

Particulars

About Your Organisation

1.1 Member Name

The Proforest Initiative

1.2 Membership Number

8-0061-07-000-00

1.3 Membership Sector

Organisations

1.4 Membership Category

Affiliate

1.5 Country

United Kingdom

2.0 Does your company or organisation produce, process, consume or sell any palm oil or any products containing derivatives of palm oil?

No

2.2 Please select all the sectors that best describe the business activities of your company or organisation, including your primary RSPO membership sector. You may select multiple sectors and will be required to complete the ACOP form for the relevant sectors

- ☐ I am a bank or financial institution that finances or supports companies or organisations that produce or manufacture palm oil, palm kernel oil or related products
- ☐ I am a conservation and environmental NGO supporting the sustainable development of the palm oil industry
- ☐ I am a social and human development NGO supporting the sustainable development of the palm oil industry
- ☒ I am an Affiliate member of the RSPO, indirectly involved in the palm oil industry

Affiliates

1. Operational Profile

1.1 What are the main activities of your organisation?

Proforest helps people manage the world's natural resources sustainably. We are an independent, international organisation that works alongside producers, industry, governments, NGOs and communities to help them understand and address their sustainability challenges, bridge their differences and arrive at effective, integrated solutions. We deliver our work by supporting companies, through collaboration and providing knowledge and capacity. Our work builds on a few steps to achieve positive social and environmental outcomes through awareness, commitment, implementation, integration and scale to deliver goals. Our expertise delivers sustainable natural resource management – from policy, investment and procurement to production on the ground. Our vision is to achieve Sustainable Livelihoods in Sustainable Landscapes, and our approach to responsible sourcing aims to contribute to this transformation.

1.2 What activities has your organisation undertaken to promote sustainable palm oil, the RSPO and/or RSPO members in the reporting period?

Responsible Sourcing and Production:

As part of our Responsible Sourcing and Production works, we have a sizeable Palm Oil portfolio, working with companies across the entire supply chain to support responsible sourcing and production of palm oil, with RSPO certification advocated as key tool to achieving sustainability goals.

In Europe, Proforest works with companies that produce, source and use forest and agricultural commodities. This includes companies throughout the supply chain from producers, mills, aggregators, traders processors and manufacturers to retailers. Proforest supports its clients to deliver on their social and environmental responsible sourcing and production commitments through Proforest ACRES framework (Agricultural Commodity Responsible Sourcing and Production). Proforest supports clients (manufacturers, traders, retailers) on their palm oil strategies and policies, in understanding the supply base, planning interventions, engaging with and beyond supply chains, and monitoring and reporting. Specifically, regarding the RSPO (non-exhaustive list):

- PF supports the use of certification schemes as tools to ensure that purchased volumes (under actions within supply chains that a company can take) are responsibly produced with the adequate level of assurance.
- We assist companies in developing pathways to report on deforestation- and conversion-free (DCF) volumes and promote RSPO as one of the key mechanisms available for such reporting.
- Additionally, RSPO is recognized as a tool to track company progress on NDPE (No Deforestation, No Peat, No Exploitation) commitments through the IRF (Implementation Reporting Framework).
- We also offer guidance on engaging with smallholder supply chains and highlight RSPO's role in supporting the inclusion of independent smallholders.

Proforest collaborates with key RSPO members such as Nestlé, Mars, Mondelēz, PepsiCo, Unilever, Cargill, Bunge, Wilmar, LDC, Musim Mas, and others.

In Africa, we directly support producer companies in their efforts to achieve, maintain or expand RSPO certification. In 2024, Proforest Africa continued supporting Plantations Socfinaf Ghana (PSG) with its Remediation and Compensation Procedure (RaCP) which was approved by RSPO in 2024 and subsequently led to the company attaining RSPO certification for its Subri concession in the same year.

