

MINUTES OF MEETING

48th SSC Meeting

Time: 1500 - 1700 (MYT)

Date: Thursday, 5th December 2024

Venue: Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/98362606690> Meeting ID: 983 6260 6690 Passcode: 48@SSC

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. Jenny Walther-Thoss	JWT	WWF Singapore	ENGO – Substantive
7. Andrew Aeria	AA	PEMANGKIN	SNGO - Substantive
1. Yen Hun Sung	HS	RSPO Secretariat	
2. Leena Ghosh	LG	RSPO Secretariat	
3. Jasmine Ho Abdullah	JH	RSPO Secretariat	
4. Maria Papadopoulou	MP	RSPO Secretariat	
5. Liyana Zulkipli	LZ	RSPO Secretariat	
6. Premalatha Karisnajunian	PK	RSPO Secretariat	
7. Freda Manan	FM	RSPO Secretariat	
8. Mohd Zaidee Mohd Tahir	ZT	RSPO Secretariat	
<i>Invited Guest:</i>			
1. Bilge Daldeniz	BD	Proforest	
2. Claire Reboah	CR	Proforest	
<i>Absence with apology:</i>			
1. Brian Lariche	BL	Humana	SNGO – Alternate
2. Anne Rosenbarger	AR	WRI	ENGO – Substantive
3. Librian Angraeni	LA	Musim Mas	P & T – Alternate
4. Sander Van den Ende	SvE	SIPEF	Grower (RoW) – Substantive
5. Alien Huizing	AH	CNV	SNGO – Substantive
6. Suzan Cornelissen	SC	CNV	SNGO – Alternate

AGENDA

Time	Item	Agenda	PIC
1500 - 1505	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	
	1.5	Welcome new SSC Members: Andrew Aeria, Alien Huizing, Suzan Cornelissen	

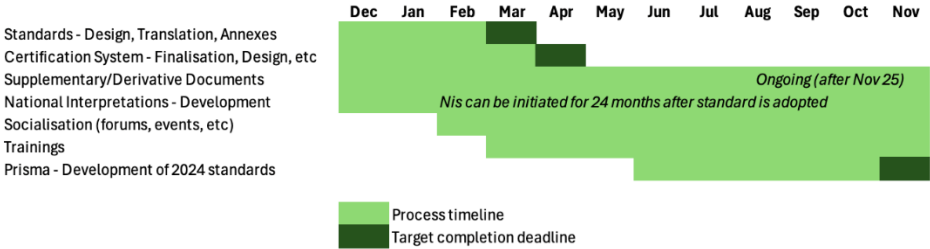
1505 - 1510	2.0 2.1 2.2 2.3	Meeting Dashboard Confirmation of the 47 th MoM on 9 th November 2024 Action Tracker Progress Update WG/TF/SG under SSC	Co-Chairs
1510 - 1530	3.0 3.1	For Endorsement Independent Review of the RSPO Standards Review and Revision Process	HS/LG
1530 - 1620	4.0 4.1 4.2 4.3	For Discussion Communication on Standards (Next Step) Revision of Supply Chain Certification Standard Revision of Secretariat SOP for Standard Setting and Review	HS HS/MP LG/HS
1620 - 1650	5.0 5.1	For Update Independent Review of the Implementation of RSPO Labour Auditing Guidance	Proforest
1650 - 1700	6.0	Any Other Business	
1700		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. The agenda was approved.	
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.	
1.3	The Chairs welcomed new SSC Members: Mr. Andrew Aeria from PEMANGKIN replacing Silvia Irawan as substantive member representing Social NGO; Ms. Alien Huizing from CNV Internationaal, representing Social NGO and Ms. Suzan Cornelissen from CNV Internationaal, representing Social NGO.	
2.0	Meeting Dashboard	
2.1	<u>Confirmation of the 47th MoM on 9th November 2024</u> The minutes of the meeting were presented. The Committee commented that some parts of the minutes were a bit inconsistent and may create confusion for readers. The Committee suggested capturing the main essence of the discussion instead of going into every detail. The Secretariat will take note of this for future minutes.	

