

## MINUTES OF MEETING

### 52<sup>nd</sup> SSC Meeting

**Time:** 1500 - 1700 (MYT)

**Date:** Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2025

**Venue:** Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/97114856560> Meeting ID: 971 1485 6560 Passcode: 52@SSC

### ATTENDEES

Name	Initial	Organisation	
1. Lim Sian Choo (Co-Chair)	LSC	Bumitama Group	Grower (INA) - Substantive
2. Olivier Tichit (Co-Chair)	OT	Musim Mas	P & T – Substantive
3. Jenny Walther-Thoss	JWT	WWF Singapore	ENGO – Substantive
4. Andrew Aeria	AA	PEMANGKIN	SNGO – Substantive
5. Lee Kian Wei	LKW	United Plantations	Grower (MY) – Alternate
1. Yen Hun Sung	HS	RSPO Secretariat	
2. Leena Ghosh	LG	RSPO Secretariat	
3. Jasmine Ho Abdullah	JH	RSPO Secretariat	
4. Akmal Razali	AR	RSPO Secretariat	
5. Durgha Periasamy	DP	RSPO Secretariat	
6. Maria Papadopoulou	MP	RSPO Secretariat	
7. Liyana Zulkipli	LZ	RSPO Secretariat	
8. Suguna A/P Murugan	SM	RSPO Secretariat	
9. Amrita Gunasekaran	AG	RSPO Secretariat	
<i>Absence with apology:</i>			
1. Anne Rosenbarger	AR	WRI	ENGO – Substantive
2. Suzan Cornelissen	SC	CNV	SNGO – Substantive
3. William Siow	WS	MPOA/IOI	Grower (MY) – Substantive
4. Guillaume Lacaze	GL	L'Oreal	Consumer Goods Manufacturer – Substantive
5. Sander Van den Ende	SvE	SIPEF	Grower (RoW) – Substantive
6. Brian Lariche	BL	Humana	SNGO – Alternate
7. Librian Angraeni	LA	Musim Mas	P & T – Alternate

### AGENDA

Time	Item	Agenda	PIC
1500 - 1505	1.0	<b>Opening</b>	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	
1505 - 1515	2.0	<b>Meeting Dashboard</b>	Co-Chairs
	2.1	Confirmation of the 51 <sup>st</sup> MoM on 27 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	
	2.2	Action Tracker	
	2.2.1	List of Supplementary/Derivative Documents of P&C and ISH Standard 2024	
	2.3	Progress Update WG/TF/SG under SSC	
	2.4	Progress Update of National Interpretation	

1515 - 1545	3.0	<b>Action Points from 51<sup>st</sup> SSC Meeting</b>	
	3.1	ToR for Guidance on Repayment of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs	
	3.2	Interim interpretation on tracing beyond refinery in the Supply Chain Certification Standard	
1545 – 1600	4.0	<b>For Endorsement</b>	
	4.1	BHCVWG revised ToR	AR
1600 - 1630	5.0	<b>For Update</b>	
	5.1	Certification System for P&C and ISH Standard 2024	JH
	5.2	Independent Review of the RSPO Standards Review and Revision Process	HS/LG
	5.3	Supply Chain Certification Standard Review	MP
1630 – 1645	6.0	<b>For Discussion</b>	
	6.1	Procedural Update for 2024 RSPO Standards	HS
1645 – 1655	7.0	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
	7.1	Next SSC Meeting	
	7.2	FY26 Budget	
1655		<b>END</b>	

**DISCUSSION:**

No.	Description	Action Points (PIC)
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Opening</b>	
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.	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Meeting Dashboard</b>	
2.1	<b><u>Confirmation of the 51<sup>st</sup> MoM on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025</u></b> The minutes of the meeting were adopted.	
2.2	<b><u>Action Trackers</u></b> The action tracker of the previous meeting was presented. No other comments were received.	
2.2.1	<b><u>List of Supplementary/Derivation Documents of P&amp;C and ISH Standard 2024</u></b> The Secretariat presented the list of supplementary/derivation documents of P&C and ISH Standard 2024. No comments were received.	

2.3	<p><b><u>Progress Update WG/TF/SG under SSC</u></b></p> <p>The progress update for the WG/TF/SG Committee was presented.</p> <p>The Committee raised a question on the progress for Greenhouse Gas Task Force (GHGTF) about the upcoming steps for PalmGHG Calculator, the timeline for when the requirements will become mandatory for members, and how the implementation will be structured.</p> <p>The Secretariat explained that the calculator specifications are currently available in Excel format. It is now in the module development process within prisma, with completion expected by July 2025. The Secretariat believe it would be beneficial to have a trial period to allow members time to familiarize themselves with the new version, but the immediate focus is on the development. At the moment, the GHGTF is finalizing discussions around the main components of the calculator and the drafting of the accompanying guidance.</p> <p>The Committee emphasised that the timeline for implementing the new version needs to be carefully considered to ensure that members are not caught off guard or feel pressured into a new version without proper training. The rollout and operation of version 4 was a challenging experience for many, and since version 5 will be different in methodology and format, a well-managed transition will be especially important.</p>	
2.4	<p><b><u>Progress Update of National Interpretations of the 2024 P&amp;C and ISH Standard</u></b></p> <p>The progress update for National Interpretations (NI) of the 2024 P&amp;C and ISH Standard was presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most recent expression of interest came from Ghana, and the Secretariat is currently engaging with the interested parties to help identify additional members needed to form a complete Task Force (TF). Similarly, Guatemala has also expressed interest but has yet to finalize the search for all Task Force members.</li> <li>• For the remaining NITFs, several of them have begun the search for members, but the process has proven challenging particularly in certain regions. The Secretariat is actively supporting them in reaching out to a broader network to try and complete their TF composition. If they are unable to secure full representation, they would need to seek approval from the SSC. However, no such requests have been made yet.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee highlighted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a strong request from the MYNI TF that all NITF meetings, not just MYNI, should have representation from the Secretariat. As</li> </ul>	

