower. An exception is made where the proposed new development area is less than 500 ha, in which case internal assessments are allowed. Where internal assessments identify significant environmentally or socially sensitive areas or issues, an independent assessment must be undertaken.

Assessments older than three years at the point of NPP submission, must be reviewed and the findings updated to reflect any changes on the ground and according to new requirements of RSPO. The time is counted at the point of finalisation or approval of report.

**3.2.** The **HCV assessment** will evaluate the six categories of HCVs, and specify areas required to maintain or enhance the HCVs identified and will include HCV maps and management recommendations. From 1 January 2015, the HCV assessment shall be led by an HCV lead assessor licensed under the HCV Resource Network (HCVRN) Assessor Licensing Scheme (ALS). Note that only the HCV team leader requires a licence: team members can be licensed under the HCVRN ALS, but this is not compulsory.

**RSPO Criteria relevant to HCV assessments for further guidance:**  
5.2, 7.3

- The grower must verify that the HCV assessor holds a valid ALS licence at the time of engagement.
- The HCV assessment report must be submitted to the ALS quality control system and successfully pass (with satisfactory status) before being submitted as part of the NPP.

It is the responsibility of the grower to verify both the licence status of the HCV assessor at the time they are hired and the status of the HCV report (i.e. whether it has passed the ALS Quality Control System) before submitting it as part of the NPP. This can be done on the HCVRN ALS website.

- If an HCV assessment report is **older than three years** at the time of NPP, it must be reviewed and updated by an ALS licensed assessor including any new requirements of RSPO.

**Box 2. An ALS licensed assessor is not required if:**

- The HCV assessment pre-dates 1 January 2015 (unless the HCV assessment report is older than three years and requires an update)

**3.3. A land use change (LUC) analysis** should use historical remote sensing imagery (of land cover) to demonstrate there has been no conversion of primary forest or any area required to maintain or enhance HCVs since November 2005. This should be carried out in coordination with the HCV assessment, but not necessarily by the HCV licensed assessor. It is recommended that the LUC analysis builds on the conclusions of the other environmental studies, in particular the HCV assessment. The LUC analysis can be conducted by the grower or by an independent consultant.

**RSPO Criteria relevant to LUC analysis: 7.3**

**3.4. The soil suitability and topographic survey** should identify all areas of marginal and fragile soils, as well as areas too steep to plant and areas requiring precautionary practices in order to be planted. Riparian buffers are not to be planted.

The survey can be conducted by the grower or by an independent consultant, and can be carried out as part of the SEIA or separately. The survey report can be older than three years at the time of the NPP, so long as the findings are still valid.

**RSPO Criteria relevant to fragile soils for further guidance: 4.3 7.2, 7.4**

**3.5. The greenhouse gas (GHG) assessment** shall 1) identify and estimate carbon stocks and major potential sources of emissions in the proposed development area (also called the carbon stock assessment) and 2) include a plan to minimise net GHG emissions as a result of the planned development using the RSPO GHG Assessment Procedure for New Oil Palm Planting.

The identification of carbon stocks can be combined with the vegetation survey carried out as part of the HCV assessment and LUC analysis. The GHG assessment can be conducted by the grower or by an independent consultant. The GHG assessment must be current at the time of the NPP submission, e.g. less than three years old.