<p>2.2</p> <p>2.3</p>	<p>The minutes of the meeting were adopted.</p> <p><u>Action Trackers</u> Action tracker of the previous meeting was presented.</p> <p>The Secretariat will send a new doodle poll for the 2025 SSC Meeting Schedule to all SSC members to account for the adjustments of the dates.</p> <p>No other comments were received.</p> <p><u>Progress Update WG/TF/SG under SSC</u> The progress update for the WG/TF/SG Committee was presented.</p> <p>The Committee raised a question whether there is any progress for the Greenhouse Gas Task Force (GHGTF). The Chairperson of GHGTF updated that the GHGTF has accepted the recommendation from SSC and have changed the name from GHG Working Group to GHG Task Force Further details will be provided in the next meeting.</p>	<p>Send a new doodle poll for 2025 SSC Meeting Schedule Action by: Secretariat</p>
<p>3.0</p>	<p>For Endorsement</p>	
<p>3.1</p>	<p><u>Independent Review of the Standards Review and Revision Process</u> The Secretariat presented the decision paper on the independent review of the RSPO standards review and revision process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Secretariat is seeking the approval of SSC for an independent review of the standards review and revision process that took place from mid-2022 to 2024. ● The independent review shall consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assessing and benchmarking processes and best practices of other comparable sustainability schemes, especially those in the ISEAL Alliance ○ A lesson learned review of the RSPO Standards Review 2022-2024, including a holistic assessment of the roles and performance of all parties to the process (including the SSC), taking into account their mandated responsibilities and capacities ○ Development of an effective process/procedure for future RSPO standards reviews and revisions <p>The Committee highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The draft Terms of Reference (ToR) is somewhat lacking, as one point is overly prescriptive, and the timeline is not included. The Stakeholder Engagement part within the Scope needs to be clarified that it should not be limited to those involved in the revision but should also consider 	

	<p>not only Certification Bodies (CBs) but non-RSPO members as well. The stakeholder engagement should go beyond RSPO as this is important for understanding the direction and movement of the standards. It should also be reflected in the Review Process section, particularly in the stakeholder interviews.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Committee suggested adding in the deliverables section that there will be appropriate time allocated during scheduled or ad-hoc SSC meetings to review the progress and deliverables. It is important to clarify that the SSC must actively spend time and engage in this process and cannot simply let it run on autopilot. The Committee also suggested including a line to state that the objectives of this ToR are fully met. ● The Committee suggested adding a final item to the timeline section, which is to present the results to the Board of Governors (BoG), as well as including an estimated time for endorsement. The Committee recommended setting a maximum time limit of 6-8 months for the work and review after contracting, to ensure everything is completed within a one-year cycle. OT will share these comments with the Secretariat for the necessary amendments. The Secretariat will revise the ToR and circulate the amended version to all SSC members via email. ● The Committee raised a question about the availability of the budget for this review. The Secretariat explained that there is an allocation of 50,000 USD in the current budget, which was reallocated from other budget items. It is still manageable but some non-priority items may need to be sacrificed. The Committee highlighted that the current budget is running on the FY24/25 cycle. Since the project will take approximately one year, the budget can be split into two phases. If additional funds are required, they can be requested during the next budget cycle. ● The Committee raised a question regarding which certification schemes will be benchmark for this review. The Secretariat responded that it will mostly refer to ISEAL standards, at a minimum, as well as other ISEAL certifications. However, not all ISEAL certifications will be included in the benchmark. The Committee recommended looking into Fairtrade, FSC or UEBT (Union for Ethical Bioproducts) as potential benchmarks. It would also be better to clarify that the focus should be on land-based agricultural commodity standards, rather than providing specific recommendations for available certifications. <p>Decision The SSC has requested for the Secretariat to amend the ToR to incorporate the comments and feedback received during the meeting. The Secretariat will amend the ToR accordingly and circulate it to all SSC members for endorsement via email.</p>	<p>Amend the ToR and circulate it to all SSC members for endorsement via email.</p> <p>Action by: Secretariat</p>
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4.0	For Discussion	
4.1	<p><u>Communication for Standards (Next Step)</u></p> <p>The Secretariat provided an update on the communication for the Standards Rollout.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat presented the timeline for the Standards rollout for the next 12 months as shown below.  <p>Standards - Design, Translation, Annexes Certification System - Finalisation, Design, etc Supplementary/Derivative Documents National Interpretations - Development Socialisation (forums, events, etc) Trainings Prisma - Development of 2024 standards</p> <p>Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov</p> <p><i>Ongoing (after Nov 25)</i> <i>Nis can be initiated for 24 months after standard is adopted</i></p> <p>Process timeline Target completion deadline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat is planning to update the RSPO website with communications on common aspects that members will inquire about, such as providing clarity of National Interpretations (NI) and their processes, as well as expected deadlines for the design and translation of the standards. This also includes the socialisations and training activities planned with the Assurance and Technical team. This is for the SSC’s discussion and the Secretariat welcomes any feedback from the SSC on any items that may have been overlooked or require further clarification. The NI process will follow the current RSPO Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). Three requests have been received so far: from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Colombia. The regional teams are planning roadshows in Africa and Latin America to encourage other countries to initiate their NIs. The NI process is straightforward; a multi-stakeholder group must be formed within the country, and an email expressing interest to initiate the NI should be sent to the Secretariat. The SSC will be informed when a specific NI is being initiated. RSPO provides some financial support for the NI, and there is a budget allocated for this. The Secretariat is recommending to the regional colleagues that while the Nis can be formed now, work should only start during March or April, when more of the Annexes of the standards and supplementary documents are ready. The target for completion of the design, translation, and Annexes is the end of March 2025. More details will be shared with the SSC in January 2025. The list of supplementary and derivative documents has also been compiled, and the working groups have begun discussing and dividing the work. This will be included in the monthly updates for the SSC to review the progress. 	