Proforest Africa supported oil palm companies to implement RSPO requirements for their proposed smallholder oil palm projects. These include:

- o Land Use Change Analysis (LUCA) and preparation of New Planting Procedure (NPP) report for Benso Oil Palm Plantation's (Wilmar subsidiary) proposed scheme smallholder project in Ghana called Adum Bansa Smallholder Oil Palm Plantation (Nana Kwandoh Brempong III Estate). The NPP was approved by RSPO in January 2025.
- o Continued with the Integrated HCV-HCS assessment for proposed smallholder oil palm developments for Biase Plantation Limited (Wilmar subsidiary) in Nigeria. The report was approved by HCV Network in March 2025.

In Latin America, Proforest further delivered a range of smallholder-focused work funded by a major trading company as described in the 'Smallholders' section of this submission (below).

Landscapes work:

In Southeast Asia, Proforest has carried out a variety of roles on different landscape projects in Palm Oil sourcing areas:

- Proforest is co-implementer alongside GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) and TAL (Tanah Air Lestari) in a sustainable landscape initiative in Kutai Timur (called SUSTAIN KUTIM), Indonesia. This collaboration between the public and private sectors aims to enhance the technical capacity of the East Kutai district government, local communities, smallholders, workers, and plantation companies. Together, they work towards transforming the district into a sustainable region for agricultural production with a particular focus on palm oil and rubber, including empowering land users to sustainably manage high conservation value (HCV) areas, thereby contributing to reducing emissions. The landscape program is for an initial 3 years (2023-2026).

- Proforest supports 8 palm oil sourcing companies in meeting their commitments of sourcing deforestation and exploitation free palm oil from the districts of Siak and Pelalawan, in Sumatra, Indonesia. The 8 companies aim to meet their commitments through the design of a landscape programme that supports the district governments in progressing their agenda on the Green Growth district (Siak) and implementation of the Sustainable Palm oil National Action Plan in Indonesia (Pelalawan). CORE and the Coalition of 8 companies are closely collaborating with key partners including LTKL, Sedagho Siak (a consortium of local and international NGOs WRI, Winrock, Elang, Jikalahari) and ASSPUK in meeting their and the district government's objectives on moving towards responsible palm production.

- The Sungai Linau Landscape Conservation and Livelihoods Programme (SLP) is a collaboration between the public and private sector in Riau, Indonesia. Proforest support the coordination of this project. The programme aims to support community-based land use development and strengthen village members' livelihoods, while protecting HCV (high conservation value) and HCS (high carbon stock) forest and reducing greenhouse gas emissions through forest and peat protection. The location is Sungai Linau: a village approximately 14,000 hectares in size, of which two thirds of the land is forested (peat swamp forest) and the remaining third is agricultural land, mostly used for palm production. The programme intends to expand into three neighbouring villages. After completing an assessment of the social and environmental context in Sungai Linau and developing a land use plan with local community members (Phase 1), the programme has moved on to Phase 2 (2024-2027), a three-year plan. Phase 2 activities include a reforestation and agroforestry trial; the installation of water management system; and training for fire and water management, among many other activities.

In Colombia, Latin America, Proforest has played key roles as an implementation partner on a landscape project along the Lebrija River basin where there are approximately 53 thousand hectares planted with oil palm (30% of its coverage), most of them coming from small producers with between 1 and 5 hectares. The main objectives we have been working on at landscape scale for the last five years are:

- Strengthen governance systems between the different actors involved in the programme to ensure viability and sustainability in the sector.
- Contribute to more sustainable palm oil production in the region.
- Mitigate impacts and contribute to improving the quality of life of stakeholders.
- Ensure the protection and improvement of the quality of water bodies and other ecosystems.