**RSPO Criteria relevant to carbon and GHG for further guidance: 7.8**

Table 2. Guidance for assessments

Assessment	For areas less than 500 ha: internal assessments by grower are permitted	For areas 500 ha and greater: Independent assessor required	Special notes on assessment validity
<p><b>Social and Environmental Impact Assessment(s)</b></p>	<p>A competent internal assessor, or the person responsible for leading the SEIA internally, should have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted at least 3 assessments (either SEIA, HCV or carbon); and</li> <li>• Expertise with remote sensing and mapping</li> </ul> <p>Note: Where internal assessments identify significant environmentally or socially sensitive areas or issues, an independent assessment must be undertaken.</p> <p>SEIAs must always comply with any relevant national laws.</p>	<p>The SEIA shall be led by an independent consultant compliant with national requirements and contracted directly by the grower. In countries where there is no clear national requirement on SEIA lead assessors, a competent independent lead assessor should have conducted at least 3 SEIAs, have expertise with remote sensing and mapping and have knowledge of the relevant laws.</p>	<p>If the SEIA report is older than three years at the point of NPP submission, it should be reviewed and updated to reflect changes on the ground and must also meet any new RSPO requirements.</p>
<p><b>High Conservation Value (HCV) Assessment</b></p>	<p>HCV assessment may be conducted by grower, but the person responsible for leading the HCV assessment internally must hold a valid ALS licence. For assessments from 1 January 2015, the HCV assessment shall be led by an HCV lead assessor licensed under the HCVRN ALS. All HCV assessments must pass through the ALS quality control before being submitted as part of the NPP.</p>	<p>For assessments from 1 January 2015, the HCV assessment shall be led by an independent HCV lead assessor licensed under the HCVRN ALS. All HCV assessments must pass through the ALS quality control before being submitted as part of the NPP.</p>	<p>If an HCV assessment report is older than three years at the time of NPP, it must be reviewed and updated by an independent ALS licensed assessor.</p>

Assessment	For areas less than 500 ha: internal assessments by grower are permitted	For areas 500 ha and greater: Independent assessor required	Special notes on assessment validity
<b>Green House Gas (GHG) Assessment</b>	Same requirement as for external consultants	<p>The assessment team should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have knowledge of carbon emission accounting methodologies for above and below ground carbon stocks including peat</li> <li>• Have experience in verifying land cover maps and/or conducting carbon stock assessment in agriculture and/or forestry sectors</li> <li>• Have experience and expertise in using remote sensing technology to estimate carbon stocks</li> </ul>	If the GHG assessment report is older than three years at the point of NPP submission, it should be reviewed and updated to reflect changes on the ground and must also meet any new RSPO requirements.
<b>Land Use Change (LUC) analysis</b>	Same requirement as for external consultants	Must have expertise in interpreting remote sensing imagery.	The LUC analysis must be current at the time of the NPP submission, e.g. less than one year old.
<b>Soil and topography survey</b>	Same requirement as for external consultants	Survey must identify all areas of marginal and fragile soils, as well as areas too steep to plant and areas requiring precautionary practices in order to be planted.	The survey report can be older than three years at the time of the NPP, so long as the findings are still valid.

#### Step 4. Development of management plans

Results and recommendations drawn from the various assessments and the FPIC process shall be incorporated into the planning and operations of the new plantings and associated developments. One of the main purposes of the assessments is to determine which areas are and are not suitable for development. Based on assessment results, a grower can decide which areas will be set-aside and which areas will be developed. The NPP includes summary management plans that:

- Are based on the FPIC of any local peoples whose lands and/or rights are affected;
- Exclude all primary forests from clearance;
- Provide for the maintenance and/or enhancement of all identified HCVs;
- Avoid extensive planting on steep terrain and/or marginal and fragile soils including peat and provide for appropriate management of these soils to protect them from adverse impacts;
- Minimise net GHG emissions from the development in ways which take into account the avoidance of land areas with high carbon stocks and/or maximises sequestration options.

Summary management plans shall include (see Annex 1 for reporting requirements):

- Summaries of mitigation measures and monitoring requirements relevant to each assessment;
- Maps of the key findings of the various assessments ;
- An action plan describing operational actions consequent to the findings of the various assessments, referencing the grower's relevant operational procedures;
- Designation of management team and responsible person for the implementation of these plans.