	<p>The Committee commented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the 2018 P&C, some of the NIs were completed very late. Since there is already a list of the countries that are considering NIs, the Secretariat can proactively alert them or revitalise their interest to start the NI process as soon as possible to ensure that it can be completed within the specified timeline. ● The Secretariat explained that NIs can be initiated within 24 months of the revised standards' adoption and should be concluded within 36 months. In addition to socializing with the regional teams, the Secretariat is also planning to provide cheat sheets. The Standards and Impacts team will be analysing the major differences between the 2018 P&C and the NIs to provide a starting point for the NIs, which will hopefully expedite the process. This will allow focus on the areas that have changed as opposed to reviewing the entire document again. The Secretariat is exploring ways to accelerate the process, and have advised the regional teams to begin reaching out to individual countries to form the NIs as soon as possible, with the goal of starting work around March/April 2025. ● The Committee commented that the 24-month period for initiating an NI after adoption seems quite long. This information should be made public and clearly communicated. It would be useful to do a comparison with other standards to see how RSPO fairs. The Secretariat suggested looking at FSC, although FSC has a different approach to NIs than RSPO. This comparison can be captured during the independent review and SOP review. ● The Committee pointed out that the delays in previous NIs were partly due to the process being too heavy. The Committee suggested providing extra support from the start to countries that experienced delays in previous reviews. The Secretariat explained that the regional team has already identified these countries, which are mainly in West Africa, and the delays were largely due to a lack of government support. However, the regional team has a plan in place and will be conducting a roadshow in West Africa in February or March for socialization. ● The Committee raised a question of whether a clear timeline or guidance for the entire process can be established. This would set expectations for all parties involved, ensuring that the process does not experience unnecessary delays. The Secretariat stated that the Standards team is working closely with the Assurance, Technical, and regional teams on the socialization process. The Standards team will collaborate with the various teams to carry out the socialization and integrate with the annual CB forums and member meetings. ● The Secretariat highlighted that some working groups such as the labour subgroup had made two requests, which asked for translations 	
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to be done in Portuguese language and would like to conduct field testing, particularly for new guidance, and that the field-testing period be extended to 2 months. The Secretariat is flagging this issue as it may be challenging to fit all these requirements and still meet the deadline for completing the document by November 2025.

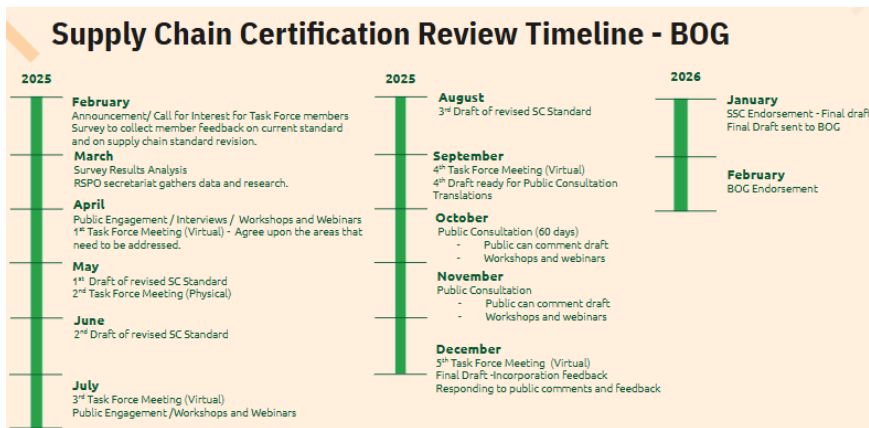
- The Committee suggested that it would be helpful to have a list of which documents are able to meet the timeline and which cannot, along with the reasons for the delays. The SSC will be able to monitor the progress and ensure the project stays within the allocated timeline and can be managed accordingly. Special cases could still be accommodated as needed.

