MINUTES OF MEETING

47th SSC Meeting

Time: 1400 - 1600 (ICT)

Date: Saturday, 9th November 2024

Venue: Amari Bangkok

Zoom Meeting https://zoom.us/j/95070282549

Meeting ID: 950 7028 2549   Passcode: SSC@RT24

ATTENDEES

Name	Initial	Organisation	
1. Olivier Tichit (Co-Chair)	OT	Musim Mas	P & T – Substantive
2. Lim Sian Choo (Co-Chair)	LSC	Bumitama Group	Grower (INA) - Substantive
3. William Siow	WS	MPOA/IOI	Grower (MY) – Substantive
4. Lee Kian Wei	LKW	United Plantations	Grower (MY) – Alternate
5. Guillaume Lacaze	GL	L'Oreal	Consumer Goods Manufacturer – Substantive
6. Librian Angraeni	LA	Musim Mas	P & T – Alternate
7. Sander Van den Ende	SvE	SIPEF	Grower (RoW) – Substantive
8. Jenny Walther-Thoss	JWT	WWF Singapore	ENGO – Substantive
1. Yen Hun Sung	HS	RSPO Secretariat	
2. Leena Ghosh	LG	RSPO Secretariat	
3. Jasmine Ho Abdullah	JH	RSPO Secretariat	
4. Daniel Liew	DL	RSPO Secretariat	
5. Ashton Lim	AL	RSPO Secretariat	
6. Maria Papadopoulou	MP	RSPO Secretariat	
7. Liyana Zulkipli	LZ	RSPO Secretariat	
8. Wong Yi Jin	WYJ	RSPO Secretariat	
9. Muhammad Shazaley bin Abdullah	SA	RSPO Secretariat	
Absence with apology:			
1. Brian Lariche	BL	Humana	SNGO – Substantive
2. Anne Rosenbarger	AR	WRI	ENGO – Substantive

AGENDA

Time	Item	Agenda	PIC
1400 - 1405	1.0	**Opening**	Co-Chairs
	1.1	Acceptance of agenda	
	1.2	RSPO Antitrust Law	
	1.3	RSPO Consensus-Based Decision Making	
	1.4	RSPO Declaration of Conflict of Interest	
1405 - 1410	2.0	**Meeting Dashboard**	Co-Chairs
	2.1	Confirmation of the 46th MoM on 3rd October 2024	
	2.2	Action Tracker	
	2.3	Progress Update WG/TF/SG under SSC	

1410 - 1430	3.0	**For Endorsement**	
	3.1	Acknowledgement of RSPO JA Pilot Progress Achievement of Step 1 – Ecuador	DL
	3.2	GHGWG Revised ToR	AL
1430 - 1510	4.0	**For Update**	
	4.1	Certification Systems for P&C and ISH Standard 2024	JH
	4.2	Supplementary/Derivatives documents of P&C and ISH Standard 2024	HS
1510 - 1555	5.0	**For Discussion**	
	5.1	Revision of Supply Chain Certification Standard	HS
	5.2	Revision of SOP for Standard Setting and Review	HS
	5.3	Review of the Standards Revision Process - Independent Reviewer	HS
1555 - 1600	6.0	**Any Other Business**	
	6.1	Next SSC Meeting - 5th December 2024	
	6.2	2025 SSC Meeting Schedule	
	6.3	Ian Orrell and Silvia Irawan's retirement from SSC	
1600		**END**	

DISCUSSION:

No.	Description	Action Points (PIC)
1.0	**Opening**	
1.1	The Chairs welcomed everyone to the meeting and presented the agenda of the meeting.	
1.2	The RSPO Antitrust Law, Consensus-Based Decision Making, and Declaration of Conflict of Interest were read out to the Committee. No comments were received.	
2.0	**Meeting Dashboard**	
2.1	**Confirmation of the 46th MoM on 3rd October 2024** The minutes of the meeting were presented. The Committee asked for clarification regarding the approval process for the Certification Systems document. The Secretariat explained that the initial proposal was to send the draft without Annex 12 (Compliance Checklist) to both SSC and Assurance Standing Committee (ASC) and seek approval via email. However, this was not done following the discussion at the SSC meeting on 3rd October 2024. The Committee decided that the Secretariat will seek input from the ASC on the full draft Certification Systems document, and then seek approval from the SSC. The Committee requested to include a note that the draft without Annex 12 was	

	not sent to the SSC and ASC and will require another decision/instruction from SSC on the next steps. The Secretariat noted this. The minutes of the meeting were adopted.	
2.2	**Action Trackers** Action tracker of the previous meeting was presented. No comments were received.	
2.3	**Progress Update WG/TF/SG under SSC** The progress update for the WG/TF/SG Committee was presented. The Committee raised a question on whether there is an annual report from the Working Groups. With the new Principles and Criteria (P&C) expected to be endorsed, Working Groups are tasked with document development, and it is important to carefully manage the timeline and set expectations for the Working Groups to complete the document development by a specific date. The Secretariat clarified that there is no annual report per se. However, updates on the progress of document development will be included in the monthly Progress Updates, and it is regularly updated by the Working Groups. The detailed timeline will depend on the discussion of the respective Working Groups. A draft timeline is usually set out in the Terms of Reference (ToR) which are submitted to the SSC, and the SSC is cognizant of the progress of the document development. There will be a comprehensive list of documents that are either in development, need to be updated, or are new to support the new P&C. The Working Groups/Task Forces will oversee the development of these documents, during the 12-month period. The Committee raised a question on how often the progress from the WG/TF is published on the website. The minutes of the meeting of the WG/TF will be updated to the website after every meeting.	
3.0	**For Endorsement**	
3.1	**Acknowledgement of RSPO JA Pilot Progress Achievement of Step 1 – Ecuador** The Secretariat presented the decision paper and the Jurisdictional Approach (JA) pilot stepwise approach progress assessment to acknowledge the RSPO JA Pilot Progress Achievement of Step 1 for Ecuador. ● The Ecuador JA pilot indicated that it has completed all indicators for Step 1 of the Stepwise Approach. The self-assessment was submitted to	