## Step 5. Reporting and verification of NPP report

**5.1. Reporting:** Based on the various studies and assessment reports, the grower is responsible for collating the NPP report following a standard reporting format (see Annex 1). There are three main components in the NPP report:

- NPP notification statement
- Summary of assessment reports (SEIA, HCV, soil and topography, LUC, GHG)
- Summary of management plans

### **Box 3: Public reporting of carbon stock and GHG emissions**

- Public reporting of the requirements under Criterion 7.8 is voluntary until 31 December 2016. During this period, requirements under Criterion 7.8 will be reported to the RSPO (for review by the Emissions Reduction Working Group (ERWG)) as a separate standalone document to the NPP report.
- While prior to 31 December 2016 carbon and GHG assessments and plans can be submitted in confidence to the RSPO, it is strongly recommended that they are also made public.
- As of 1 January 2017, when public reporting becomes mandatory, the requirements under Criterion 7.8 will be published together with the NPP report.

**5.2. Verification:** the grower is to obtain verification from an accredited RSPO Certification Body (CB) that the NPP process and the content of the assessments and plan(s) is comprehensive, of professional quality and in compliance with relevant RSPO P&C and with the NPP. The grower is responsible for appointing an accredited RSPO CB who shall assign an RSPO-endorsed lead auditor to lead the verification process.

### **Box 4. CB verification not required for agriculture to agriculture new plantings**

CB verification is not required in cases where new plantings occur through the conversion of existing agricultural land (any agricultural crop or livestock ranching) to oil palm. Where no CB verification is required, the grower submits the NPP directly to the RSPO Secretariat.



As part of the verification process, the accredited RSPO CB shall provide written verification that the grower has the legal right to use the land, and has at least laid the minimum building blocks for an adequate FPIC process (See Step 2).

Full assessment reports together with the summaries for the NPP report must be submitted to the selected RSPO accredited CB. The RSPO CB should undertake a desktop and possible field verification. The verification process by the Lead Auditor shall include (but is not limited to) the following:

- The accuracy of the proposed development boundaries as per the maps submitted, and that shapefiles of proposed development area are provided;
- The legal ownership or lease of the land tenure;
- Desktop study to identify potential risks and impacts;
- The comprehensiveness and quality of all studies carried out and particularly;
  - That the SEIA was carried out following national requirements including those in the RSPO P&C that are established in the relevant NIs
  - That the HCV assessment was conducted by an ALS licensed assessor and that the report passed the HCVRN ALS quality control system before being submitted as part of the NPP
- The FPIC process;
- Interviews with local stakeholders have been conducted;
- Management plans address all the identified risks and impacts;
- Process described in NPP has been followed (i.e. area, assessor competency, legal requirements, FPIC, etc.);
- Verify any field reports from local experts (if Lead Auditor did not conduct field visits);
- NPP notification statement, assessment summaries and management plans are presented as per the NPP reporting template.

Note that the CB may waive the need for field verification if evidence can be shown that the area is low risk; however, field verification is needed for high risk areas. Although there is no strict criteria, the following guidance applies:

- **High risk:** e.g. near protected areas, HCVs present, local people with claims to land and resources, greenfield developments, if inconsistency in conclusions of assessments is found.
- **Low risk:** agriculture lands/brownfield development, size less than 500 ha.

Where accessibility to the new concession is restricted due to land tenure, customary or legal constraints, field verification may be waived upon the CB's agreement.

Field verification should preferably be done by the Lead Auditor but, it can also be conducted by a local agent appointed by the CB. However, the responsibility of verification lies within the Lead

Auditor. The findings from the CB shall be documented and reported to the grower who will then ensure that all NPP requirements have been met.

**Box 5. Conflict of interest**

Where Certification Body (CB) assessors carry out the assessments under the NPP, the CB must demonstrate that there is no conflict of interest with their client for RSPO certification in keeping with the RSPO certification system requirements; i.e. the SEIA or HCV assessors that developed the implementation plans for NPP cannot conduct verification of the same assessments and plans.

**Step 6. Submission of the NPP Report to the RSPO Secretariat and public notification**

Upon verification that all NPP requirements have been complied with, the CB shall submit the final NPP report on behalf of the grower (RSPO member), within five working days. The final NPP report shall contain:

- NPP Notification statement
- Summary of assessment reports (SEIA, HCV, soil and topography, LUC, GHG)
- Summary of management plans

The above materials, together with the CB’s verification statement, must be submitted electronically with the grower copied in the email. The grower remains responsible despite the CB being tasked with submitting the NPP report. The NPP submitted to RSPO for public notification must be in English. Companies are encouraged to prepare NPP reports in national languages and RSPO will publish both versions on the website.