	<p>much as possible, the Secretariat should ensure that someone is present during the NITF meetings, ideally someone with a thorough understanding of the P&amp;C.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Secretariat took note of this and mentioned that it was clearly communicated to the MYNI that participation is subject to availability and advance notice. There were representatives from the Secretariat in the recent MYNI TF meetings but ensuring physical presence at all NI meetings may not be feasible due to logistical and financial constraints, given that there are currently nine NITFs. It also depends on the preferences and decisions of the NITF themselves. For instance, the India ISH NITF has engaged an independent facilitator and is operating independently, but the Secretariat may attend virtually or physically when necessary. The Secretariat remains committed to providing support to all NI processes, with the understanding that flexibility, such as dial-in participation may be necessary due to the reasons mentioned above. Ultimately the Secretariat is still responsible for reviewing the draft NI against the SOP requirements. With nine NI Task Forces currently active and five more anticipated by the end of May, support will need to be balanced with what's realistically achievable.</li> <li>• The Committee commented that this was a consensus reached by the MYNI TF that for efficiency purposes and to ensure a consistent understanding across all NI processes, the Secretariat staff should be present at all NI TF. There might be a risk of diverging interpretations of the P&amp;C and its indicators without the Secretariat's involvement. This can lead to additional workload for the Secretariat, which must then review and correct inconsistencies, delaying the process.</li> <li>• The Secretariat takes note of the concern and will check on the capacity to at least participate online if physical attendance is not possible.</li> </ul>	
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Action Points from 51st SSC Meeting</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	<p>The action points from the 51<sup>st</sup> SSC meeting were discussed in this meeting as there were several comments raised by the Committee members via email.</p> <p><b><u>ToR for Guidance on Repayment of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs</u></b></p> <p>The Secretariat presented the revised decision paper and Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Guidance on Repayment of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Secretariat have amended the decision paper based on the comments received via email by JWT.</li> <li>• The Secretariat have also amended the ToR based on the comments received during the 51<sup>st</sup> SSC meeting, specifically that the application does not apply retrospectively and the document is an informative guidance. The application in regional and national context has also been</li> </ul>	

3.2	<p>added, as well as the pilot testing will be conducted in 2 regions taking into account resources and finance limitations.</p> <p>The Committee commented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee suggested to include a sentence in the ToR that in the event of dissatisfaction after repayment, it'd automatically be treated as a grievance rather than revisiting the repayment. This would help ensure such issues are addressed through the proper channel without reopening broader discussions on retrospective payments.</li> <li>• It was highlighted that as this proposed addition has not yet been considered by the Labour Subgroup, it will need to be returned to them for review. If the subgroup agrees to the amendment, it will then be submitted to the Human Rights Working Group (HRWG) for further consideration and subsequently brought back to the SSC for final approval.</li> <li>• The Secretariat highlighted that the ToR has already been presented to the SSC four times, and without an approved ToR, the Labour Subgroup do not have a clear direction and framework to guide their work. Within the current P&amp;C framework, there is already an established grievance mechanism and a separate indicator on grievance. When a case is raised, the Unit of Certification (UoC) is responsible for responding to and addressing each grievance accordingly. To avoid further delays, the Secretariat suggested that this additional point be included as a note from the SSC members. This note can be communicated to the Labour Subgroup for their consideration during the development, without requiring formal changes to the current ToR. This would allow the process to move forward and enable the ToR to be approved for the subgroup to proceed with the work.</li> <li>• The Committee agreed with this approach.</li> </ul> <p><b>Decision</b></p> <p>The SSC has approved this decision paper with the recommendation that the following message is conveyed to the Labour Subgroup members that while developing the guidance, it is made clear that in the event of dissatisfaction after repayment, the worker will avail himself of available systems such as the UoC's Grievance system rather than the worker making the request to revisit the entire repayment process. The auditor should also be informed of this understanding to avoid misinterpretation. The Secretariat will seek approval from SSC members who are not present via email.</p> <p><b><u>Interim interpretation on tracing beyond refinery in the Supply Chain Certification Standard</u></b></p>	<p>1. Send an email to the Labour Subgroup and HRWG informing them of the additional note by SSC</p> <p>2. Seek approval from SSC members via email</p> <p><b>Action by:</b> <b>Secretariat</b></p>
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The Secretariat presented the revised decision paper on the interim interpretation on tracing beyond refinery in the Supply Chain Certification Standard (SCCS).

- The Secretariat has revised the decision paper based on the comments received during the 51<sup>st</sup> SSC meeting.
- Several comments were further received via email, mainly focusing on contextual questions related to the SCC Standard itself and these matters should be addressed through a consultation process. The Secretariat took note of the feedback and will forward the comments to the prisma and Certification teams for further review and action.
- The revised text is shown below:

#### 5.7.2

*a) Shipping Announcement: Shall be carried out by the mills when RSPO certified products are sold as RSPO certified to refineries, crushers, and traders not more than three months after dispatch with the dispatch date being the date recorded on the Bill of Lading or the dispatch documentation.*

*b) Confirm on Shipping Announcement: Shall be carried out by refineries, crushers, and traders within three months of the issue of the Shipping Announcement.*

*c) Announcement: Shall be carried out by refineries, crushers, and traders when RSPO certified products in the yield scheme (Figure 2 and Figure 3, Annex 1) is sold as RSPO certified. The announcement shall be carried out within three months of the physical delivery of the products. For post-refinery sales of RSPO certified products sold as RSPO certified by refineries, crushers, traders and other midstream/downstream supply chain actors, Announcements can be carried out on an optional basis.*