In Côte d'Ivoire, Africa, Proforest has collaborated with regional authorities, communities, and other partners to develop a comprehensive Management and Investment Plan for the San Pedro landscape. This plan focuses on sustainable agriculture, forest protection and restoration, enhancing community living conditions, and improving land use governance. The landscape programme involves six communities with a population size of approximately 900,000. This new film provides an overview of the San Pedro landscape programme and the stakeholders involved in developing the Management and Investment plan. The video captures our engagement processes and our collaborative approach with local stakeholders and governments to develop and test landscape and jurisdictional approaches. The San Pedro landscape is one of the main production landscapes in the country and a major sourcing area of cocoa, natural rubber and palm oil for many commodity trading companies. San Pedro plays a pivotal role in the local economy, with cash crops, especially cocoa, being predominantly produced by smallholders. (see below link to video)

Direct work with RSPO:

For direct work for and with RSPO we have the following to list for 2024:

- Successful joint bid for the ISEAL Innovation Fund to collaborate on fully traceable ISH (Independent Small Holder) supply chains, an 18-month project allowing us to look at integration of intermediaries into the RSPO system
- RSPO Labour Audit Guidance review, a one-year research project that we led jointly with Dr Rebecca Smalley. The report that was submitted to the ASC and was fully endorsed with implementation of recommendations planned from 2025.
- RSPO Lead Auditor P&C Curriculum and Material development: draft one and first test run completed in 2024; work continuing in 2025 to update to new P&C

RSPO Lead Auditor and HCV-HCSA Training:

As an RSPO-endorsed training provider for the RSPO Lead Auditor P&C, we delivered in 2024 three RSPO lead auditor Principles & Criteria (P&C), one RSPO lead auditor Supply Chain Certification (SCC) course and two re-sit RSPO P&C exams in Spanish and English languages with a total of 69 participants as follows:

- RSPO LA P&C, Colombia, 24-28 June 2024, Santa Marta, Colombia (20 participants)
- RSPO LA P&C Re-Sit exam - Spanish, February 28th, 2024, Antigua, Guatemala – Spanish (11 participants)
- RSPOLA P&C, Ghana, 12-16 August 2024, Takoradi, Ghana
- RSPOLA P&C Re-Sit exam - English, June 27th, 2024, Nigeria – English (7 participants)
- RSPOLA SCC, Ghana, 30 July - 01 August 2024, Ghana – English (14 participants)
- RSPO LA P&C, KL, Malaysia, November 2024- English (17 participants) – this was the testrun for the revised curriculum and new materials with RSPO and KLK staff as participants

Additionally, we have been working on the new P&C Lead Auditor curriculum and materials throughout 2024 (see above).

Smallholders:

In the context of smallholders and their move towards RSPO certification Proforest Latin America carried out a project in 2024 where we supported the group of smallholders, ADINC, in Guatemala to implement an action plan to comply with the Eligibility indicators. This project was financed by a major trading company and had the support of the company Palmas del Ixcán, which is the manager of the group, which has 28 smallholder producers. The project supported them in three areas:

- Socioeconomic characterization of smallholder producers
 - Gap analysis of compliance with eligibility indicators and creation and implementation of an action plan to close the gaps
 - Support in the RSPO membership process as a group of smallholder producers.
- This process was carried out in the first half of 2024.

Africa Sustainable Commodities Initiative (ASCI):

In 2024, ASCI with funding from the Tropical Forest Alliance conducted comprehensive Oil Palm Investment Case Study for Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and Cameroon to understand its policy and business enabling environment and to promote responsible investment into the subject country's oil palm supply chain. The research (a) identifies and details the objectives, goals and targets of national and sub-national oil palm development strategies or plans; (b) describes the institutional roles, responsibilities and capacities for implementation of policies, programmes, plans and actions; (c) includes but not limited to documenting and analysis of in-country resources, support and/or enabling conditions available to implement the policies, programmes, plans and actions; (d) provides a clear map of Public Sector and Private Sector / Investment Climate, Political, the country's technical capacity and incentives—e.g. tax holidays, rebates, or forgiveness programs for actions, and extent of funding/implementation. (e) provides analysis of other financing options for smallholder oil palm development including loans from commercial financial institutions and development financing. This is very much in line with working with the member countries to work towards oil palm value chains which as the shared aim: a sustainable oil palm industry.

Consumer Goods Forum: Forest Positive Coalition (CGF FPC):

The Consumer Goods Forum (CGF) brings together retailers and manufacturers globally at the CEO level to collaborate and engage with key stakeholders, with the aim of addressing key challenges impacting the industry, including environmental and social sustainability, health, food safety and product data accuracy.

In 2024, Proforest supported companies in following their DCF methodologies for multiple commodities, including palm, and this involved conducting supplier assessments for CGF FPC companies on Palm Oil DCF commitments and progress, along with. Proforest also supported in the development of a landscape blueprint for palm oil geographies to understand how to measure the maturity of a DCF landscape.

Benchmarking:

We are also frequently asked by various clients to provide benchmarks of sustainability standards including RSPO, analysing how well these standards can support environmental and socio-economic best practice in the production and sourcing of various commodities including palm oil. In 2024, a key area of focus in our benchmarking work was the role of Voluntary Sustainability Standards in the implementation of deforestation and human rights due diligence regulations, for example analysing in how far certification schemes such as RSPO can support companies in complying with the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). We have done comprehensive reports on this for ISEAL (focus on the German Due Diligence Act and EUDR) and for the Accountability Framework Initiative (AFi) with focus on EUDR and EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD). Standards benchmarking work for the private sector clients also continued.

Further support for RSPO:

Proforest has been working with a US client to assess and engage their suppliers on HREDD systems but focusing on deforestation conversion free performance (mainly through the Implementation Reporting Framework (IRF) tool, which, amongst others, supports organisations towards ideally sourcing or producing RSPO certified product). We receive, review and assess IRF profiles, and engage suppliers on improving performance by developing IRF action plans. Alongside engagement with suppliers, we've been working to build capacity internal for this client's procurement teams on palm sustainability in general but also focusing on DCF. Proforest also supports them in data collection and analysis for their annual reporting, building strategies for engagement with tier 2 suppliers and delivering on human rights targets for palm.

Palm Introductory Learning Journey (30 July-02 August 2024, Malaysia):

Proforest organized a Palm Introductory Learning Journey (PILJ) in 2024. The PILJ provides an opportunity for new Proforest staff to have an immersive, informative and fun learning experience about how oil palm is grown, milled and refined in Malaysia and in the region, and the issues, challenges and potential solutions related to their sustainable production and sourcing. 30 Proforest staff participated in PILJ in 2024, and about the same number will participate in 2025.

Palm oil publications:

Africa Sustainable Commodities Initiative: A platform for producer and consumer country partnerships - Proforest [<https://www.proforest.net/resources/publications/africa-sustainable-commodities-initiative-a-platform-for-producer-and-consumer-country-partnerships/>]

RAPPORT: Journées de sensibilisation et de brainstorming sur le Règlement Déforestation de l'Union Européenne (RDUE) au Gabon - Proforest [<https://www.proforest.net/resources/publications/rapport-journees-de-sensibilisation-et-de-brainstorming-sur-le-reglement-deforestation-de-lunion-europeenne-rdue-au-gabon/>]

Independent Review of the Implementation of RSPO Labour Auditing Guidance: [<https://rspo.org/wp-content/uploads/Final-Report-Independent-Review-of-LAG-by-Proforest-Oct-2024.pdf>]

Videos: Investing in the San Pedro landscape: Collaboration and Community in Côte d'Ivoire

[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJx180nKAM&t=8s>]

Investir dans le paysage de San Pedro: Collaboration et Communauté en Côte d'Ivoire [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zpqskkJVI>]

E-learning courses (free): Proforest Primer on Palm Oil - Proforest Academy

[<https://www.proforestacademy.net/learn/courses/277/proforest-primer-on-palm-oil>]

1.3 What percentage of your organisation's overall activities focus on palm oil?

50.0%

1.4 Did members of your organisation participate in RSPO working groups and/or taskforces in the reporting period?

No

1.5 Does your organisation have any past or on-going collaborations with public or private sector palm oil industry players to support them in their efforts to increase the production or consumption of certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO)?

Yes

1.6 How is your organisation's work on palm oil funded?

Through private sector companies and grant funding, depending on the nature of the project or programme work concerned. Also, we cover our costs for training provision via course participant fees and service provisioning for RSPO directly. This is done via the Proforest Initiative and charged at our lower non-profit rates.

2. Actions for Next Reporting Period

2.1 Please outline activities that your organisation will take in the coming year to promote the production or consumption of certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO)

We have a large portfolio of palm oil clients upstream, mid-stream and downstream, and aim to continue the portfolio of work described in section 1.

Additionally, we are continuing to work with and for RSPO. For example, in early 2024, Proforest and RSPO submitted a joint successful application to ISEAL Innovation Fund to work on EUDR & RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard (RISS) to be implemented 2024/2025. Our 2025 work includes the continued development of new curriculum and materials for the RSPO P&C Lead Auditor Course with the update to the new 2024 P&C, 2025 Cert Systems (expected) and the various annexes and supporting guidance documents as mentioned in the 2024 P&C.

Furthermore, our work in the various landscape initiatives such as Sustain Kutim, Siak Pelalawa and Sungai Linau and collaboration spaces such as the Consumer Goods Forum Forest Positive Coalition Palm Oil Working Group continues.

Challenges and Support

1.1 What significant obstacles or challenges has your company encountered in the promotion of certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO)? What efforts has your company taken to address these obstacles or challenges?

- ☐ Awareness of RSPO in the market
- ☒ Difficulties in the certification process
- ☒ Certification of smallholders
- ☐ Competition with non-RSPO members
- ☐ High costs in achieving or adhering to certification
- ☒ Human rights issues
- ☒ Insufficient demand for RSPO-certified palm oil
- ☐ Low usage of palm oil
- ☒ Reputation of palm oil in the market
- ☐ Reputation of RSPO in the market
- ☐ Supply issues
- ☐ Traceability issues
- ☐ No challenges faced
- ☒ Others

Others

a) Via our clients the following has been reported:

- Difficulties in the certification process, especially where response from Secretariat is needed in timely manner.
- Certification of smallholders (requires high level of organization, a dedicated group manager, and frequently substantial funding for capacity building and action plan implementation).
- Human rights issues that need resolving prior to obtaining certification.
- Insufficient demand for RSPO-certified palm oil despite the Shared Responsibility uptake targets.
- Reputation of palm oil in the market still leading to reluctance to label certified end products.

b) Our engagement with clients, in collaborative spaces, with RSPO directly and in landscapes and capacity building is described above.

1.2 In addition to the actions already reported in this ACOP report, what other ways has your company supported the vision of the RSPO to transform markets to make sustainable palm oil the norm?

- ☐ Communication and/or engagement to transform the negative perception of palm oil
- ☒ Engagement with business partners or consumers on the use of CSPO
- ☒ Engagement with government agencies
- ☐ Engagement with peers and clients
- ☐ Promotion of CSPO through off product claims
- ☐ Promotion of CSPO outside of RSPO venues such as trade workshops or industry associations
- ☐ Promotion of physical CSPO
- ☒ Providing funding or support for CSPO development efforts
- ☐ Research & Development support
- ☒ Stakeholder engagement
- ☐ No actions taken
- ☐ Others

Others

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1.3 If your company has any other publicly-available reports or information regarding its palm oil-related policies and activities, please provide the links here

Palm oil publications:

Africa Sustainable Commodities Initiative: A platform for producer and consumer country partnerships - Proforest [<https://www.proforest.net/resources/publications/africa-sustainable-commodities-initiative-a-platform-for-producer-and-consumer-country-partnerships/>]

RAPPORT: Journées de sensibilisation et de brainstorming sur le Règlement Déforestation de l'Union Européenne (RDUE) au Gabon - Proforest [<https://www.proforest.net/resources/publications/rapport-journees-de-sensibilisation-et-de-brainstorming-sur-le-reglement-deforestation-de-lunion-europeenne-rdue-au-gabon/>]

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