On receipt, the RSPO checks that the submission is complete and within ten working days, posts the notification on RSPO website for a period of 30 days (See Annex 2). The notification will not be uploaded to the RSPO website if submission is found to be incomplete. The ten working days required by the Secretariat to process the NPP submission and to upload it on the website is only indicative and subject to the completeness of the submission and the timeliness of the grower and/or CB in addressing any issues raised by the Secretariat. All comments received by the RSPO Secretariat will be fed back to the grower within three working days of receipt for their information and for clarifications if necessary, copying the CB in the email. Any comments received after the 30 day public notification period will be forwarded to the grower and addressed outside of the NPP process.

The grower should also post the NPP report on local notice boards, for a period of 30 days; examples of local notice boards include: community hall, district office, local websites, mills, local media (newspapers), etc. These local notice boards must include the RSPO NPP comments email address [nppcomments@rspo.org](mailto:nppcomments@rspo.org). The grower is also encouraged to actively inform interested stakeholders (those consulted during the assessments) in a timely manner when the NPP is up for comment.

Comments from these local notifications will be submitted directly to RSPO via the RSPO NPP email address [nppcomments@rspo.org](mailto:nppcomments@rspo.org). Comments from local notifications can be sent to the RSPO in Bahasa Malaysia, Bahasa Indonesia, English, Thai, Spanish and French. Publication and active stakeholder engagement in this stage can helpfully trigger “early warnings” and may prevent cumbersome conflicts later.

The grower shall not commence any land preparation, any new planting or infrastructure development, before the end of the 30-day period and official approval to proceed by the RSPO.

## Step 7: Resolution and completion

Any party, disputing contents of the NPP including the assessment(s) or plan(s), or wishing to dispute the verification statement by the CB, may pursue this through the NPP Comments Mechanism (see complete process in Annex 2).

Transparency should be the rule, confidentiality the exception. However, the identity of the party submitting a comment can be kept confidential upon request to the RSPO Secretariat, with reasons provided. However, the commenter cannot be anonymous to the RSPO Secretariat.

Note that only written comments submitted formally to the RSPO Secretariat or through the online NPP comment box will be considered. Any comments received after the 30 day public consultation period will be addressed outside of the NPP process.

The party who submitted a comment has the final say on whether and when the subject of their comment can be considered resolved. If the grower's reply to a comment is not acknowledged within 20 days by the party concerned, the comment will be dismissed for the purpose of NPP closure.

For resolution and completion, the RSPO Secretariat can allot an additional 60 days on top of the 30 day notification for the matter to be resolved. Failing which, the matter will be automatically filed as a "Reported Case" which means that the resolution will be facilitated via the RSPO Complaints System. RSPO Complaints team will facilitate the resolution process. If it cannot be resolved bilaterally, then it will be escalated to a complaint to be addressed by the Complaints panel. If parties are agreeable to mediation, it can be forwarded to the Dispute Settlement Facility. However, at any point during the 60 days, the matter can still be referred to the complaints team as a "Reported Case" at the discretion of the Technical Director.

Land preparations shall only take place once all comments have been addressed and parties involved agree to amicable corrective actions. Any comments received may result in a delay to land preparation (including associated development) until such an agreement is reached. Development can proceed in areas which are not disputed within an NPP area, upon approval by RSPO.

Only comments received within the public notification period (up until the last day) can be addressed by the NPP Comments Mechanism. Comments received by the Secretariat after the notification period will be addressed as a complaint under the RSPO Complaints System.