the Secretariat using the standardized format developed by the Secretariat and necessary supporting documents were provided.

- The assessment and supporting documents were then reviewed by an independent panel consisting of members from the Jurisdictional Working Group (JWG). The panel concluded that the Ecuador JA pilot had indeed fulfilled all indicators and thereby achieved Step 1.
- The JWG recommends that the SSC approves the conclusion by the review panel and that formal recognition of achieving Step1 of the Stepwise Approach be issued to the Ecuador JA pilot. This was done last year for the Sabah and Seruyan JA Pilot.
- The assessment includes system indicators and landscape indicators. System indicators are on establishing a multi-stakeholder board and the jurisdiction issuing a formal commitment. Landscape indicators are about having a plan to establish the mechanisms needed and developing all the procedures to support Step 2, as well as a plan to do a legal gap analysis between RSPO standards and the jurisdictions to see if there is anything below the RSPO Standards.

The Committee commented:
- Who are the stakeholders involved in this project? The Secretariat explained that JA is a multi-stakeholder process, and the potential stakeholders involved are everyone who works on palm oil within the jurisdiction such as the smallholders, growers, NGOs, supply chain actors. In the case of Ecuador, it includes the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, processor in Ecuador and smallholder groups. These groups of people initiated their interest to join JA.
- The Committee raised a question on why Step 1 is focused on planning, while some parties have already started their HCV-HCS mapping work, which is typically part of Step 2. The Secretariat explained that some stakeholders within the jurisdiction are not yet members or have not started the mapping process. Even for management units that have completed their individual mappings, the work at the jurisdictional level still needs to establish connections between all HCV and HCS areas. The mapping cannot be limited to the boundaries of individual management units; it must encompass the entire jurisdiction. This means that some additional work is required to ensure that the HCV and HCS areas are properly connected across the entire jurisdiction, and there may still be areas within the jurisdiction where mapping work has not been completed yet. Basically, Step 1 is focused on the group clarifying their intentions and identifying the actions required to ensure compliance with the P&C. When considering the landscape and environment, they must conduct both HCV and HCS assessments. If they have completed the HCV assessment but not the HCS, they must commit to completing

	the HCS process. While the jurisdictional entity has been operating for 5-6 years, what is being asked of them now is to reaffirm and ensure their commitment to completing the full HCV-HCS mapping. **Decision** The SSC has endorsed the decision paper. The Secretariat will seek approval from the members who are not present via email.	Seek approval from SSC members via email **Action by: Secretariat**
3.2	**GHGWG2 Revised Terms of Reference (ToR)** The Secretariat presented the decision paper for the revised Terms of Reference (ToR) for Greenhouse Gas Working Group 2 (GHGWG2). ● The ToR for GHGWG2 states that the Working Group expires in August 2023 and there has been minimal progress made on the downstream emissions and the development of PalmGHG Calculator Version 5 has yet to be completed. Since then, the GHGWG2 has been operating informally, working toward the completion of the PalmGHG Version 5 without an updated ToR. Currently, the PalmGHG Version 5 has been finalised in terms of specifications and will conduct a field trial early next year. The calculator will also be built into prisma by June 2025. ● There has also been a change in the composition of GHGWG2 members, with members replacement or appointment, member exit without replacement and no participation from the ENGO and SNGO. This may cause imbalance in the Working Group. ● Therefore, the GHGWG2 requires a new ToR to formally continue operations and meetings until the completion of the scope of work as stated. The new ToR should also include the proposed composition of the GHGWG2 members. ● The GHGWG2 has agreed and recommended that the ToR be updated to complete the PalmGHG Version 5.0 that will be launched in June 2025, excluding the downstream emission scope. The changes in the ToR are as follows: 　○ Scope of work to cover includes (i) development of PalmGHG Version 5.0 into prisma, (ii) development of PalmGHG Manual Version 5.0, (iii) improvement of PalmGHG Version 5.0 with GHG Protocol Standards, and (iv) streamlining PalmGHG Version 5.0 with other modules in prisma 　○ Enhancement of the ToR by updating the objectives, retirement criteria/reselection of inactive GHGWG2 members, and management of the GHGWG2 in terms of consensus as there is no guidance in the current ToR. 　○ Update of the composition of GHGWG2 members and meeting frequency	

○ Active period of the GHGWG2. In the latest GHGWG2 meeting on 17 October, the members requested for the Working Group to be in stasis instead of disbanded after completing its current scope of work. One reason for this is that as part of the PalmGHG Version 5 update, there will be a regular review of the default values used in PalmGHG. These values may change annually and will need to be updated accordingly. Another key reason is the growing importance of climate change discussions. As climate change remains a significant and evolving topic, there is a foreseeable need for ongoing discussions around emissions calculations and reductions. Since there isn't a dedicated climate change Working Group, the GHGWG2 can serve as a strong foundation to support these climate-related topics. Therefore, the Working Group has recommended remaining in stasis, ready to be reactivated when required, whether for an annual review and updates, or to provide support for discussions.