*d) Confirm on Announcement: Shall be carried out by refineries and traders within three months of receipt of the certified products. For post-refinery sales of RSPO certified products sold as RSPO certified by refineries, crushers, traders and other midstream/downstream supply chain actors, Confirm Announcements can be carried out on an optional basis.*

*e) Trace: Shall be carried out by the refineries and traders when RSPO certified products are sold as RSPO certified to actors in the supply chain beyond the refinery, unless an optional post-refinery Announcement has been carried out for the sale. The volume shall be traced within three months after physical delivery. Tracing triggers the generation of a trace document with a unique traceability number. For inputs and outputs at a refinery level, Tracing can be carried out on an optional basis. Tracing can be done in a consolidated way.*

The Committee commented:

- There is some confusion regarding the wording in clauses 5.7.2 (c) and (e) as they both use the term “shall”. There is also some uncertainty around the use of the term “Announcement” and “Trace”.
- The Secretariat explained that Announcements are used for the sale of products listed within the RSPO product list. This includes CSPO, refined palm oil, olein, stearin, double fractions, mid fractions, and PFAD. When a company sells any of these products to another certified actor, an Announcement must be made in the system. In contrast, Trace is used when handling products not included in the RSPO product list such as glycerin and isopropyl alcohol. These cannot be announced in the system because the products are not recognized in the product list. Therefore, a Trace record is created instead to demonstrate that such products are derived from certified sources. The Committee stated that

	<p>the current wording in the standard could be better expressed as the difference between Announcement and Trace is not clear.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee also raised another question, regarding the added sentence in (e) referring to <i>“For inputs and outputs at a refinery level, Tracing can be carried out on an optional basis”</i>. This may be intended to allow flexibility in managing stock within refineries. There are situations where a refinery encounters operational issues and needs to either liquidate or transfer stock to another refinery. Currently, under the new prisma system, such transfers are not permitted, which has created complications. While this kind of transfer could potentially be allowed under the Trace function, the wordings should be explicit, so that it doesn't create audit issues.</li> <li>• The Secretariat responded that the intention behind the clause was to allow tracing between refineries, such as for stock consolidation or stock issues, without those volumes being recorded as formal sales. In this context, Announcements represent actual sales, whereas Tracing would represent the passing of certified volume between refineries.</li> <li>• The Committee suggested that to clearly indicate that inputs and outputs can be traced out of the refinery, to prevent misinterpretation and ensure clarity during audits. There should also be guidance for this.</li> <li>• The Committee raised a concern on the limited role of Social NGOs in this process due to the lack of access to prisma and PalmTrace. Without access or visibility, it is extremely difficult for Social NGOs to understand the process and contribute to decision-making. The Committee also highlighted that non-members have access to PalmTrace but RSPO Members from the Social NGOs do not. This issue should be raised to the BoG level. The Social NGOs are open to endorsement if the growers are comfortable with the current arrangement.</li> <li>• The Committee highlighted that the Environmental NGOs also do not have access to prisma. These types of technical platforms are difficult to understand without proper exposure or guidance. The Committee recommended organising a demonstration of the system, showing how it works in real time rather than just presenting it on paper. This would help clarify why such traceability systems are important, how data flows, and what role each stakeholder plays within the platform. All the Standing Committees would greatly benefit from a practical walkthrough of the system.</li> <li>• The Secretariat recognised that the wording in the current SCCS is quite vague and needs to be revised during the upcoming SCCS review, together with all the complexities mentioned above. However, this could take some time and given the urgency of the matter, with over 350 members currently holding stock and preparing for announcements, and non-compliances being issued to refineries for</li> </ul>	
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	<p>performing the activity, there is a pressing need to resolve the issue. The core issue now is the lack of clear wording in the standard and there's a risk that auditors may issue non-compliances for practices that are operationally acceptable. The function is actually ready to be enabled but the Secretariat is unable to proceed without formal approval from the SSC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee raised a question that if announcements are for products, and a refinery is allowed to transfer CPO, it may be considered a sale as it might be a different legal entity. In that case, such a transfer would need to be allowed as an announcement, which makes it complicated. The Secretariat suggested clarifying the specific products in the decision paper. Under the current standard, announcements are made up to the refinery level; anything beyond that requires tracing. However, in this case, the proposal is that if both the refinery and the product are within the system, then announcements can be extended to the product manufacturer level on an optional basis. If the product is not within the system, then tracing would be required instead.</li> <li>• The Committee recommended instead that the text in 5.7.2 (c) should state that announcements should be carried out by refineries, crushers, and traders. This does not imply that announcements must stop at the refinery level, it can continue beyond, including to the trader level. There is concern around restricting something that was already done in the previous system, which is the ability of refineries to sell CPO. If it is removed, refineries may find themselves unable to move CPO, which could result in stock being stuck. For groups with multiple entities, this would mean that if one of their refineries encounters an issue, the raw material or input stock are stuck there or becomes decertified.</li> <li>• The Committee also raised a question regarding the language used in points (c) and (d), noting that it is contradictory. The text states that announcements "shall be carried out by refineries," which clearly indicates a mandatory requirement. However, later it refers to announcements being carried out "on an optional basis." It is inconsistent to describe the same action as both mandatory and optional. The language is unclear and confusing. It was suggested that the issue should be approached by first examining the root causes of the non-compliances currently being raised. From there, more precise and appropriate wording can be developed to address the identified gaps.</li> <li>• The Secretariat clarified that the use of the term "<i>shall</i>" applies specifically to refineries and traders, for whom the requirement is mandatory under the current standard. Beyond the refinery level, the system currently allows product manufacturers and retailers to make</li> </ul>	
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	<p>announcements, but it is not mandatory. Therefore, if the second sentence was changed to make announcements mandatory for post-refinery actors, such as product manufacturers and retailers, it would impose new obligations on a significantly larger group of stakeholders. This broader impact needs to be carefully considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee recommended scheduling a separate meeting to all members of SSC to discuss this matter further. Any decisions made during the separate meeting would still need to be brought back to the next SSC meeting for formal approval. This is necessary because attendance at the side meeting may vary, and there is no quorum requirement for such discussions.</li> <li>• The Secretariat took note of this and will arrange a separate meeting next week. The Secretariat will also inform the Prisma team to pause any ongoing work related to this matter. Relevant communications will also be updated.</li> </ul> <p><b>Decision</b></p> <p>The SSC has not approved this decision paper. The SSC has requested the Secretariat to schedule a separate meeting to discuss this further. The Secretariat will schedule a meeting next week and the decision made during the separate meeting will be brought back to the SSC meeting in May for a formal decision.</p>	<p>1. Schedule a separate meeting for further discussion</p> <p>2. Inform prisma team to pause any ongoing works and update communications</p> <p><b>Action by:</b> <b>Secretariat</b></p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>For Endorsement</b>	
4.1	<p><b><u>BHCVWG Revised ToR</u></b></p> <p>The Secretariat presented the decision paper for the RSPO Biodiversity &amp; High Conservation Values Working Group (BHCVWG) revised ToR.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BHCVWG was established in 2010 to provide technical guidance on biodiversity and High Conservation Values (HCV) in line with the RSPO P&amp;C. Over time, the group's scope has expanded to include key mechanisms such as the Remediation and Compensation Procedure (RaCP) and simplified approaches for independent smallholders.</li> <li>• With the adoption of the 2024 RSPO P&amp;C and ISH Standards, the Secretariat proposed revising the ToR to reflect updated responsibilities and alignment with new strategic priorities, as well as the coordination of supporting documents through dedicated TFs. Particularly on documents such as HCV-HCS management and monitoring, RaCP and some other relevant documents. This would help in decision-making and to avoid any potential delays in developing the relevant supporting documents.</li> <li>• The current BHCVWG structure comprises the Compensation Task Force (CTF2) under it. The CTF2 is responsible for developing RaCP version 2. There have also been ongoing discussions regarding other supporting</li> </ul>	

	<p>documents that may necessitate the formation of further TFs under the BHCVWG.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In line with this direction, there is a proposal to streamline the decision-making process by consolidating it at a single level, specifically at the BHCVWG level. Other proposed changes include the addition of an independent smallholder seat to the group's composition. Previously, smallholder representation was only included at the CTF2 level and was represented through a technical support organization. However, given the significance of decision-making on matters such as the RaCP, it is essential that smallholders have direct representation within the BHCVWG itself.</li> <li>• The specific number of representatives for each sector was also explicitly mentioned. For the grower category, the composition will include two representatives from Malaysia, two from Indonesia, two from the Rest of the World, and one independent smallholder.</li> <li>• Other changes include updates on the quorum, the decision-making approach, as well as some other strategic alignment such as technical experts that will be invited to join when needed.</li> <li>• The Secretariat is seeking the SSC's endorsement of the revised ToR for the BHCVWG.</li> </ul> <p><b>Decision</b> The SSC has approved this decision paper. The Secretariat will seek approval from SSC members who are not present via email.</p>	<p>Seek approval from SSC members via email <b>Action by:</b> <b>Secretariat</b></p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>For Update</b>	
5.1	<p><b><u>Certification System for P&amp;C and ISH Standard 2024</u></b> The Secretariat provided an update on the revision process of the Certification Systems document for the 2024 P&amp;C and ISH Standard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Certification System document has been undergoing revision pursuant to the request of the Standards Revision Steering Group's to conduct the Certification Systems document revision concurrent with the standards to ensure consistency and a smooth transition.</li> <li>• The document has since gone through a wide consultation process, and received feedback from multiple stakeholders.</li> <li>• The Secretariat has incorporated the comments from the ASC into the final draft.</li> <li>• The final draft will be circulated to the SSC at least 2 weeks before the next scheduled SSC meeting in May, for purposes of endorsement.</li> </ul>	
5.2	<p><b><u>Independent Review of the RSPO Standards Review and Revision Process</u></b> The Secretariat provided an update on the independent review of the RSPO Standards Review and Revision Process.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Secretariat is currently reviewing the proposals received by the three consultants (Solbert Consulting, Singapore Agri-Food Innovation Lab (SAIL), Nanyang Technological University and Peterson Solutions) and should be able to land on the proposed choice soon. This will be presented in the next SSC Meeting.</li> </ul> <p>Committee raised questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent are the three consultants familiar with the RSPO Standards Review process?</li> <li>• The Secretariat explained that Solbert Consulting is an independent consultancy led by a consultant who previously worked with Fair Trade for five years, where she was involved in standards revision. Since becoming independent, she has continued her work in sustainability, and was involved in the ISEAL Combined Code and other sustainability standards systems. SAIL is affiliated with Nanyang Technological University, which focuses on food and sustainability systems. The team is familiar with RSPO and has worked with RSPO previously. The lead consultant has a strong background in standard-setting, particularly within the manufacturing sector. Peterson Solutions is more of a generalist firm with a broad understanding of sustainability systems. All three consultants have backgrounds in sustainability and standards—some with more direct, applied experience, and others with a more foundational focus. The Secretariat is currently reviewing the candidates and will make a selection based on merit and suitability for the RSPO Standards Review process.</li> <li>• The Committee emphasized that a key criterion for selecting the consultants should be their skills and experience necessary to foster and build consensus across a diverse group of stakeholders. This was identified as one of the major challenges during the previous standards review process, where consensus-building did not function as effectively as intended. The Secretariat mentioned that this has been explicitly outlined in the ToR, where extensive references have been made to the importance of stakeholder engagement throughout the standards review process both internally within RSPO and externally with broader stakeholders.</li> <li>• The Committee also commented that Peterson Solutions is a funded consultancy and has links to Control Union. This background presents both advantages and challenges, as mixing consultancy and certification can be complex. They possess strong knowledge of the RSPO Standard, but it depends on who will be directly responsible for conducting the review. The key determining factor should be the expertise, facilitation skills, and ability of the assigned team members rather than the organisation as a whole.</li> </ul>	
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<p>5.3</p>	<p><b><u>Supply Chain Certification Standard Review 2025</u></b></p> <p>The Secretariat provided an update on the Supply Chain Certification Standard (SCCS) Review 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In March, the Secretariat had posted a 'call for expression of interest' to invite members and stakeholders to express their interest in joining the Supply Chain Certification (SCC) Standard Review Task Force (TF) or to participate as an Observer. Several registrations were received and the deadline for submitting the 'expressions of interest' was on 13 April 2025.</li> <li>● The next step is to establish the TF and have a virtual kick-off meeting for the SCCS TF. The kick-off meeting will take place on 29 April 2025.</li> <li>● For the SCCS Review TF members, there were more registrations than the number of seats for Growers, Processors and Traders, Consumer Goods Manufacturers and Retailers but the Environmental NGOs and Social NGOs are still missing 2 seats and there's no registration from Banks and Investors. In some cases, there are multiple registrations from the same organisation. The Secretariat will discuss with the registered members to finalise the substantive and alternate members during the kick-off meeting.</li> <li>● The number of observer registrations also exceeds the number of available seats. As a result, only a limited number of observers will be able to participate in the physical meetings, and the observers will be required to select among themselves and take turns to attend the physical sessions.</li> <li>● The Secretariat would like to bring to the attention of the SSC that GL and AA from the SSC have requested to be part of the SCCS Review TF. According to the ToR of the SCCS Review TF, it states that <i>"to avoid conflict of interest and due to the escalated alternative decision-making mechanism as outlined in section 4.4 of the RSPO SOP for Standard Setting and Review 2020, SSC members (as individuals) shall not sit on the TF"</i>. Furthermore, the RSPO SOP for Standard Setting and Review 2020 also has the same requirement and it applies to all standard-development related TFs. For the purposes of the application of the RSPO SOP for Standard Setting and Review, RSPO Standards refer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ RSPO Principles and Criteria (P&amp;C)</li> <li>○ National Interpretations (NI's)</li> <li>○ RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard</li> <li>○ RSPO Medium Grower Standard</li> <li>○ RSPO Supply Chain Certification Standard</li> </ul> </li> <li>● GL has informed the Secretariat that he would like to resign from the SSC for the duration of the SCCS review to take part in the TF as he was not able to find another person to replace him. He may rejoin the SSC</li> </ul>	
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after the SCCS review. The Secretariat would like to seek the SSC's advice on a possible way forward.

The Committee commented:

- The existing rules are quite clear, but an exception could be made under specific circumstances where in the event an SSC member chooses to participate in a TF, they must recuse themselves from any related discussions during SSC proceedings to avoid any conflict of interest. However, if a member temporarily steps down from the SSC to join a TF and later returns to the SSC, complications may arise should the SSC need to revisit or clarify an issue linked to the TF's work. For a long-term solution, it was suggested that the governance documents be amended to reflect this process as a formal policy moving forward.
- The Committee highlighted that currently there are a few SSC members participating in existing TFs. If we allow SSC members to resign temporarily to join the TF and rejoin SSC later, the conflict-of-interest concern would remain unresolved.
- AA supports the existing rule prohibiting individuals from simultaneously sitting on both the SSC and TF. However, the situation is particularly challenging for Social NGOs, as their representation is very limited. The Committee recognised the situation faced by the Social NGOs and agreed that in specific cases, an exception could be justified but such allowances should not become common practice. Large organisations should be able to nominate different individuals to participate in either SSC or TF. AA requested to allow a few days to explore the possibility of identifying an alternative representative from the Social NGOs to participate in the TF.
- The Committee suggested that the rule be amended to include language that encourages organisations, where possible, to nominate separate individuals for SSC and TF participation in order to strengthen the integrity of the RSPO process.
- The Committee proposed to have a discussion on this matter in the next SSC meeting to specifically address the rule prohibiting individuals from participating simultaneously in both the SSC and TF. The Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare a presentation that outlines the relevant sections of the ToR to facilitate a clear and informed discussion and explore how this issue can be managed moving forward.
- Given the urgency of the matter as the kick-off meeting for the SCCS Review TF is scheduled for next week and the physical meeting taking place on 20–23 May, the Committee advised that both AA and GL would be required to formally resign from the SSC in order to participate in the TF. Upon receipt of their resignation letters, the Secretariat should issue a formal response acknowledging the

	resignation, while also mentioning that the SSC is currently reviewing the broader issue and may consider inviting them to rejoin the SSC at a later stage. The unique circumstances faced by constituencies with very limited representation, such as Social NGOs, was recognised and the SSC is actively considering these specific cases. The Secretariat takes note of this and will prepare a presentation at the next SSC meeting for discussion.	Include as a discussion for the next SSC meeting <b>Action by: Secretariat</b>										
6.0	For Discussion											
6.1	<p><b><u>Procedural Update for 2024 RSPO Standards</u></b></p> <p>The Secretariat presented the procedural updates identified in the 2024 RSPO P&amp;C and ISH Standard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Based on concerns raised by members and stakeholders, and internal identification by the Secretariat, the following potential procedural updates for clarity have been identified in the adopted text of the 2024 P&amp;C and the ISH Standard (as of 17 April 2025).</li><li>There is a clause in the ISEAL Combined Code which states that procedural or urgent updates to standards are allowed for clarity especially if the current wording is causing confusion. This has been adopted in the 2024 P&amp;C. There are two planned timeframes for this to happen, within the first year after adoption before the effective date and a year after effective date.</li><li>This discussion is intended to inform the next steps for a possible procedural update of the 2024 standards to incorporate the identified changes into a Version 4.1 of the P&amp;C 2024 and a Version IS_V2-1 of the ISH Standard 2024, together with a change log that identifies that these changes have been made so that the reference point is always the most current version of the standard that incorporates the changes necessary for clarity for all parties. This may coincide with the publication of the completed designed version of the standards targeted for late-May.</li><li>A formal decision paper will be presented at the next SSC meeting.</li><li>The Secretariat have identified 6 issues so far, as shown below:</li></ul> <p><u>No. 1</u></p> <table><tr><th>No.</th><th>Standard</th><th>Section</th><th>Text requiring clarity (with explanation)</th><th>Proposed change in a procedural update</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>ISH Standard 2024</td><td>ICS, Indicator A1.2 E</td><td><p><i>The Group Manager shall have and maintain documented evidence of the smallholder group's RSPO <b>membership</b> that include:</i></p><p><i>A) Legal formation (if necessary as per country of register requirements);</i></p><p><i>B) Fair and transparent decision-making and governance; and</i></p><p><i>C) Additional documents per requirements for group formation and management, where applicable</i></p><p><b>Context: The requirements of this indicator concern how an ISH group is established, not how the group became an RSPO membership. An ISH group's RSPO membership must happen after the group has been legally formed (requirement A). However, requirements B and C may happen before or after membership. The current wording implies that all three requirements must be met at the point of RSPO membership.</b></p></td><td><p>Update the text for clarity to:</p><p><i>The Group Manager shall have and maintain documented evidence of the smallholder group's RSPO <b>establishment</b> that include: ...</i></p></td></tr></table>	No.	Standard	Section	Text requiring clarity (with explanation)	Proposed change in a procedural update	1	ISH Standard 2024	ICS, Indicator A1.2 E	<p><i>The Group Manager shall have and maintain documented evidence of the smallholder group's RSPO <b>membership</b> that include:</i></p> <p><i>A) Legal formation (if necessary as per country of register requirements);</i></p> <p><i>B) Fair and transparent decision-making and governance; and</i></p> <p><i>C) Additional documents per requirements for group formation and management, where applicable</i></p> <p><b>Context: The requirements of this indicator concern how an ISH group is established, not how the group became an RSPO membership. An ISH group's RSPO membership must happen after the group has been legally formed (requirement A). However, requirements B and C may happen before or after membership. The current wording implies that all three requirements must be met at the point of RSPO membership.</b></p>	<p>Update the text for clarity to:</p> <p><i>The Group Manager shall have and maintain documented evidence of the smallholder group's RSPO <b>establishment</b> that include: ...</i></p>	
No.	Standard	Section	Text requiring clarity (with explanation)	Proposed change in a procedural update								
1	ISH Standard 2024	ICS, Indicator A1.2 E	<p><i>The Group Manager shall have and maintain documented evidence of the smallholder group's RSPO <b>membership</b> that include:</i></p> <p><i>A) Legal formation (if necessary as per country of register requirements);</i></p> <p><i>B) Fair and transparent decision-making and governance; and</i></p> <p><i>C) Additional documents per requirements for group formation and management, where applicable</i></p> <p><b>Context: The requirements of this indicator concern how an ISH group is established, not how the group became an RSPO membership. An ISH group's RSPO membership must happen after the group has been legally formed (requirement A). However, requirements B and C may happen before or after membership. The current wording implies that all three requirements must be met at the point of RSPO membership.</b></p>	<p>Update the text for clarity to:</p> <p><i>The Group Manager shall have and maintain documented evidence of the smallholder group's RSPO <b>establishment</b> that include: ...</i></p>								

- The Committee highlighted the need to clearly define the term "establishment", to avoid confusion in interpretation. The Secretariat agreed with this and mentioned that the definition can be clarified in the guidance. The Secretariat will bring this matter back to the Smallholder Unit for further consideration and refinement.

Inform the Smallholder Unit to clearly define "establishment"  
**Action by:**  
**Secretariat**

#### No. 2

No.	Standard	Section	Text requiring clarity (with explanation)	Proposed change in a procedural update			
2	P&C 2024	Annex 6  Indicator 6.8.3 (C)	<p>In the list of supplementary and derivative documents of the 2024 P&amp;C, the RSPO document on Repayment of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs is incorrectly labelled as normative.</p> <p>The title of the document is also misleading, as a Procedure should be normative, while an informative document should be a Guidance</p> <table><tr><td>RSPO Procedure for the Repayment of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs - <b>in development</b></td><td>6.8 / 6.8.3 (C)</td><td>Normative</td></tr></table>	RSPO Procedure for the Repayment of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs - <b>in development</b>	6.8 / 6.8.3 (C)	Normative	<p>Update the title and applicability for clarity to:</p> <p><i>RSPO <b>Guidance</b> for the Repayment of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs</i></p> <p>Applicability: <b>Informative</b></p>
RSPO Procedure for the Repayment of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs - <b>in development</b>	6.8 / 6.8.3 (C)	Normative					

#### No. 3

No.	Standard	Section	Text requiring clarity (with explanation)		Proposed change in a procedural update		
3	P&C 2024	Criteria 6.8	<p>In the adopted text of the 2024 P&amp;C, there is a guidance note in Criteria 6.8 directing National Interpretations to provide additional information on national regulations.</p> <p>The note is written using normative language with the strictest verb form 'shall'. However, a Criterion is not subject to audit. The position of the note in the Criterion could cause interpretation issues if an NI does not provide the required information or in countries where there are no NIs.</p>	<table><tr><td>6.8</td><td><p>Forced Labour and Trafficking in persons is prohibited. Prevention and remediation procedures are in place.</p><p><i>*National Interpretations shall include information on national regulations governing recruitment fees and related costs, where applicable.</i></p></td></tr></table>	6.8	<p>Forced Labour and Trafficking in persons is prohibited. Prevention and remediation procedures are in place.</p> <p><i>*National Interpretations shall include information on national regulations governing recruitment fees and related costs, where applicable.</i></p>	<p>Move the guidance note to Annex 5 (Guidance) to reflect its applicability</p> <p>To update the text to a less 'strict' verb form:</p> <p><i>*National Interpretations <u>should</u> include information on national regulations governing recruitment fees and related costs, where applicable.</i></p>
6.8	<p>Forced Labour and Trafficking in persons is prohibited. Prevention and remediation procedures are in place.</p> <p><i>*National Interpretations shall include information on national regulations governing recruitment fees and related costs, where applicable.</i></p>						

#### No. 4

No.	Standard	Section	Text requiring clarity (with explanation)	Proposed change in a procedural update		
4	P&C 2024	Terms and Definitions	<table><tr><td>Medium Grower</td><td>Medium Growers are beneficial owners, land owners, or businesses with more than 50 hectares (ha) and up to 500 ha (accumulative) of cultivated and harvested oil palms.  Please also refer to other related definitions: 'grower', 'smallholder'</td></tr></table> <p>The definition of Medium Grower (MG) in the adopted text does not reflect the <a href="#">updated definition endorsed by the RSPO BoG in September 2021</a> per the recommendations of the Medium Grower Task Force.</p> <div><p>1. The interim definition of Medium Growers:</p><p>Medium Growers are land owners or small businesses with more than 50 ha and up to 500 ha (accumulative), who cultivate and harvest oil palms using hired labour rather than family labour. They may have diverse sources of income including from multiple crops, may not reside near their oil palm plantings and may employ administrative staff. (National Interpretation is encouraged).</p></div> <p>MG may operate mills or only produce FFB (outgrowers). Different certification pathways apply. MG without mills can seek P&amp;C certification of their FFB through Group Certification. MG with mills fall under P&amp;C certification.</p>	Medium Grower	Medium Growers are beneficial owners, land owners, or businesses with more than 50 hectares (ha) and up to 500 ha (accumulative) of cultivated and harvested oil palms.  Please also refer to other related definitions: 'grower', 'smallholder'	<p>Update the definition of Medium Grower (with additional clarity) to:</p> <p><i>Medium Growers are land owners or small businesses with more than 50 ha and up to 500 ha (accumulative), who cultivate and harvest oil palms using hired labour rather than family labour. They may have diverse sources of income including from multiple crops, may not reside near their oil palm plantings and may employ administrative staff. <u>Medium growers may or may not operate mills.</u> (National Interpretation is encouraged).</i></p>
Medium Grower	Medium Growers are beneficial owners, land owners, or businesses with more than 50 hectares (ha) and up to 500 ha (accumulative) of cultivated and harvested oil palms.  Please also refer to other related definitions: 'grower', 'smallholder'					

- The Committee commented to be careful on how the definition is applied, as a medium grower may have 50 ha land located a few hundred kilometres away from their mill. As the definition

currently stands, a medium grower is classified based on an accumulative land of up to 500 ha, which may be distributed across multiple locations. Some growers may have 100 ha in one province and another 100 ha in a different province, with varying operational setups. In some locations, they may rely on third-party suppliers, while in others, they may own a mill.

- Basically, the land owners are classified as either a smallholder or a grower. In the case of medium growers, the distinction depends on whether or not they operate a mill. If a medium grower has a mill, then the P&C applies. However, if a medium grower does not have a mill, they fall under the smallholder category, as they would typically participate in the Group Certification scheme.
- The Secretariat took note of this, and stated that the issue of medium growers' participation and inclusion is currently being addressed by the newly established Grower Incentive Task Force. The current definition of medium growers still needs to be updated as the version presently in use was not the version officially endorsed by the BoG.

#### No. 5

No.	Standard	Section	Text requiring clarity (with explanation)	Proposed change in a procedural update						
5	P&C 2024  ISH Standard 2024	Terms and Definitions  Criteria 7.7	<p>The definition of High Carbon Stock in the adopted text has attracted criticism publicly from non-member NGOs due to the lack of mention of the HCSA approach.</p> <table><tr><td>High Carbon Stock</td><td>High Carbon Stock forests are defined as forests with above and below ground carbon stores, where the sequestered carbon (losses as a result of land use change are greater than the potential gains in carbon stock within the next development area (including set aside and non-planting areas) over the period of one planting cycle.</td></tr></table> <p>The 2018 P&amp;C definition of HCS was:</p> <table><tr><th>Term</th><th>Definition</th></tr><tr><td>High Carbon Stock forest</td><td>Forests that have been identified using the High Carbon Stock Approach (HCSA) Toolkit</td></tr></table> <p>This issue has been raised by HCVN at the BHCVWG, which is now proposing to revisit the definition of HCS (and other related definitions) to ensure consistency and alignment with the intention of the standards.</p>	High Carbon Stock	High Carbon Stock forests are defined as forests with above and below ground carbon stores, where the sequestered carbon (losses as a result of land use change are greater than the potential gains in carbon stock within the next development area (including set aside and non-planting areas) over the period of one planting cycle.	Term	Definition	High Carbon Stock forest	Forests that have been identified using the High Carbon Stock Approach (HCSA) Toolkit	<p>Pending proposed new text of definition for HCS from the <a href="#">BHCVWG</a> (expected June 2025)</p>
High Carbon Stock	High Carbon Stock forests are defined as forests with above and below ground carbon stores, where the sequestered carbon (losses as a result of land use change are greater than the potential gains in carbon stock within the next development area (including set aside and non-planting areas) over the period of one planting cycle.									
Term	Definition									
High Carbon Stock forest	Forests that have been identified using the High Carbon Stock Approach (HCSA) Toolkit									

- The Committee raised a question whether this would require a complete revision of the definition and how extensive the issue is across the system.
- The Secretariat clarified that Indicator 7.7.1 is quite clear as it refers to HCS forest as forests identified using the HCV-HCSA Integrated Assessment Manual (2017/2022). However, the current definition used within the RSPO documents is not fully aligned with the definition outlined in the normative reference. This misalignment has resulted in public criticism, with concerns raised that RSPO is not adhering to the standards it has committed to. As such, it has been proposed that the

	<p>Secretariat review and revise the existing definition to ensure it is consistent with the references. This will be a work in progress as it is not solely a matter of procedural clarification. Depending on how the situation evolves and the implications of the changes, the issue may need to be escalated to a higher decision-making level for further consideration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The Secretariat also explained that when this matter is discussed at the BHCVWG, the inputs received from HCVN will be provided for proper context and background for discussion. Once the BHCVWG has reviewed and deliberated on the issue, the Secretariat will update the SSC on the outcomes of the discussion.</li></ul> <p><u>No. 6</u></p> <table><tr><th>No.</th><th>Standard</th><th>Section</th><th>Text requiring clarity (with explanation)</th><th>Proposed change in a procedural update</th></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>P&amp;C 2024  ISH Standard 2024</td><td>Annex 5 (P&amp;C)  Annex 3 (ISH)</td><td>The title of Annex 5 and Annex 3 in the adopted text is Compliance Requirements and Informative Guidance, reflecting the previous understanding of the Annex's applicability. This applicability has been superseded by the decision to make Annex 5/3 informative.  <u>Annex 5 - Compliance Requirements and Informative Guidance</u></td><td>Update the title of Annex 5/3 for clarity to reflect the correct level of applicability:  <i>Annex 5/3 - <del>Guidance</del> Compliance Requirements and Informative Guidance</i></td></tr></table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Another procedural update was identified from the MYNI which is similar to the applicability of normative or informative documents. There's a reference in Indicator 7.3.4 on soil management practices where it was labelled as a guidance but it is a normative reference. The MYNI proposed to amend it to a guidance.</li><li>● The Secretariat will discuss all the procedural updates through a decision paper at the next SSC meeting.</li></ul>	No.	Standard	Section	Text requiring clarity (with explanation)	Proposed change in a procedural update	6	P&C 2024  ISH Standard 2024	Annex 5 (P&C)  Annex 3 (ISH)	The title of Annex 5 and Annex 3 in the adopted text is Compliance Requirements and Informative Guidance, reflecting the previous understanding of the Annex's applicability. This applicability has been superseded by the decision to make Annex 5/3 informative.  <u>Annex 5 - Compliance Requirements and Informative Guidance</u>	Update the title of Annex 5/3 for clarity to reflect the correct level of applicability:  <i>Annex 5/3 - <del>Guidance</del> Compliance Requirements and Informative Guidance</i>	
No.	Standard	Section	Text requiring clarity (with explanation)	Proposed change in a procedural update								
6	P&C 2024  ISH Standard 2024	Annex 5 (P&C)  Annex 3 (ISH)	The title of Annex 5 and Annex 3 in the adopted text is Compliance Requirements and Informative Guidance, reflecting the previous understanding of the Annex's applicability. This applicability has been superseded by the decision to make Annex 5/3 informative.  <u>Annex 5 - Compliance Requirements and Informative Guidance</u>	Update the title of Annex 5/3 for clarity to reflect the correct level of applicability:  <i>Annex 5/3 - <del>Guidance</del> Compliance Requirements and Informative Guidance</i>								
7.0	Any Other Business											
7.1	<p><b><u>Next SSC Meeting</u></b></p> <p>The next SSC meeting originally scheduled on 22 May 2025 clashes with SPOD as well as the SCCS Review Task Force Meeting. The Secretariat proposed to postpone the meeting to 27 May (Tuesday) or 5 June (Thursday).</p> <p>The Secretariat will send out a doodle poll to all SSC members to schedule a new date for the next meeting.</p>	<p>Send a doodle poll for the next SSC meeting</p> <p><b>Action by:</b> <b>Secretariat</b></p>										
7.2	<p><b><u>FY26 Budget</u></b></p> <p>The Secretariat provided a brief update on the FY26 budget, which will cover the period from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026.</p>											

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The budget development process included the SSC workplan, including all associated components from working groups and task forces, as well as prioritising necessary activities such as the rollout of the standards, the development of supplementary and derivative documents, the funding of NIs and other standards related activities.</li> <li>• The Secretariat stated that the organisation will be operating under a constrained budget in FY26. While costs are relatively fixed, there remains significant uncertainty on the revenue side due to ongoing global developments, including trade and tariff-related challenges. Although budget provisions have been made for all essential activities, there is limited flexibility to accommodate additional items. Should further funding be required beyond the approved budget, it will be necessary to submit a requisition to the Finance Committee.</li> <li>• The Committee inquired whether they would be given access to review the FY26 budget. The Secretariat responded that the budget is under the purview of the Finance Committee and the Board of Governors for review and approval. The Secretariat can provide quarterly updates on the budget and expenditure.</li> </ul>	
7.3	<p><b><u>Audit Checklist Consultations</u></b></p> <p>The Committee stated that there have been requests from the growers and Social NGOs for greater consultation and participation, specifically highlighting the consultation of the audit checklist. The Committee emphasised the importance of involving all stakeholders in consultations to align the understanding of the interpretations of indicators, guidance, and definitions. This would prevent growers and auditors from having different interpretations of certain indicators during audit. All stakeholders should participate in any consultations to ensure clarity and consistency.</p>	

**MEETING ENDED AT 1655 MYT**