On satisfactory completion of the 30 day notification period and resolution of any comments, the RSPO Secretariat will formally notify the grower electronically on the first working day after the 30 day notification period ends, or once any comments raised are resolved. A hard copy of the electronic notification is available from RSPO upon request. The RSPO secretariat cannot issue notification of completion of the NPP while comments received during the public notification period are still under consideration.

Upon completion of the NPP process, RSPO notifies the grower and posts notice of the completion on the RSPO website.

## Annex 1. Reporting Templates and Guidance

### Before 1 January 2017

1. Notification & verification statement
2. One report consisting of 1) overview and background of new development, 2) summary of SEIA, 3) summary of HCV assessment, 4) summary of LUC analysis and soil and topography survey (if not already included in HCV assessment or SEIA), 5) summary of FPIC process, and 6) management plans
3. GHG and carbon stock – C 7.8 as per template Summary of carbon stock assessment and GHG emissions and management plan

### From 1 January 2017

1. Notification & verification statement
2. One report consisting of 1) overview and background of new development, 2) summary of SEIA, 3) summary of HCV assessment, 4) summary of LUC analysis and soil and topography survey (if not already included in HCV assessment or SEIA), 5) summary of FPIC process, 6) Summary of carbon stock assessment and GHG emissions, and 6) management plans

### 1. A.: NPP Notification Statement (including Verification Statement by CB)

1. Date of Notification	
2. Name of Grower	
3. Name of Subsidiary (if any)	
4. RSPO Membership No.	
5. Location of proposed new planting <i>Notes:</i>	
(i) <i>Grower Address</i>	
(ii) <i>Business Permit</i>	
(iii) <i>Type of Business</i>	
(iv) <i>Size (ha)</i>	
(v) <i>Contact persons</i>	
(vi) <i>E-mail address</i>	
(vii) <i>Geographical location</i>	
(viii) <i>Spatial Reference (GPS Coordinates)/(e.g. N 1° 50' 5.0" E 103°27' 47.23")</i>	
(ix) <i>Boundary map</i>	
(x) <i>Areas and time plan for new plantings</i>	

6. Statement of Acceptance of Responsibility for NPP

*Notes: The oil palm grower signs to confirm that the necessary assessments have been done and completed in accordance to the NPP.*

7.

Name of Grower:

Name of Person Responsible:

Position:

Signed:

Date:

8. Verification Statement by Certification Body (CB)

*Notes: On completion of the information above, the oil palm grower will submit the details to the appointed CB who shall then verify the findings through documentation and field checks of proposed new plantings. The CB then provides a signed verification statement and sends it to the RSPO Secretariat.*

*In the NPP submission, the verification statement by the CB will confirm that the appropriate carbon stock assessments have been made in compliance to C7.8 and that these assessments have been submitted to the ERWG (applicable through 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016).*

9.

Name of CB:

Name of Lead Auditor:

Position:

Signed:

Date:

## 1. B. Structure of report: assessment summaries and management plans

1. **Overview and background** of new development including description of location, topography, maps, etc.

- Maps indicating location (and area) of new plantings at landscape level and property level

2. **Assessment process and methods**

**For each assessment, provide the following information**

- Dates assessments were conducted
- Assessors and FPIC experts and their credentials
- Methods used for conducting assessments and for conducting the FPIC process

3. **Summary of findings**

### 1.1 SEIA

- Positive and negative environmental effects
- Socio-economic impacts to country, region and local communities
- Socio-economic impacts in respect of emergent communities (workers, suppliers etc.)
- Issues raised by stakeholders and assessors comments
- List of legal documents, regulatory permits and property deeds related to the areas assessed

### 1.2 HCV assessment

If an HCV Resource Network ALS licensed assessor conducted the HCV assessment, then the summary report must follow the ALS template for HCV Public Summary Reports available here: [www.hcvnetwork.org/als](http://www.hcvnetwork.org/als)

In the case where an HCV Resource Network licensed assessor was not hired (e.g. for assessments conducted before 1 January 2015), growers must follow the guidance below.

