

MINUTES OF the 1st Biodiversity Technical Committee (BTC) MEETING

Venue:	Jed Room, Hotel Istana, Kuala Lumpur	
Date & Time:	15 th April, 2009 (9.00 – 16.40)	
Attendees:	Chew Jit Seng (Asiatic Development, MPOA)	CJS
	Henry Barlow	HB
	Reza Azmi (Wild Asia)	RA
	Tom Maddox (ZSL)	TM
	Sarala Aikanathan (Wetlands International)	SA
	Nobuo Nakanishi (Saraya Co. Ltd., Japan)	NN
	Purwo Susanto (Representative of Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO) Foundation or HCV_INARWG (HCV_Indonesia RSPO Working Group)	PS
	Julie Flood (CABI)	JF
	Gan Lian Tiong (MusimMas, Indonesia)	GLT
	Olivier Tichit (Tolan Tiga Group, Indonesia)	OT
	Vengeta Rao (RSPO SG)	VR
	Jutta Poetz (RSPO BC)	JP
Apologies:		
Absent:	Prof. Latiff Mohamad	
	Prof. Yong Hoi Sen	
	Prof. Machmud Thohari	

AGENDA:

1. Welcome and opening remarks (VR)

VR provides brief background information to reasons for formation of BTC and its intended role in relation to RSPO P&C, e.g. relevance and capacity for implementation by growers and CBs, areas of potential conflict realized early during the development of the P&C from 2004-7. BACP program was seen as possible avenue to address such concerns. In 2008 an application for co-funding of the BC position and BTC was submitted to BACP and granted.

VR stresses on voluntary role of members and importance of commitment to active involvement in the activities of the committee. The present composition of members may be revised accordingly based on expertise requirements and availability/capacity of members to contribute.

Committee members were advised that BACP-approved budget covers only logistics and per diem expenses incurred by members.

2. Introduction of members (JP)

Attending members were introduced with brief description of expertise/affiliation and work background relevant to BTC membership. Corrections made to relevant contact and other information where pointed out.

3. Briefing by JP on

a. Analysis of P&C performance with reference to biodiversity conservation

Principles 4, 5, 7 & 8 were presented briefly to highlight common areas in the P&C where insufficiencies were seen in reporting.

HB pointed out the importance of addressing issues related to set-asides in estates as part of the BTC's responsibilities. Please refer to short write-up at the end of this file.

RA commented on poor auditing and the need to improve on CBs understanding and interpretation of P&C.

GLT - public summary may not reflect the full audit results, and the provision in the Certification process for regular monitoring which will follow up on initial compliance and serve as good check and balance mechanism.

CJS - there is a lack of information among CBs of bioD related issues (e.g. recognition of artificial against natural waterway), and the need to consider historical circumstances when assessing CB reports.

PS - HCV assessment and monitoring in INA hampered by shortage of qualified expertise and resulting high fees and delays for growers. BTC can look into how to close this gap as FSC only provides guidance on HCV identification, not monitoring etc. HCV-RIWG will pilot some of their proposals for monitoring and management. Compensation scheme drafted by HCV has run into trouble with government parties, resulting in impasse in matters related to reforestation, regional compensation & land swaps.

b. Current working groups under RSPO that address biodiversity-related issues

A brief outline of HCV-RIWG, NP-WG and GHG-WG was given, including background, purpose, composition (members), timeline of activities

PP, as a key member of HCV-RIWG, was invited to augment the report on this WG and pointed the necessity to address HCV-related matters and the potential role of the BTC in addressing these.

c. Current projects relating to Biodiversity and its conservation undertaken by RSPO, and research projects funded or endorsed by RSPO and co-funded by BACP (Biodiversity and Agricultural Commodities Program).

Introduction of three RSPO endorsed, BACP co-funded projects awarded to FFI, PanEco and ZSL and IWM project funded by RSPO and awarded to CABI. Outputs from all projects are expected to assist in the work of the BTC. TM and JF were invited to elaborate on ZSL and CABI projects, respectively. JF informed that ongoing activities include pilot testing of questionnaire, and a literature review. The project manager would be meeting key stakeholders in KL in mid- April to collect further information for the literature review and for further inputs on pilot testing the questionnaire. JF also stressed the need to include smallholders in the study to get a smallholder perspective on alternatives to weed control. Progress on IWM project may be presented around RT07 timeline.

TM was invited to report on progress of the ZSL project but due to the very early stage of the project and no grant money received so far this was deferred to a later date.

d. Biobanking/offset certification schemes

BTC encouraged to explore this avenue, info on two providers, New Forests Asia (& proposal to RSPO) and BBOP.

JP suggests compensation scheme that pools back revenue from compensation certs into RSPO conservation projects, especially smaller players in the OP sector.

e. Avenues & approaches, e.g. corridors, rehabilitation, restoration and enrichment planting

Advice on pros and cons of conservation initiatives (e.g. riparian corridors, empty land rehab) and the necessity for BTC to take into considerations all angles to minimize potential negative backlash from growers etc.

Suggestion to use three-pronged approach, i.e education, 'force' and incentive, to improve compliance with BioD and BMP P&C.

BTC needs to set goals, short- and long-term.

f. Constraints and conflict points

Conflicts/criticisms will arise on both sides of the divide (conservation groups – growers).

PP – information on WWF work on human-wildlife conflicts available, but not utilized to capacity

4. Roundtable discussion

- a. setting priorities for the BTC**
- b. setting future agenda and time plan to achieve objectives**
- c. working groups, specific delegation within the BTC?**

OT suggests inclusion of iconic work/research (e.g. ERTs), corridors and broad-spectrum conservation lack iconic value. Also work needs to be focused around existing operations in estates.

TM – suggests BTC needs to define ‘biodiversity’ in the RSPO/plantation context, and relative to that issues like species richness, ERTs, etc.
What is the exact impact of OP on biodiversity (main points: habitat loss, habitat structure impacts, human access, pollution).

RA – Need to focus on landscape issues and company processes.

PP – Suggests preparation of a concept paper to outline work program for BTC (to include BioD definition and separate treatment for existing and new plantations).

NN – Japanese consumers are aware of complexity in biodiversity rather than understanding it in limited view of a few iconic species as often the case.

HB – stresses on availability of un-planted areas (especially when replanting cycles necessitate omission of steep slopes) and need to address this and utilize them for conservation projects. Suggests Individual companies to survey their estates and then revert to BTC on advise on how much (%) to set aside and actively conserve.

OT – cautions on the need to consider size of such areas. Micro-set-asides may have little conservation value.

SA – BTC needs to consider management of surrounding areas (e.g. FRs) affected/impacted by OP operations.

PP/GLT – in INA companies may opt to return concessions to government if HCV % is more than economically justifiable, or, in case of conserving the area, the government may opt to withdraw the concession on grounds of the company failing to develop the land. Can BTC address this matter?

RA/TM – suggest obtaining feedback from stakeholders (consultation meeting/questionnaire) before deciding on what issues need to be addressed by BTC

JP points out that valuable time may be lost through this, and issues are clear even without such consultation from stakeholder feedback received through practice and implementation of P&C over the trial period and 1. year of full implementation.

HB – stakeholders must be consulted for feedback on all BTC recommendations.

Priority areas for BTC review and discussion:

Issue	Current activities/strategies	BTC role	Timeframe/output
HCV Assessment	HCV-RIWG Some HCV certification already done by members of this WG FFI project (BACP) CI TNC WWF	Assist in providing credibility to HCV assessments that is presently lacking 'networking' to strengthen existing gaps	Consultation (3 months) Document that details criteria for HCV assessment etc. 6 months (Sept. 2009)
BioD assessment	ProForest/WildAsia ZSL project (BACP)	Workshop/seminar Technical knowledge dissemination to CBs & growers	June 2009
Compensation mechanisms	New Forests Asia BBOP HCV-RIWG ICI	Review different compensation schemes to explore options for RSPO, and scale of impact	November 2009
BMPs Riparian zones Empty land Steep slopes	PanEco (BACP) Sime Darby Proposal Wetlands Internatl.	Workshop/seminar Technical knowledge dissemination to CBs & growers	September 2009
"Green Corridor"/landscape issues	Saraya Wetlands WWF HOB NCI	Recognizing corridor value for landscape conservation, endorsement, information gathering	July 2009 Workshop/sem. or broad initiative?
Smallholders	NI-WGs	"Biodiversity assessment" (ref. INA NI-WG) POPSI Refer to BACP to close gaps	May 2009
Threats/Conflicts (conservation areas)	WWF experience in Central Kalimantan	Review of existing information, BMP, case studies, experiences etc., linking to compensation schemes RT07 forum?	November 2009
Review (Impact)	BACP projects	Look at BACP monitoring, refer back to BACP to stimulate/improve impact (ref. WWF impact score)	2011 (BACP) As soon as possible

d. next meeting(s) and other housekeeping

Deferred, to be finalized via email communication as ~ 1/2 of members had to leave earlier due to other commitments.

16 April, 2009-04-17
prepared by Jutta Poetz