● The Secretariat would like to seek the SSC's approval on the revised ToR for GHGWG2.

The Committee commented that:
● The Committee agreed with the revised ToR but raised a concern regarding the composition of the Working Group. They questioned why it was not being formed as a Task Force, given that not all stakeholder groups would be represented. By forming it as a Task Force, there would be no need to justify the absence of certain members, reducing the risk of the group's results being challenged due to the lack of representation from specific stakeholder groups.
● The Committee acknowledged that additional issues, such as the GHG Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) calculation, will be coming up. They agreed that the Working Group should remain in place to support the RSPO. However, they expressed concern about the absence of certain groups, particularly the SNGOs and ENGOs, whose technical expertise is crucial for the development process. The Committee emphasized the importance of having these groups involved and securing support from these different stakeholder groups. If they are not involved, external experts will need to be engaged to fill the gap. It is essential that the Working Group does not lack representation from these groups.
● Another Committee Member disagreed with the previous point, noting that many SNGO and ENGO representatives are not technical. They emphasized that the group should prioritize technical expertise over broad representation. The Committee argued that the technical
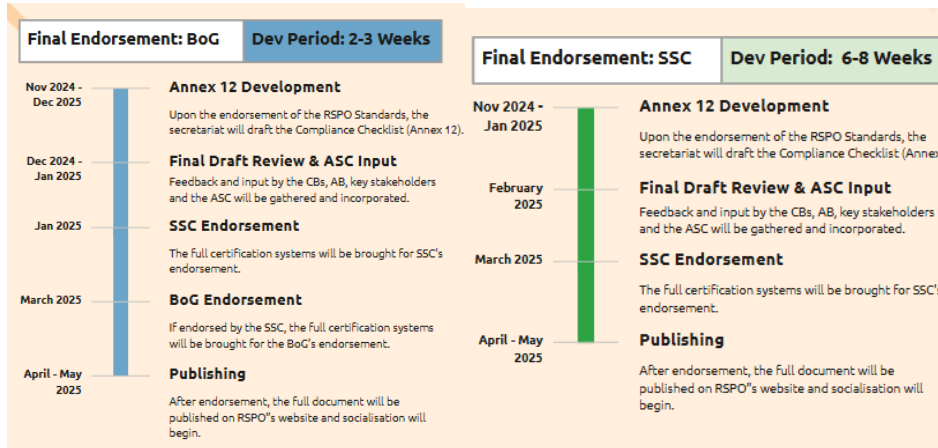
requirements of the group are vital, especially when considering frameworks like the GHG Protocol and upcoming Land-Based Sector Removal Guidance, which will be issued by May 2025. Given the complexity of these issues, it is suggested that the Working Group be detached from the representation requirement and instead focus on technical expertise. Whether the experts come from ENGO or SNGO backgrounds, they must be experienced and have in-depth knowledge in the technical aspects of GHG accounting. It is a highly specialized field, and it is recommended to include organizations such as the World Resources Institute (WRI) in the technical group to ensure that the necessary expertise is represented.

- The Secretariat explained that the ToR has already included provisions for inviting technical experts to the Working Group. A few potential experts have already been identified, and some downstream members have expressed interest in joining as well. The Secretariat noted that the composition of a Working Group is typically more fixed and subject to specific rules. In contrast, a task force is more ad-hoc and can accommodate a broader range of experts, allowing them to not only participate but also contribute their expertise directly to the process.

- The Committee suggested that the topic at hand requires a professional structure within the standard, and RSPO should consider establishing a dedicated climate unit, especially with GHG reporting and standards becoming increasingly important. The Committee agreed to rename the current Working Group to a task force but emphasized that this should be part of a broader discussion on building a professional unit within RSPO, including experts. Having such a unit would make it easier to recruit members who can dedicate the necessary time or volunteer their expertise. The Committee noted that developing a GHG calculator is a substantial task for a voluntary committee, and professionalizing this function within the Secretariat in 2025 would likely be more efficient and effective.

- The current GHG Calculator is very upstream-focused, which is why it is crucial to have representation from growers and other members who are directly involved in the hands-on development of the calculator. These members have been actively working on the calculator, and for the past few months, the process has been operating informally. During the process, it was recognized that the absence of ENGOs, particularly groups like WWF, has been a significant gap. Efforts have since been made to engage the ENGO community, including reaching out to organizations like the GHG Protocol and WRI. On the other hand, the challenge for SNGOs is that their focus is not typically on emission calculations, making it more difficult for them to catch up with the

technical discussions. The ENGO representation is currently the critical missing element in the group.

- The Committee highlighted that technical experts are very important in the process as they can provide valuable insights based on what has already been done in plantations. The Committee mentioned receiving numerous inquiries from investors who are concerned about discrepancies between the PalmGHG calculator used by RSPO and those published by other companies in their sustainability reports. Investors have noted that the PalmGHG figures tend to be much higher than those in Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) reports from other companies and have requested for a gap analysis. They are also asking if there are any efforts from RSPO to streamline the calculator to align it more closely with international standards. The calculator should be aligned with the GHG Protocol to gain international recognition.

- The Secretariat clarified that this is why the alignment with the GHG Protocol was made – RSPO has been working closely with experts in this field and have the calculator verified by GHG Protocol. The PalmGHG calculator is now being developed in accordance with the GHG Protocol, and the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) has been using the GHG Protocol as a reference. The GHGWG2 is also playing an important role in reviewing and assessing RSPO's readiness to commit to the SBTi.

- The Committee pointed out that when considering the GHG Protocol, the focus is primarily on Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions, which looks at emissions from one perspective. In contrast, LCA takes a broader approach, examining emissions from multiple angles. The study of LCA and the GHG Protocol is slightly different. LCA provides a more comprehensive view, especially when conducted from top to bottom, though no company typically does a full LCA. Essentially, the two frameworks offer different perspectives on emissions. The Secretariat needs to build a specialized team to effectively handle these complex tasks.

- The Secretariat responded that RSPO has a Climate Change Unit, which could certainly handle this matter further. However, there is a limit on the number of people they can hire. The Secretariat would need to seek further consideration from the relevant committee regarding the possibility of expanding the team's capacity. This issue would be taken forward for discussion and consideration.

Decision
The SSC has requested the Secretariat to revise the ToR with amendments made to the name of the group, changing it from "Greenhouse Gas Working Group" to "Greenhouse Gas Task Force" in order to reflect the group's focus on addressing complex and technical issues related to climate change.

1. Amend the revised ToR
2. Seek approval from SSC members via email

		Action by: Secretariat
	The Secretariat will amend the wordings and circulate the decision paper and revised ToR to all SSC members for final approval via email.	
4.0	**For Update**	

4.1	**Certification Systems for P&C and ISH Standard 2024**
	The Secretariat provided an update on the revised Certification Systems for P&C and ISH Standard 2024.
	● The Certification Systems document was previously presented during the 46th SSC Meeting on 3rd October and the SSC agreed that a full document that includes Annex 12 (Compliance Checklist) should be completed for endorsement. Therefore, the timeline has been delayed.
	● The Secretariat highlighted on the timeline and endorsement for the Certification Systems document:
	    o The Secretariat has checked and confirmed that the previous versions of the Certification Systems document have always been endorsed by the Board of Governors (BoG). There was no specific explanation on why it was endorsed by the BoG. SSC was only formed in 2019 and all the versions prior to that was endorsed by the BoG. The 2020 version of the document was developed after the formation of SSC, and it was also endorsed by the BoG as it included the inclusion of certification process requirements for Independent Smallholder (ISH) Standard for the first time.
	    o The Secretariat explained that the RSPO Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Standard Setting does not specifically state the endorsement requirement for the Certification Systems document. It only states that it will be at the discretion of the SSC. The SSC can decide whether to have the document endorsed by the SSC or BoG.
	    o The Secretariat presented two different timelines for the SSC's consideration. The full document is aimed to be ready by March 2025. The difference between the two timelines is the final endorsement, whether it will end at the BoG level or SSC level. For the first timeline where the final endorsement is by BoG, the development of Annex 12 (Compliance Checklist) will take place from December 2024 to January 2025. There will be around 2-3 weeks to focus on the development for Annex 12 after the endorsement of the RSPO Standards. For the second timeline where the final endorsement is by SSC, there will be more time, around 6-8 weeks for the development of Annex 12. The other process will be similar for both timelines where the final draft will be reviewed by all the key stakeholders as well as	

input received from the Assurance Standing Committee (ASC). Then it will be sent for endorsement.

Final Endorsement: BoG	Dev Period: 2-3 Weeks
Nov 2024 - Dec 2025	**Annex 12 Development** — Upon the endorsement of the RSPO Standards, the secretariat will draft the Compliance Checklist (Annex 12).
Dec 2024 - Jan 2025	**Final Draft Review & ASC Input** — Feedback and input by the CBs, AB, key stakeholders and the ASC will be gathered and incorporated.
Jan 2025	**SSC Endorsement** — The full certification systems will be brought for SSC's endorsement.
March 2025	**BoG Endorsement** — If endorsed by the SSC, the full certification systems will be brought for the BoG's endorsement.
April - May 2025	**Publishing** — After endorsement, the full document will be published on RSPO"s website and socialisation will begin.

Final Endorsement: SSC	Dev Period: 6-8 Weeks
Nov 2024 - Jan 2025	**Annex 12 Development** — Upon the endorsement of the RSPO Standards, the secretariat will draft the Compliance Checklist (Annex
February 2025	**Final Draft Review & ASC Input** — Feedback and input by the CBs, AB, key stakeholders and the ASC will be gathered and incorporated.
March 2025	**SSC Endorsement** — The full certification systems will be brought for SSC's endorsement.
April - May 2025	**Publishing** — After endorsement, the full document will be published on RSPO"s website and socialisation will begin.

The Committee commented:
- The Committee raised a concern that the development period of 2-3 weeks for Annex 12 is not sufficient. The second timeline is more reasonable with a development period of 6-8 weeks, and it also avoids the holiday period in December.
- Should the final endorsement be extended to ASC as well? The Secretariat clarified that the input from ASC will be gathered prior to the endorsement by SSC.
- The Committee raised concerns about the timeline for developing Annex 12 within two months, questioning whether this is sufficient, especially since the format of Annex 12 is still unclear and it is a crucial part of the audit checklist for the Principles and Criteria (P&C). Is there a framework for its development? Is it necessary to seek endorsement from ASC? It was clarified that since Annex 12 is a Standards document, it is the SSC that should endorse it, and it does not need to go to the Board of Governors (BoG) for review. The endorsement should stop at the SSC level, and the BoG members can provide comments or feedback through the two Standing Committees during the review period.
- The Committee agreed that the second timeline is more appropriate, where Annex 12 is reviewed by the ASC before being presented for SSC endorsement. If there are no controversial issues, the endorsement can stop at SSC. However, if any contentious matters arise, the document can be taken to the BoG for review or to seek their endorsement of the process, rather than the content itself. If the SSC cannot resolve a significant issue, it can be escalated to the BoG for a final decision.
- The Committee asked about the initial process for the previous Standards. The Secretariat explained that the 2018 Standards had an audit checklist, but it was not part of the Certification Systems. It was a standalone spreadsheet document available on the RSPO website. This

time, however, the Secretariat felt it was important to integrate the audit checklist into the assurance process and have everything in one place, rather than keeping it as a separate document. The previous document was informative. The 2020 audit checklist was developed a year and a half after the adoption of the Standards, with the ISH Standard being adopted in 2019. As a result, there are some gaps in the current checklist, and some elements go beyond the standards, which is a concern. To address this, the Secretariat believes it is more appropriate to develop the audit checklist and related documents in parallel with the new Standards, keeping everything fresh in mind. This approach will also help ensure the documents are clear references for the certification systems and avoid any confusion about their purpose. Some auditors and Certification Bodies (CBs) have indicated that they initially thought the checklist was mandatory, even though it was meant to be informative. If the checklist is intended to be informative, it should be written in a less prescriptive, more general way, to avoid being too specific. Additionally, National Interpretations (NIs) currently don't have their own audit checklist, so the document needs to be general enough for NIs to follow as well.

- The Secretariat stated that there is already a foundation for the audit checklist and reference document developed as part of the process. The process will start in late November and the draft will be refined and circulated for necessary consultations in a multi-stakeholder manner within 6-8 weeks.
- The Committee raised the point that, since the final draft will go through consultation with targeted stakeholders, it is important to involve those stakeholders during the development period as well. The Secretariat took note of this and clarified that the intention is indeed to include consultation throughout the development period, not just at the final stage.
- The Committee agreed that the second option, which involves ongoing consultation with CBs and other stakeholders during the development process, would be more favorable.
- The Committee also commented that the proposed 6-8 weeks timeline might be too short, especially if stakeholder consultation is to be included during the development process. It was suggested to extend the timeline to 6-12 weeks instead, with a completion target around the end of June or early July 2025, which would provide more time for thorough consultation.
- The Secretariat will come back to the SSC with a plan for this process. The Secretariat will submit a clearer plan, including the revised timeline and the option of whether the SSC wishes to consider seeking BoG's

Draft timeline and present to SSC
Action by: Secretariat

endorsement for the process to the SSC for a formal decision in the next meeting in December.

The Secretariat also presented an update on whether Annex 12 (Compliance Checklist) should be informative or normative.
- There are three additional columns that have been introduced in the new Standards. The Compliance Requirements are the necessary requirements to demonstrate compliance to an indicator and will be informative. The Informative Guidance provides additional guidance to assist in implementation and compliance to the requirement of the indicator and is also informative. These two additional columns have been decided by the BoG to be informative. The Compliance Checklist (Annex 12) is the checklist that the auditors will be checking in assessing compliance to an indicator. The Compliance Requirements and Informative Guidance will be an addendum of the P&C and ISH Standard, but the Compliance Checklist (Annex 12) will be within the Certification Systems document.
- This is just an update to the SSC. The Secretariat is not seeking the SSC's decision at this point as it still has to go through ASC for feedback.

The Committee commented:
- The Committee highlighted that the Compliance Checklist should be an informative document but raised concerns about the name "Compliance Checklist" potentially being misleading. This could lead to some people believing it is more prescriptive or mandatory than intended.
- The Committee disagreed with the advantages of making Compliance Checklist normative, namely that it would allow for more standardized audits and ensure thorough audits. Does this imply that audits conducted previously were not thorough or transparent? The Secretariat explained that the idea of making the checklist normative was just for consideration and that the BoG had recommended keeping the Compliance Checklist as an informative document.

The Secretariat presented a proposed approach to auditing called focused audits to be included in the Certification Systems document.
- This is a proposal by Assurance Services International (ASI) and is just an update that will also be brought to ASC. This will be formally presented to the SSC again for decision once there is a definite decision from ASC.
- The proposal is to provide a different form of audit called focused audits. In the current audit process, every single indicator is reviewed during each audit. The proposal is to change this approach where instead of reviewing every indicator, the focus would be placed on a

certain number of indicators during surveillance audits. For initial certification and recertification, all indicators would still be reviewed, but for surveillance audits, the idea is to prioritize certain indicators and not all indicators are required to be audited. The reason behind this change is mainly due to time constraints. There is also a risk of overlooking crucial details when auditing every single indicator that could lead to deprioritizing important aspects of the audit, such as stakeholder interviews and site inspections.

- According to the proposal, there will be two lists of indicators:
  - Mandatory list of indicators: This list includes all critical indicators and all social indicators that are crucial to be audited during every audit.
  - Non-mandatory list of indicators: This list includes indicators that are audited at least once during a cycle.
- During surveillance audits, the audit process would focus on auditing all indicators in the mandatory list and certain indicators from the non-mandatory list.
- There are several proposed conditions for the focused audit approach:
  - All indicators shall be audited during the main certification audit (initial certification and recertification).
  - The mandatory list will consist of all "Critical" indicators and selected "non-critical" indicators and all social indicators.
  - The non-mandatory list shall be audited at least once during a certification cycle.
  - Indicators that received a Non-Compliance (NC) must be audited in the following audit.
  - If the CB determines that there is a huge risk to not audit a particular indicator, the CB can require that the indicator still be audited during the next audit.
- The proposed conditions do not apply to the ISH Group, as all the indicators are critical and shall be audited during each audit.
- For example, if Indicator 1.2.1 is a non-mandatory indicator, it is required to be audited during initial certification and recertification, as well as Annual Surveillance Audit 2. If Indicator 4.1.1 is a mandatory indicator, it will be required to be audited during every single audit.
- Currently, the mandatory list of indicators has not been developed. However, let's assume that there are 120 mandatory indicators and 49 non-mandatory indicators. Under this scenario, there could be an approximate 22% reduction in the total number of indicators audited per audit. While this reduction may seem small, the idea is that it could lead to a more focused audit. Instead of auditing every single indicator, which can be time-consuming, this approach would allow CBs to concentrate on critical indicators and ensure that these are thoroughly

reviewed. This change is not a drastic change and could help reduce audit time, allowing CBs to focus on indicators that are critical.

The Committee raised concerns:
- The Committee supports the idea of focused audits but raised concerns that some indicators are straightforward while others are more complex. Certain issues, such as social and environmental factors, can vary significantly depending on the regional context, situational conditions, and specific challenges. This makes it difficult to categorize indicators as strictly mandatory or non-mandatory without considering each case individually. The focus should be on defining what needs to be audited rather than solely aiming for a reduced number of indicators and audit time.
- The Committee appreciated the idea as it could help ensure adequate time for stakeholder interviews and site visits, which are critical elements of the audit process. It was suggested that there should be mandatory time allocations specifically for critical activities, such as site visits and stakeholder interviews. This would help ensure that these important activities are not overlooked. CBs have already been experimenting with desk audits and online audits, which could reduce time spent on-site. This approach could be a way to secure the quality and thoroughness of the audit process, making sure that even with the reduction in the overall number of indicators to be audited, stakeholder engagement and site visits are prioritized and given sufficient time.
- The Committee recommended revisiting the document and advised against using words like "force," as such terms can trigger negative reactions from those reading the document.
- The Committee expressed concern about the proposal to differentiate between critical and non-critical indicators at this stage, especially as the revised P&C is already going for approval. This should have been addressed earlier during the P&C revision process. There was also concern about the current ratio of critical to non-critical indicators, noting that it was incorrect. The critical indicators, which are essential to supporting the non-critical ones, should constitute a smaller proportion compared to non-critical indicators. Once the critical and non-critical indicators are properly defined, the mandatory and non-mandatory lists would be clearer. The reduction percentage of indicators should be based on random sampling, rather than estimation, and that random sampling should be done properly, focusing on high-risk issues such as social issues or sites with grievances. Additionally, the Committee highlighted the importance of desktop audits in shaping site audits. The desktop phase is just as crucial as the site work in determining which critical and non-critical

indicators should be focused on during site visits. Properly scoping the desktop audit is vital, as it helps the auditors plan the site work effectively.

- The Committee supported the intent of the proposal and acknowledged that it could bring benefits to the CBs and others. However, it might be better to use a risk-based auditing approach, which would help explain why certain indicators could be reduced in number. A better way to communicate the proposal would be to explain that thorough preparation and risk assessment during the desktop phase would lead to a more focused audit. This would mean that some sites might undergo audits with all indicators, while others with less risk might have fewer indicators audited, saving both time and resources. By presenting the proposal this way, it would be easier to justify reducing audit man-days, as it would be based on a solid, risk-based process, rather than an arbitrary reduction in audit days. This approach would also avoid significant financial and time impacts by ensuring that the audit process remains thorough and proportionate to the risks identified.

- The Committee supported the initiative, especially regarding the idea of reducing time spent on-site, as usually a significant portion of the audit is spent reviewing documents which often does not require a site visit. This way auditors can focus on pertinent issues during site visits. However, it should not appear as if certain indicators are being overlooked, and auditors must be able to report that all indicators were considered, even if some were evaluated remotely before the site visit. This approach would allow for a more efficient audit without diluting the outcome of the audit.

- The Committee also commented on the balance between developing a comprehensive checklist and allowing auditors the flexibility they need. As the P&C are already quite robust, it's important not to overly restrict the auditors when developing a more detailed checklist with mandatory and non-mandatory indicators. Auditors, being the ones closest to the situation, are often the best judges of what should be prioritized, especially in terms of high-risk areas. If too many procedures are imposed, it could make the audit process too rigid, potentially hindering auditors from focusing on the most relevant issues and leading to less effective outcomes.

- The Committee is not comfortable with the proposal to reduce the number of indicators audited, suggesting instead that the focus should be on improving the efficiency of the audit process without lowering expectations. Rather than decreasing the scope of the audit, alternative strategies could be explored to streamline the process—such as shifting some aspects of the audit to desktop or remote work. Efficiency can be

improved through better planning and resource allocation, without compromising the thoroughness or effectiveness of the audit.
- The Secretariat explained that the logic behind ASI's proposal is to move away from a "checklist mentality," where auditors simply go through the motions of ticking off each indicator without considering the broader context. Instead, the goal is to encourage auditors to focus their on-site time on the actual issues that matter, based on a comprehensive risk assessment. Framing the proposal properly is crucial, and this concept is still in the early stages of discussion and development.
- The Secretariat take note of all the comments and will take them back to ASI. ASI is involved in the design of prisma and the audit modules, which will have more indications of the risk, and we can use this information to enhance pre-audits and desktop audits, making them more focused and efficient.

The Secretariat also highlighted the risks of Uncertified Management Units (UMU).
- This will also be presented to the ASC.
- The current existing mechanism specified within the Certification Systems states that the Unit of Certification (UoC) must provide a positive self-assurance statement on their UMU and provide evidence of compliance with 4 main requirements (Labor disputes resolution, land conflict resolution, compliance with the law and no clearing of primary forests). The auditors will then verify through a desk study and stakeholder consultation or field inspection (if necessary).
- The limitation of the current mechanism is that the UMU are not being audited per se but are only required to provide a positive self-declaration. Due to this limitation, there are a number of grievances, which increase the risk towards RSPO's reputation as a whole.
- Some of the issues with the current mechanism:
    o Self-declarations are a risky way of determining compliance with the requirements.
    o Further assessments such as stakeholder consultations and field inspections are only done if deemed necessary by the auditors. This is very rarely done due to cost and logistical constraints.
    o This often leads to auditors not being able to discover non-compliances during the duration of the audit.

The Committee commented:
- The Committee cautioned everyone to be careful when discussing this topic, whether UMU refers to existing management units, such as mills and plantations already in production, or uncertified management

Revert to ASI with comments received
Action by: Secretariat

units, which refer to projects in development. These two categories cover a wide range of scenarios and require careful consideration of the associated risks. The guiding principle should be a risk-based approach, evaluating the level of risk in each scenario. The focus should be on assessing the risks appropriately to ensure that decisions are made based on whether there is sufficient risk.

- The Committee disagreed with this, stating that even certified management units can pose risks to RSPO. Uncertified units, as long as they are RSPO members, mean the parent company remains accountable for any non-compliance. Although the management units may be uncertified, they still need to operate in accordance with RSPO P&C standards.
- The Committee pointed out that auditors can choose to visit uncertified units, so this approach isn't entirely new. Starting the audit process for non-certified units is relevant, especially as all members are committed to their time-bound plans. However, this is a voluntary system, and companies should not be coerced into additional requirements that go beyond the scope. There is a strong objection to introducing new mandatory requirements that would cover elements outside the established framework.
- The Secretariat explained that under the current Certification Systems, the audit focuses on the UoCs that hold the certificates. The reason for raising this issue is that if a non-conformity is found related to the UMU during an audit, there could be an unfair suspension of the UoC. This is because the failure to address the UMU might not be under the control of the UoC itself. The responsibility lies with the parent company, not the UoC per se, as the general manager of the UoC typically only oversees the unit they manage and may not have control over broader compliance issues related to the UMU. In this case, who would receive the non-conformity?
- The Committee agreed with this because if the UMU is not directly subject to the P&C, it cannot be treated as an NC during the audit of the certified UoC. Instead, it might be better classified as a grievance. The Committee suggested considering how to follow up on such findings, as this scenario is somewhat different from what was initially presented. It's not about penalizing the audited UoC for an issue concerning the UMU. Instead, it requires a clear process for escalating and addressing the issue without imposing penalties on the UoC itself.
- The Committee expressed that it is too early to conclude that UMUs are problematic, particularly for parent companies. The delay in certifying these units could be due to financial issues, and it's important not to prematurely judge them. The Committee concluded that it would be beneficial for the standard to clarify the process in these situations,

		ensuring that there is a clear course of action in the event such issues are found. This process should be separate from the annual certification assessment of the UMU.	
	4.2	**Supplementary/Derivatives documents of P&C and ISH Standard 2024** The Secretariat presented a list of the supplementary/derivatives documents of P&C and ISH Standard 2024. The list includes documents that either have to be developed or have already been developed to support the P&C and ISH Standard 2024. Some of the documents are to be updated, which means they need to be updated but the development process has not yet begun. Others are new documents that have not started development, and some are currently in development. The Committee commented: ● There is a heavy concentration of work in one or two Working Groups, namely the HRWG and BHCVWG. This needs to be addressed, particularly in terms of where the support for the BHCVWG will come from. ● How will the process for these documents be carried out? Will there be consultations throughout the process, or will it just be providing comments on the final draft? The Secretariat clarified that each document would follow its own process. This needs to be discussed further but the goal is to begin the process with the full list of documents, determine who will be involved in the development and develop procedures accordingly. Different Working Groups and teams will be assigned to each document, and the aim is to complete them within 12 months. ● The Committee highlighted that completing this within 12 months is a significant challenge and stressed the need to streamline processes. These Working Groups usually face issues such as lack of quorum, low attendance, and insufficient participation. They may need additional support to complete their tasks. The Secretariat responded that this discussion such as getting resources should take place at the Working Group level. Reviewing the list provides insight into what needs to be done, and prioritization may be necessary. Some Working Groups have also indicated that reaching consensus on sensitive topics within 12 months might be unrealistic, on top of getting SSC's approval, field testing and more. ● The Committee suggested that this list be reviewed at every meeting. The Secretariat will incorporate it into the action tracker for each meeting.	Incorporate the list into the action tracker for each SSC meeting **Action by: Secretariat**
5.0		**For Discussion**	

5.1	**Revision of Supply Chain Certification Standard**	
	● The Secretariat introduced Maria Papadoupoulou who will be the new Manager for Supply Chain Certification within the Standards & Sustainability Department in RSPO. She will be supporting the revision of the Supply Chain Certification (SCC) Standard. ● The Secretariat provided an update that the process for revision of the SCC Standard should start by 1 February 2025, as per the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Sustainability Systems ver 1.0 (Clause 6.14). ● Some preparatory work had been initiated internally by the Secretariat in terms of things that could go into the SCC revision such as certification of waste/by-products, FFB traders, and sustainable aviation fuel, along with recommendations for strengthening the MB Model (GA Resolution 18-2C that was done by Proforest). ● The Secretariat will draft a plan to launch the process by February 2025. ● The Secretariat raised a question to the Committee regarding the endorsement of the SCC Standard. Previous versions of the SCC Standard were endorsed by the BoG. However, the SOP does not clearly state whether the standard should go to the GA or BoG endorsement is sufficient. This needs to be clarified. ● The Committee suggested the Secretariat to draft a clear plan and present it in the SSC meeting in December.	Draft a plan on the revision process of SCC Standard and present in the December meeting **Action by: Secretariat**
5.2	**Revision of SOP for Standard Setting and Review** The Committee suggested discussing this topic in the SSC Meeting in December 2024.	Include in the agenda for December meeting **Action by: Secretariat**
5.3	**Review of the Standards Revision Process – Independent Reviewer** The Committee is supportive of a review of the Standard Revision process. ● The Committee raised a question on whether the result of the review be implemented for the National Interpretation (NI) process or the next Standards process. It was clarified that the changes will be implemented for the next Standards process. ● The Committee raised a question whether feedback would be collected from all stakeholders involved in the process. The Secretariat explained that, as per the BoG's request, this feedback should be gathered through an independent review. The BoG emphasized that the review should be conducted by an independent party and include a comprehensive 360-degree view of the process, particularly from those within the ISEAL community who are familiar with how other standards organizations approach their standards revision processes. The Secretariat can assist to identify potential reviewers who are suitable to carry out this task.	

		● The Committee also suggested interviewing the Steering Group (SG) and Task Force (TF) members. The Secretariat takes note of this and ensures that everyone involved is comfortable with the expectations for the independent review once there is clear direction from the SSC and a finalized ToR.	Identify potential independent reviewer **Action by: Secretariat**
6.0	**Any Other Business**		
6.1	**Next SSC Meeting – 5ᵗʰ December 2024** The Committee agreed to have the next SSC meeting on 5ᵗʰ December 2024.		
6.2	**2025 SSC Meeting Schedule** The Secretariat has proposed the SSC meeting schedule for 2025. The Secretariat will send a doodle poll to all SSC members to confirm their availability.		Send a doodle poll for the 2025 SSC Meeting Schedule **Action by: Secretariat**
6.3	**Ian Orrell and Silvia Irawan's retirement from SSC** Ian Orrell who represents the Smallholder has officially stepped down from SSC since his retirement from April 2024. Silvia Irawan, who represents the Social NGO, has retired from Kaleka and will also resign from SSC. This has been notified to the SSC Co-chairs via email on 21 October 2024. The Committee expressed their appreciation to both of their excellent services and commitment over the years. **SNGO's seat in the SSC** The other Social NGO seat in SSC currently taken by Brian Lariche from Humana is experiencing some serious health issues and will not be able to commit to upcoming SSC meetings. This means that there will be no representative from the Social NGO at the upcoming SSC meetings and there is a gap in representation from the SNGO sector. These seats need to be replaced as soon as possible to ensure balanced representation in SSC and decisions can be made. The Co-chairs have brought the issue to the attention of the BoG members and the BoG will discuss it with the Social NGO caucus. The BoG will also look for representatives for the Smallholder seat.		

MEETING ENDED AT 1614 ICT