- Decisions on presence or absence for all six HCV categories
- Interpretation of the findings that led to decisions on HCV presence/absence. It is key that all decisions on HCV presence/absence are adequately justified and supported by evidence.
- A summary of stakeholder consultation must include the following:
  - Dates
  - Stakeholder details
    - Name and title or role (unless anonymity requested)
    - Organisation or social group
    - Key concerns/recommendations
    - Maps showing location of HCVs and HCV management areas.

### **3.3 Soil and topography**

- Identification of all areas of marginal and fragile soils (including peat and riparian buffers)
- Identification of all areas of excessive gradients (See RSPO Criterion 7.4)

### **3.4 Summary of carbon stock assessment and GHG emissions**

- Land cover stratification (including maps and results of verification using ground survey data (e.g. Participative survey data and HCV data) or ground-truthing and estimated carbon stock (tC/ha) for each land cover stratum)
- Map and description of all areas of significant carbon stocks including areas of peat soils
- Identification of all likely significant sources of GHG emissions and sequestration related to the proposed development

*[Insert in notification statement] This is a Confirmation by the Grower that the above has been undertaken using the latest available version of the RSPO GHG Assessment Procedure for estimating the carbon stock of above ground and below ground biomass for land earmarked for new oil palm development and that the potential net GHG emission arising from the development has been estimated. In addition, the Grower confirms that the assessment includes a plan to minimise net GHG emissions which takes into account avoidance of land areas with high carbon stocks and/or sequestration options.*

### **3.5 LUC analysis**

The LUC Analysis reporting template is currently being developed by the RSPO Biodiversity and HCV Working Group. In the interim, the following should be provided for LUC Analysis reporting:

- Maps showing land use cover change since Nov 2005
- Assessment methodology

Findings and conclusion of the land use cover change analysis

From P7: Land Use Change (LUC) analysis to determine changes to vegetation since November 2005. Evidence should include historical remote sensing imagery which demonstrates that there has been no conversion of primary forest or any area required to maintain or enhance one or more HCV.

### **3.6 FPIC process**

- The participatory identification of local people's land where it can be demonstrated that there are legal, customary or user rights (see RSPO Criterion 7.5)
- Documentary evidence showing that minimum building blocks for an adequate FPIC process are in place for any indigenous and/or local people affected by the development of the concession (part of RSPO requirements)

## **4. Summary of Management Plans**

### **4.1 Team responsible for developing management plans**

### **4.2 Elements to be included in management plans**

**Elements to be included for SEIA:**

- Proposed management measures to promote positive environmental and social impacts
- Proposed mitigation measures to minimise negative environmental and social impacts
- Remedial Action and Time Frame
- Responsibility

To simplify, the above could be displayed in a tabular form with column headings as follows:

<i>Parameter to be monitored</i>	<i>Proposed Enhancement / Mitigation Measures</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Measurement</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Estimated Time-frame for completion of task</i>
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**Elements to be included for HCV Assessment:**

If an HCV Resource Network ALS licensed assessor conducted the HCV assessment, then the summary report is to follow the ALS template for HCV Public Summary Reports available here: [www.hcvnetwork.org/als](http://www.hcvnetwork.org/als). In the case where an HCV Resource Network licensed assessor was not hired (e.g. if an internal assessment was conducted or for assessments conducted before 1 January 2015), growers must provide the following information:

- Include the total number of hectares allocated as HCV management areas.
- Threats to each HCV must be identified, described and addressed through management recommendations.
- Monitoring options (even if general), need to be presented for each HCV, aimed at verifying management objectives and targets.

**Elements to be included for soil analysis:**

- Management and mitigation measures where limited planting on fragile and marginal soils is proposed

**Elements to be included for carbon stocks and GHG emissions**

- A plan of the new development which indicates the carbon stock and location of peat soil within the areas to be developed and the areas to be conserved (please insert relevant maps)
- Present results of scenario testing showing GHG emissions (with relevant tables, charts, etc.)
- Provide explanation for the selection of optimal scenario with relevant spatial map
- Explain measures taken to maintain and enhance carbon stocks within the new development areas
- Explain measures that will be taken to mitigate net GHG emissions associated with oil palm cultivation and processing in the new development (e.g. methane capture at the palm oil mill, local sourcing of fertilisers, reducing usage of inorganic fertilisers, reducing fuel consumption, etc.)