4.2 **Revision of Supply Chain Certification Standard**

The Secretariat presented a brief update on the revision of the Supply Chain Certification (SCC) Standard.

- Per the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Sustainability Systems ver 1.0 (Clause 6.14), each of the standards covered by the ISEAL Code should be “reviewed at least every five years, drawing on relevant data and information”.
- The SCC Standard 2020 was endorsed by the RSPO BoG on 1 February 2020. A process for the SCC Standard revision should be started/announced by 1 February 2025 to comply with the ISEAL Code.
- The Secretariat has initiated some preparatory work internally on certain aspects, e.g. certification of waste/by-products, FFB traders, sustainable aviation fuel, as well as recommendations for strengthening the MB model.
- The Secretariat would like to highlight a point of discussion to the SSC whether the RSPO BoG’s endorsement is sufficient for the adoption of the revised SCC Standard, or would it be required to go through the General Assembly (GA).
- The Secretariat presented 2 different timelines below with the final endorsement at GA or BoG.





- If the revised SCC document is to be sent to the GA, the timeline will be from February to November 2025. On the other hand, if the revised SCC document is only submitted for BoG endorsement, the timeline will be from February 2025 to February 2026. The process will be similar but there will be more time to work on the draft if the endorsement stops at BoG.
- The Secretariat also highlighted that in the RSPO SOP for Standard Setting and Review, there is a requirement to have two physical task force meetings, but due to budget constraints, the current proposed plan only accounts for one physical meeting.

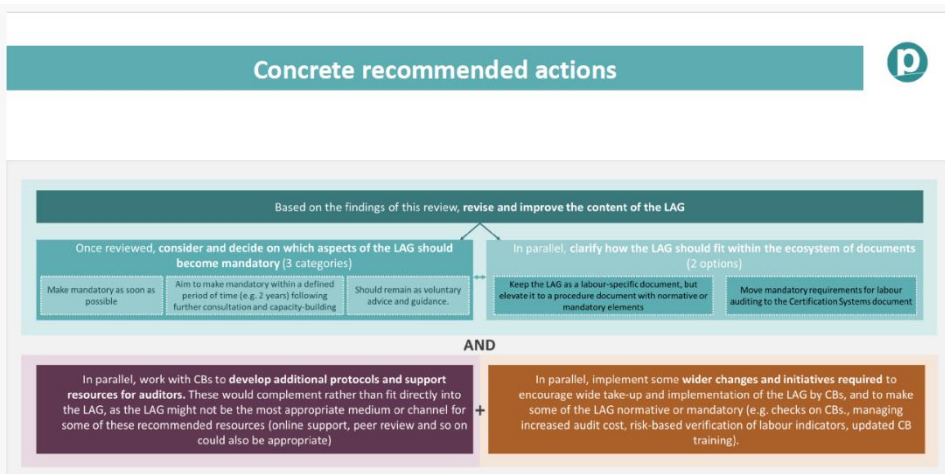
The Committed commented:

- The Committee expressed concern regarding the public consultation process, noting that during the P&C Standard Review, a lot of discussions that had already been agreed upon by the TF members had to be reopened due to comments received during the consultation. While relevant comments should be addressed, irrelevant ones should not be reopened. The Committee questioned how to manage public consultation more effectively. There was also hesitation about having only one physical meeting, as physical meetings tend to be more efficient.
- The Secretariat explained that having two physical meetings are possible, if they are split to one being held before June 2025 and the other after July 2025. The Secretariat will be able to request for an additional budget in the next financial year. The Secretariat also addressed the concern on public consultation that it is based on the ISEAL requirement where a 60-day consultation period is required. It is also necessary to publish the stakeholder comments received during consultations and detailed how these comments were addressed and responded to. ISEAL also mandates that suggestions from stakeholders are tracked continuously for consideration in future standards. The

	<p>Secretariat has just started this practice, it is not yet reflected in the SOP, but the Secretariat plans to include it in the SOP revision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Committee suggested to rearrange the process and proposed that to have the public consultation done in parallel. If the public has feedback on both the old and upcoming new drafts, why not ask for their comments upfront on the old standard and what should be incorporated into the new one, then run the public consultation for the revised version at a later stage? This way, the process wouldn't require revisiting the same issues repeatedly. The Secretariat acknowledged this and explained that this is why it is proposed for the process to start with a survey to gather feedback on the current standard. The feedback received would then be incorporated into the revisions before proceeding with public consultation on the revised versions. ● The Committee raised a concern on the new elements that have been added to the SCC standard, such as the certification of waste/by-products and sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). SAF is more about production and feedstock than the supply chain. FFB traders are a more understandable addition, as it represents an expansion of the SSC standard. The Secretariat explained that these topics were raised by members and identified through research as areas to consider. Feedback from the Assurance team, who conducted some research, indicated that these would not be mandatory requirements in the SCC standard but would be modular or voluntary aspects. The Secretariat stated that it would be instructive to discuss by the SCC revision task force. The Committee commented that these new elements might distract the TF from its main work, suggesting that these issues should be addressed by the Market Development Standing Committee (MDSC) instead. The MDSC should determine whether there is a need for these elements and how they should be integrated into the RSPO system. The Secretariat agreed and will bring these issues to the MDSC and incorporate their considerations into the initial communication about the SCC Standard. ● The Committee pointed out that the certification of waste/by-products is not just a minor addition to the SCC standard; it requires more context to explain why it has been introduced, possibly through a survey. The Secretariat suggested that these aspects can be deemphasized in the communication but will include them in the survey to gather feedback from all members. The results of the survey would then guide the discussion. Aspects such as SAF could be misunderstood by members, who might think it refers to a production standard for SAF, rather than a supply chain element. 	<p>Present to the MDSC for feedback</p> <p>Action by: Secretariat</p>
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<p>4.3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Committee also highlighted that the way the facilitator conducts the discussions is important, as previous facilitation processes did not always yield the expected results. ● The Secretariat raised a question on the timeline and if the BoG endorsement is sufficient for the SCC Standard or if it requires GA. The Committee commented that all previous versions of the SCC Standard were adopted by the BoG and did not go to the GA. The process still adhered to the ISEAL Code, which does not mandate GA approval, only that the standard be finalized through a multi-stakeholder process. However, it was suggested that the process for revising the SCC Standard should be clarified in the revision of the SOP. It should continue to follow the BoG approval process as it would allow more time for document review, consultation, and the task force to develop a more thorough and improved document. ● The Secretariat will prepare a decision paper on the process and timeline of the SCC standard to be presented to the SSC in January 2025. <p><u>Revision of Secretariat SOP for Standard Setting and Review</u></p> <p>The Secretariat presented the revision of SOP for the Standard Setting and Review document for discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Secretariat is planning to do a revision of the SOP for Standard Setting and Review document. ● There are several issues to consider in this revision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Should the document include the development process for both normative and informative documents? Or separate? ○ Revise process for National Interpretation and Local Interpretation? ○ Include the transition period after the endorsement of standards (e.g., timeline for revision/development of normative documents) ● The Secretariat recommended taking into consideration the results from the independent review of the standards revision process before revising the SOP. <p>The Committee commented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As the independent review will be carried out, it is important to ensure that it is done thoroughly so that any changes to the system can be made in a considered manner, avoiding the need to make multiple changes to the system. ● The revision of the SOP for Standard Setting and Review will be postponed until the independent review is completed, and the 	<p>Prepare a decision paper and present to SSC in the January meeting</p> <p>Action by: Secretariat</p>
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	<p>recommendations from that review will be used to guide the revision of the SOP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the meantime, the current SOP will remain in place until the revision is completed. 	
<p>5.0</p>	<p>For Update</p>	
<p>5.1</p>	<p><u>Independent Review of the Implementation of RSPO Labour Auditing Guidance</u></p> <p><u>Guidance</u></p> <p>Proforest presented the final report on the independent review of the implementation of RSPO Labour Auditing Guidance (LAG).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The report was commissioned a year ago, with the goal of not only reviewing LAG but also analysing how labour auditing can be broadly enhanced. The detailed research findings, including the literature review and interviews, are all included in the report. The Assurance Standing Committee (ASC) has endorsed the report and is set to implement the recommendations provided. ● The recommendations were divided into two parts: the first focuses on broader measures to improve the RSPO labour audit process, which are essential for making labour auditing a success in RSPO. The second part includes concrete recommendations regarding the specific elements outlined in the guidance document. ● The broader measures are essential improvements to make a shift in labour auditing in RSPO. These are shown below: <div> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The concrete recommendations are shown in the flowchart below: 	



- Based on the findings of the review, the first step is to thoroughly review the report and revise the content of the LAG as a whole. This involves going through each item and implementing changes based on the recommendations. Once this is completed, the revision process will move on to its main focus, which has been divided into two main activities that can occur in parallel.
- Firstly, is to consider, decide and agree on which aspects of the LAG should become mandatory. The aspects have been divided into three categories:
 - Identify what should or can be made mandatory as soon as possible.
 - Identify elements that should aim to make mandatory within a defined period of time but would require further consultation or more time for working groups to address. This may involve CBs more directly in the revision process or engaging other stakeholders.
 - Determine which elements should remain as voluntary advice and guidance.
- In parallel to deciding which aspects of the LAG should be made mandatory, it is important to clarify how the LAG fits within the broader ecosystem of RSPO documents. One of the feedback from the interviews indicated that the LAG, as it currently stands, is somewhat ambiguous—it exists between a guidance document and, at times, aligns more with the system documents, which creates confusion. Two options were identified for clarification:
 - Option 1: Keep the LAG as a labour-specific document, clarifying its position within the RSPO document ecosystem. This option would recognize that some aspects of the LAG are moving towards mandatory status, and elevate it to a

	<p>procedural document with normative or mandatory elements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Option 2: Move the mandatory requirements for labour auditing into the Certification Systems document. This will provide clarification on what is mandatory and what remains as guidance. o After the first round of actions, the next step is to work with the CBs to develop additional protocols and support resources for auditors. This will address various elements that feed into the revision and may also introduce new aspects or a rethinking of the auditing process. These resources will support the users of the LAG, including CBs, growers, and other stakeholders. o Additionally, there is a need to implement wider changes and initiatives that encourage wide take-up and implementation of the LAG by CBs, and to make some of the LAG normative or mandatory. Currently, only one CB has used the LAG, so efforts should focus on how to encourage and support other users in implementing the recommendations. <p>The Committee commented that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The focus should be on addressing the lack of knowledge about labour auditing. There needs to be a stronger push for mandatory training to build up the necessary knowledge and expertise in this area. ● While having the LAG is important, one of the fundamental issues to address is the shift from auditors being tied to CBs to now being independent. The growth of independent auditors has created challenges for the industry, as there is no alliance or alignment between the auditors and the CBs. Auditors now tend to work on a short-term basis, often with limited availability, which makes it difficult to ensure consistent training and quality. With a shortage of auditors and CBs, requesting training can feel like an unrealistic wish. It will be challenging to make meaningful improvements if the issue is not addressed. ● One of the points of discussion at the ASC was to focus on risk-based auditing. It's important to ensure that audits are better prepared to have a more focused auditing process rather than a generic approach. A thorough desktop audit is important, as it sets the foundation for the on-site audit, making the entire process more efficient and effective. ● The Committee raised a question about the next steps, including the timeline for implementing the guidelines and who will be responsible for the implementation. The Secretariat clarified that they would start the implementation process with a subgroup that is being created by the ASC. The closest timeline will be around February 2025 as it involves incorporating some elements of the guidelines into the Certification 	
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	<p>Systems. The rest of the elements will be integrated into the workstream as part of the assurance work plan. A decision regarding the future of the LAG will be made during discussions within the smaller working group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat will continue working with ASC to determine how the recommendations will be implemented. 	
6.0	Any Other Business	
6.1	<p><u>SNGO and Smallholder seat in the SSC</u></p> <p>The Social NGO seats in SSC have been filled. The substantive members are Andrew Aeria from PEMANGKIN and Alien Huizing from CNV Internationaal. Brian Lariche from Humana will become an alternate member together with Suzan Cornelissen from CNV Internationaal.</p> <p>The Smallholder seat remains vacant. The Co-chairs provided an update that the matter is still pending and they will reach out to the Smallholder representative in the BoG on this matter.</p>	

MEETING ENDED AT 1638 MYT