- Plan for monitoring the implementation of selected scenario for new development including measures for enhancing carbon stock and minimising GHG emissions

## **5. References**

- List of references used in the assessments

## **6. Internal responsibility**

- Formal signing off (with date) by assessors and grower.
- Statement of acceptance of responsibility for assessments.
- Formal signing off (with date) of management plan.
- Organisational information and contact persons.
- Personnel involved in planning and implementation.

## 1. C. Guidelines for NPP map submissions

The following maps are required:

- Location of project (shapefiles must be submitted), clearly showing location within country and the proposed new planting area
- Evidence of participatory mapping with local communities (if applicable)
- Land cover stratification (including maps and results of verification using ground survey data (e.g. Participative survey data and HCV data) or ground-truthing and estimated carbon stock (tC/ha) for each land cover stratum
- Map and description of all areas of significant carbon stocks including peat soils
- Maps of HCV locations and HCV management areas

It is vital that the NPP report is accompanied with clear and legible maps. At minimum, the necessary elements for map submissions in the NPP are presented below

### **Title**

**Scale Indicator:** The reader must be able to determine the relationship between a unit of measure on the map and a unit of measure in the real world. Scales for maps should optimally be 1:50,000

**Quality of image:** For online publication of maps, the maps should be 150 dpi but for printing purposes it is always best to set the maps at 300dpi.

**Orientation:** a map should indicate which way is north (and/or south, east and west).

### **Border(s)**

### **Legend**

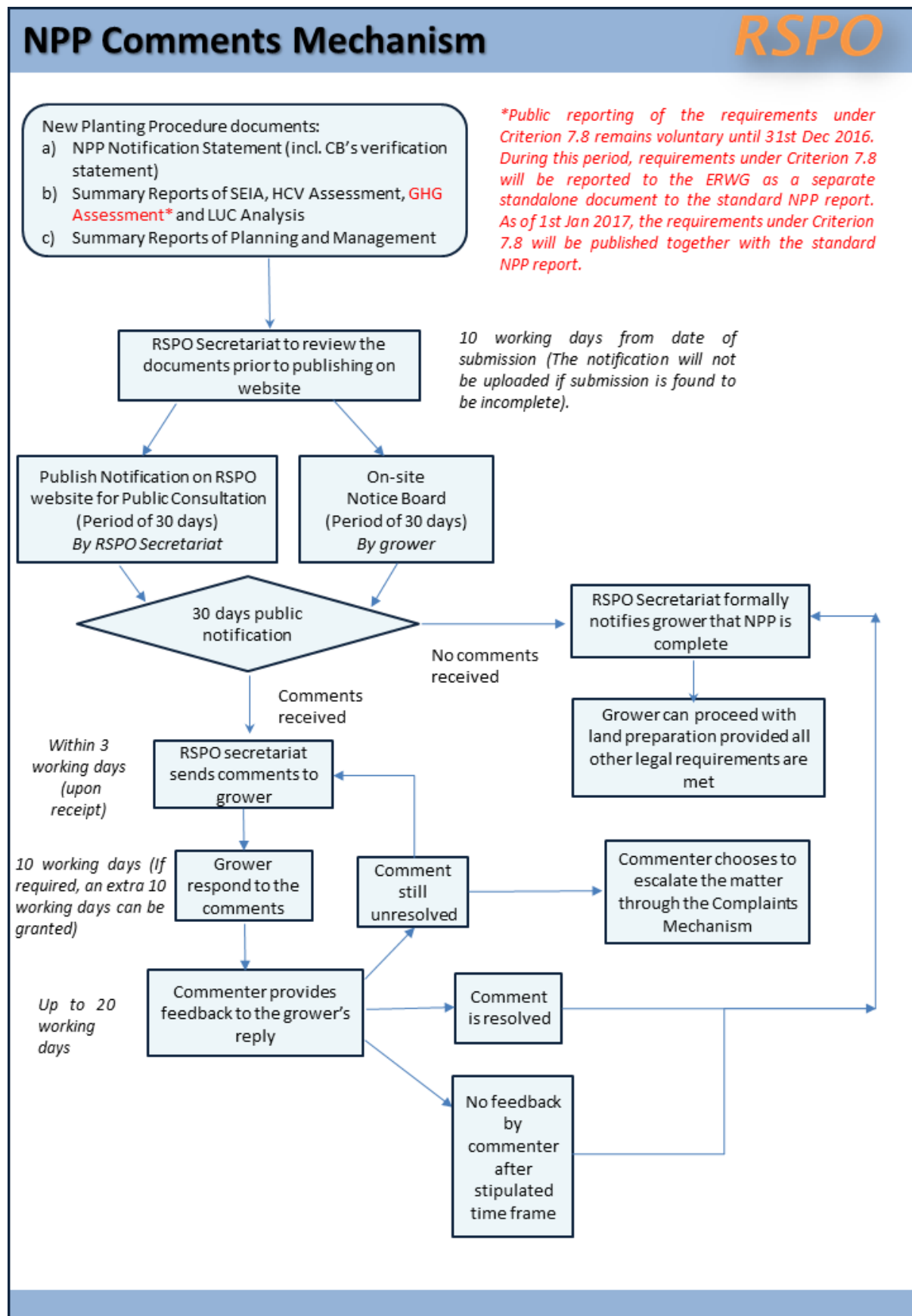
### **Map Credits:**

- Source of data (especially on thematic maps)
- Name of the cartographer
- Date of the map creation/publication
- Date of the map data
- Projection of the map (especially small-scale maps)

**Locator Map** (Inset): a locator map is needed if the area of the map is not easily recognizable or is of large scale.

**Legibility:** use the appropriate font size, type and symbols so that the text or symbols appear clear and legible to the reader

## Annex 2: NPP Comments Mechanism



## Annex 3: NPP Comments Template

This template is for use during the 30-day public notification and comment period for NPP reports and should be submitted to [nppcomments@rspo.org](mailto:nppcomments@rspo.org) within 30 days after the NPP report is posted on the RSPO website. Comments received after 30 days will not be processed through the Comments Mechanism (see Annex 2).

**Date:**

**Name (of commenter):**

**Contact details (of commenter):**

Email address:

Telephone number:

**Name of Grower:**

**Location of proposed new planting:**

Country and District:

Project name:

**Comment(s):**

*Comments should be accompanied by sufficient explanation, and where possible, evidence, to support the comments.*

### **Statement of Responsibility**

I understand the NPP process and submit these comments in good faith (i.e. comments and justifications are true to the best of my knowledge). I will engage actively in the NPP process and will work to resolve these comments and concerns.

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**Signature of Commenter**

## Annex 4: Supporting documents

- i. RSPO list of accredited Certification Bodies (CB) to conduct P&C audits
- ii. The HCV Resource Network (HCVRN) Assessor Licensing Scheme (ALS) documents, including:
  - a. HCV Assessment Report Template
  - b. HCV Assessment Public Summary Template
- iii. The HCV Resource Network (HCVRN) global guidance:
  - a. Common Guidance for the Identification of High Conservation Values (HCV)
  - b. Common Guidance for the Management and Monitoring of High Conservation Values (HCV)
- iv. RSPO Remediation and Compensation Procedure (RaCP) – related to land clearance without prior HCV assessment (including Land Use Change (LUC) analysis guidelines)
- v. RSPO FPIC Guidance
- vi. RSPO GHG Assessment Procedure
- vii. RSPO Palm GHG tool

The RSPO is an international non-profit organization formed in 2004 with the objective to promote the growth and use of sustainable oil palm products through credible global standards and engagement of stakeholders.

[www.rspo.org](http://www.rspo.org)

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Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil