



INDEPENDENT SMALLHOLDERS OUTREACH
PROGRAMME IN INDONESIA

INDEPENDENT REVIEW REPORT

Paving the Way for Transformation and
Acceleration of the Implementation of
Sustainable Palm Oil Standard by
Independent Smallholders in Indonesia



INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH AND
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER	0
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	i
TABLE OF FIGURES	iii
TABLE OF LIST.....	iv
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background	1
1.2. Objectives.....	1
1.3. Program Location.....	2
1.4. Methodology.....	2
2. OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.....	8
2.1. Subulussalam (Aceh).....	8
2.1.1. An overview of the program area.....	8
2.1.2. Regional Response to the RSPO Program	8
2.1.3. Responses, Models and Approaches to Established Partnerships	10
2.1.4. Policy Advocacy.....	11
2.1.5. The Organizational of Farmers	12
2.1.6. Opportunities and challenges for the program sustainability.....	13
2.2. Pesisir Selatan (Sumatera Barat).....	14
2.2.1. An overview of the program area.....	14
2.2.2. Regional Response to the RSPO Program	14
2.2.3. Responses, Models and Approaches to Established Partnerships	15
2.2.4. Policy Advocacy.....	16
2.2.5. The Organizational of Farmers	16
2.2.6. Opportunities and challenges for the program sustainability.....	17
2.3. Bengkulu Utara (Bengkulu)	17
2.3.1 An overview of the program area.....	17
2.3.2 Regional Response to the RSPO Program	18
2.3.3 Responses, Models and Approaches to Established Partnerships	18
2.3.4 Policy Advocacy.....	20
2.3.5 The Organizational of Farmers	20
2.3.6 Opportunities and challenges for the program sustainability.....	22
2.4. Barito Kuala (Kalimantan Selatan)	23
3.4.1 An overview of the program area.....	23

3.4.2	Regional Response to the RSPO Program	23
3.4.3	Responses, Models and Approaches to Established Partnerships	24
3.4.4	Policy Advocacy.....	25
3.4.5	The Organizational of Farmers	25
3.4.6	Opportunities and challenges for programme sustainability	26
2.5.	Kapuas Hulu (Kalimantan Barat)	27
2.5.1.	An overview of the program area.....	27
2.5.2.	Regional Response to the RSPO Program.....	27
2.5.3.	Responses, Models and Approaches to Established Partnerships	28
2.5.4.	Policy Advocacy.....	29
2.5.5.	The Organizational of Farmers	29
2.5.6.	Opportunities and challenges for the program sustainability.....	30
2.6.	Landak (Kalimantan Barat).....	31
2.6.1.	An overview of the program area.....	31
2.6.2.	Regional Response to the RSPO Program.....	31
2.6.3.	Responses, Models and Approaches to Established Partnerships	32
2.6.4.	Policy Advocacy.....	33
2.6.5.	The Organizational of Farmers	33
2.6.6.	Opportunities and challenges for the program sustainability.....	34
2.1	Berau (Kalimantan Timur).....	35
2.7.1	Overview of the programme area	35
2.7.2	Regional Response to the RSPO Programme.....	35
2.7.3	Partnership responses, models and approaches developed.....	36
2.7.4	Policy Advocacy.....	40
2.7.5	Farmer Organization	40
2.7.6	The Organizational of Farmers	40
2.7.7	Opportunities and challenges for programme sustainability.....	42
3.	OUTCOMES HARVESTING	43
4.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS	48
4. 1.	Conclusion.....	48
4. 2.	Recomendation.....	56
DAFTAR PUSTAKA		Error! Bookmark not defined.

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1. 1 Theory of Change Approach	3
Figure 1. 2 The Stage of Outcome Harvesting	3
Figure 1. 3 Programme Framework	4
Figure 1. 4 Statement of Instrument Evaluation Results	4
Figure 2. 1 Organizational Structure of TIM ICS.....	12
Figure 2. 2 ICS Struktur in Berau	38
Figure 3. 1 The Outcome of Programme	43

TABLE OF LIST

Table 1. 1 Data Collection Methods and Informants	5
Table 2. 1 Draft Matrix RAD-KSB Subulussalam City	9

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) was established in 2004 to promote the growth and use of sustainable palm oil products through credible global standards and stakeholder engagement. The RSPO promotes palm oil production practices that help reduce deforestation, conserve biodiversity, and respect the livelihoods of rural communities in oil-producing countries. It ensures that no new primary forests or other areas of high conservation value are sacrificed for oil palm plantations, that plantations use recognized best practices, and that the fundamental rights and livelihoods of millions of plantation workers, smallholders, and indigenous communities are fully respected.

Based on this view, the RSPO proactively engages oil palm growers, oil processors, food companies, retailers, NGO, and investors to work together towards a global supply of palm oil produced in a way that is both environmentally and socially sustainable manner.

IRE has experience working at the grassroots level, particularly on issues of rural empowerment and smallholder empowerment. We use a critical engagement approach between communities and government, NGO, and the private sector to promote sustainable and people-centered development, particularly for vulnerable and marginalized groups. Our experience in supporting smallholders in Berau (2017– 2019) shows that this engagement has a significant impact on the success of village and regional policy advocacy in favor of smallholders. We are also committed to engaging local NGO to organize and support beneficiaries at the grassroots level. IRE's study (2017) shows that one of the efforts to overcome palm oil sustainability is to build democratic governance through strong institutions, both at the village government level, farmer groups, labor groups, and connected economic institutions, so as to improve more equal relations.

1.2. Objectives

In general, the program evaluation aims to collect a number of achievements, challenges, and lessons learned from the implementation of the program carried out by IMO and the Forum of Sustainable Palm Oil Farmers of Indonesia (FORTASBI).

- a. Identify the outcomes of changes that occurred before and after program interventions in relation to supporting program outcomes. Outcomes include aspects of policies, institutions, actors and relationships between aspects that influence each other.
- b. Evaluate the suitability of the program carried out by IMO against the project objectives to pave the way for Transformation and Acceleration of Implementation of Sustainable Palm Oil Standard by Independent Smallholders in Indonesia.
- c. The evaluation of program management and coordination by the IMO to assess whether the work carried out by the IMO implementation partner has been able to address the issues outlined in the Intermediary Outreach and Engagement in Producing Countries, Status Assessment, and Outreach Plan (prepared by the Forest Peoples Programme, October 2014)
- d. Evaluation of the entire role, set-up, activities, achievements, and impacts of the program that have been implemented, including how this program has contributed to the achievement of the RSPO's mission and vision, and Theory of Change.

- e. Identification of issues that remain unaddressed, points of contention or conflict, and assessment of the barriers to effective implementation of the program.

1.3. Program Location

This activity was conducted in seven regency that serve as the implementation locations of the "Paving the Way for Transformation and Acceleration of the Implementation of Sustainable Palm Oil Standard by Independent Smallholders in Indonesia" programme, namely:

- a. Subulussalam (Aceh)
- b. Pesisir Selatan (West Sumatra)
- c. Bengkulu Utara (Bengkulu)
- d. Barito Kuala (South Kalimantan)
- e. Kapuas Hulu (West Kalimantan)
- f. Landak (West Kalimantan)
- g. Berau (East Kalimantan)

1.4. Methodology

Based on IRE's experience in monitoring and evaluating programs using the Theory of Change approach, it will be more aligned if the monitoring and evaluation tool uses the Outcome Harvesting methodology. Outcome harvesting is a method that allows evaluators, donors, and project managers to identify, formulate, verify, and understand the results/changes that have occurred (Ricardo Wilson-Grau, 2012). Using outcome harvesting, the evaluator or harvester can quickly see information from reports, personal interviews, and other source documents on how the program or initiative developed contributed to the 'outcome'. Outcomes can be positive or negative, planned or unplanned, but there must be a link between the initiatives undertaken and the results produced, and they must be verifiable.

The strength of this method lies in the detail with which it breaks down the achievements of change, the challenges that have arisen, the interrelationship of influential aspects and the contribution of each aspect to the achievement of short, medium and long term goals.

Outcome harvesting also encourages a critical thinking process applied in the context of evaluation, motivated by an attitude of curiosity and belief in the value of evidence, which involves identifying assumptions, asking thoughtful questions, pursuing deeper understanding through reflection using robust perspectives, so that evaluation results can guide decision-making for further action (Buckley, Archibald, Hargraves, & Trochim, 2015).

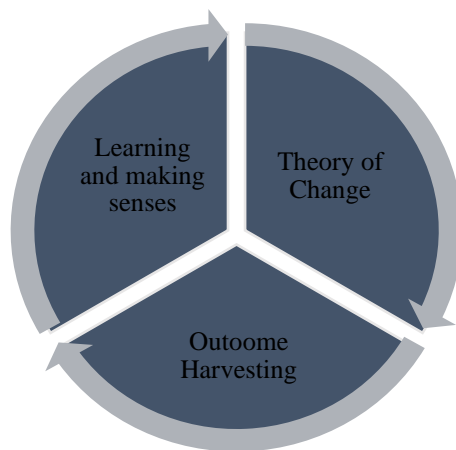


Figure 1. 1 Theory of Change Approach

In outcome harvesting there are structured stages. Each stage will be interconnected and tested between stages to ensure that what is produced has a connection to the designed outcome.

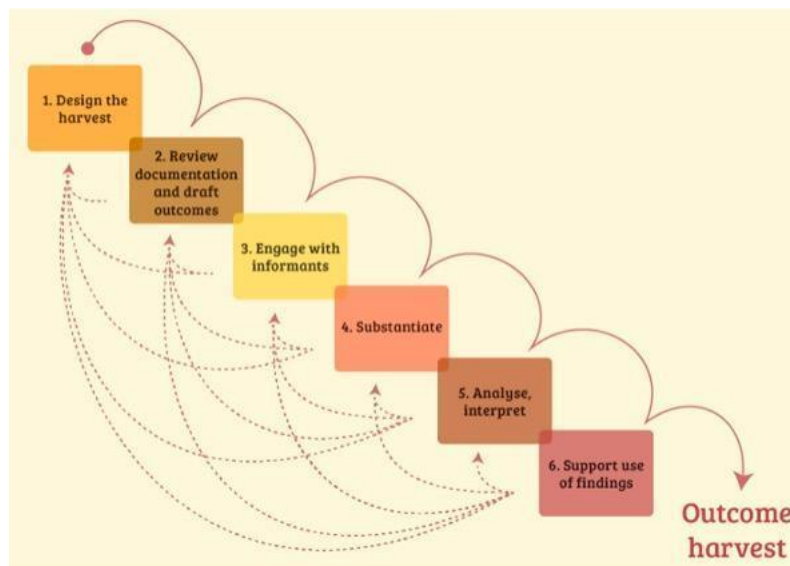


Figure 1. 2 The Stage of Outcome Harvesting

Source: Ricardo Wilson-Grau, 2012

This evaluation will begin by first examining the program framework that has been designed using the TOC approach, which is generally described as follows:

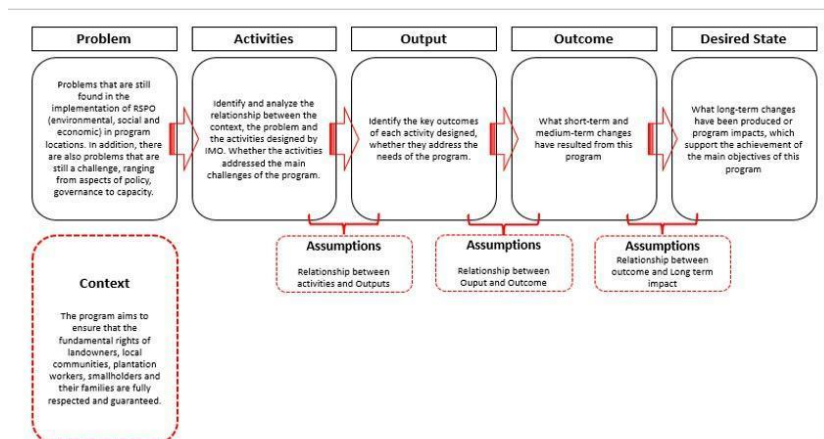


Figure 1. 3 Programme Framework

The harvester will analyze the framework that has been designed in the program and will identify, check, analyze and build connections between aspects that have been done. Outcome statements are important in this evaluation process.

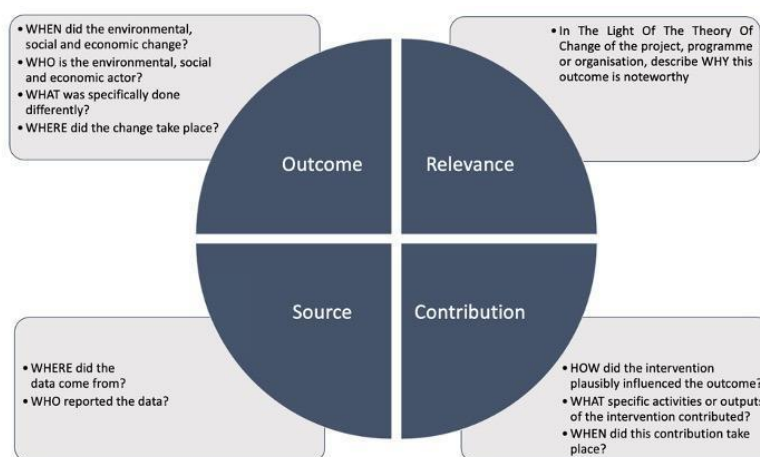


Figure 1. 4 Statement of Instrument Evaluation Results

Evaluation instruments will be developed from the above framework, to see the relevance, contribution and resources that support the achievement of outcomes. In the context of the program developed by FORTASBI, this evaluation will specifically identify and analyze at the level of program management (implementers) and program beneficiaries. The aspects identified and assessed can be in the form of impacts that are already visible and those that have the potential to emerge, among others:

- Impact (potential) on policy.
- Impact (potential) on governance/institutionalization.
- Impact (potential) on capacity/knowledge.
- Impact (potential) on the social ecosystem.
- Impact (potential) on the environmental ecosystem.
- The result (potential) economic impact.

In this evaluation, we will be using the outcome harvesting method. Our research approach is qualitative and descriptive, with a focus on analyzing processes and meanings to explore information in the field (Creswell, 2010). In qualitative research, we do not refer to participants as 'respondents', but rather as 'informants', as they provide valuable information for our research. Informants are people who have or can access data, information, or facts related to a research object (Kriyanto, 2010: 71-73). In this study, our key informants are the beneficiaries and stakeholders associated with the outreach program for oil palm smallholders. The qualitative research approach can help researchers or evaluators understand the perspectives, knowledge, and social practices of their informants (Flick, 1998: 4-6) as beneficiaries of this RSPO program.

Data Collection

Data collection techniques in this evaluation will be conducted through in-depth interviews with key informants, FGD, observations, and literature studies. Before conducting the field data search, a research protocol will be prepared that contains the purpose of the evaluation, the research code of ethics, and the question guide. The function of this research protocol is to serve as a reference for evaluators conducting evaluations in the field. A substantial proportion of the interviews will focus on the outcomes and the learning that supports them. The interviews will be conducted in a more conversational manner, with the aim of exploring the achievements and learning that have been achieved. In addition, interviews will be conducted with FORTASBI, the programme manager, as well as local partners and beneficiaries of the programme, namely farmer groups.

- a. FORTASBI. The objective of the interviews with FORTASBI is to ascertain the achievements of the programme, the opportunities and challenges encountered during implementation, the lessons learned and the strategies employed in running the programme.
- b. Local government. In order to ascertain the changes that have occurred at the local government level, as well as the opportunities for further development and sustainability, interviews were conducted. Furthermore, the innovations implemented by each local government in response to this programme, both in the form of policies and programme facilitation, will be examined.
- c. Local non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The interviews will focus on the achievements and lessons learned of the programme by the local NGOs, as well as their strategies in building relationships and facilitating for farmer groups. At the level of local NGOs, the changes that have been achieved in the implementation of the programme will also be explored.
- d. The programme will also examine the experiences of farmer groups. The interviews concentrated on the outcomes and achievements of the groups and the key learnings from the programme.

This data collection activity was conducted using a mix of offline and online interviews.

Table 1. 1 Data Collection Methods and Informants

No	Region	Method	Informant
1	FORTASBI		1. Sendy De Soysa (Program Manager) 2. Rukaiyah Rafik (Kepala Sekretariat)

2	Subulussalam	Online	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wahda (Ketua Koperasi Sada Kata) 2. Mainul (Earthworm Foundation) 3. Rikto (Earthworm Foundation)
3	Pesisir Selatan	Online	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Liusman (Staf bidang Perkebunan, Dinas Pertanian) 2. Syafrianto (Kabid Perkebunan, Dinas Pertanian) 3. Peri Hariyanto (PPL Kec. Lunang) 4. Eni Marlinda (PPL Kec. Lunang) 5. Redi Purnomo (ISH, Koperasi Bina Usaha Mandiri) 6. Nanda (PT Sapta Sentosa Jaya Abadi)
4	Bengkulu Utara	Offline	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sahadi (Ketua YKRL) 2. Rifi Zulhendri (Koordinator Program YKRL) 3. Bambang (Fasda) 4. Helmundi (Mantan Kades Talang Rasau) 5. Safarudin (Kabid Perkebunan, Dinas Perkebunan)
5	Barito Kuala	Online	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rudy Fahrianor (Lingkar Hijau Indonesia) 2. Aminna (Dinas perkebunan Barito Kuala) 3. Umar (Kelompok Tani Karya Makmur Abadi)
6	Kapuas Hulu	Offline	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feri Suryanata (Kasubdin. Perkebunan Dinas Pertanian & Pangan Kabupaten Kapuas Hulu) 2. M.Salamun (Small Holder BPM Palm Oil Specialis WWF Kabupaten Kapuas Hulu) 3. Hidayat Jatiswara (Community Organiser/CO WWF untuk pendampingan petani swadaya/ISH) 4. Radius Haraan (CO WWF untuk pendampingan ISH) 5. Zulkifli (CO WWF untuk pendampingan ISH) 6. Samsul (District Cordinator GIZ Kabupaten Kapuas Hulu untuk program GRASS) 7. Kusmadi (Ketua 2 Perkumpulan Petani Sawit Mandiri Mitra Bersama/PPSMMB) 8. Agelius Endi (PPSMMB) 9. Thomas Edison (PPSMMB) 10. Tomi Patinasarani (PPSMMB)

7	Landak	Online	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yakobus (Ketua Koperasi Sinam Sejahtera) 2. Kurniawan (Asisten Manager Sustainability PT Hilton Duta Lestari) 3. Yulianus Edo Natalaga (Kepala Dinas Perkebunan)
8	Berau	Offline	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fahcrudin (ASRM) 2. Mufit (ASRM) 3. Rasdi (USAID SEGAR) 4. Gunawan (YKAN) 5. Suparno (Solidaredad) 6. Heri (Dinas Perkebunan) 7. Hasbul (Bapelitbang) 8. Kelompok Tani Long Ayan (Dewi, Agus, dan lain-lain) 9. Kelompok Koperasi Ora Et Labora (Jones, dan lain-lain)

2. OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

2.1. Subulussalam (Aceh)

2.1.1. An overview of the program area

Subulussalam City is one of the transfer areas for the implementation of the RSPO Intermediary Organization project by FORTASBI, which was originally located in the Aceh Jaya Regency area. Some of the factors that initiated the move include a location that is difficult to access and a lack of local NGO (FORTASBI, 2023). Aceh Province is one of the important regions, considering that the area of oil palm plantations reaches 474,900 hectares (BPS, 2023). Statistics Indonesia (BPS) data for 2022 states that the area of people's plantations in Subulussalam City amounts to 19,304 hectares, while Aceh Jaya Regency has an area of 16,297 hectares. The relocation of the project locus is quite logical if viewed in terms of the comparison of the area of oil palm land, assuming that it will reach more independent oil palm farmers. Other factors are very likely to be taken into consideration.

Oil palm plantation activities in Subulussalam City are carried out by several parties, such as the regional government, companies, NGO, independent oil palm farmers, and farmer groups with various interests. The implementation of IMO by FORTASBI in Subulussalam City is quite actively played by the Sada Kata Cooperative as one of the institutions that gathers independent farmers with members or assistance totaling 1,200 farmers in all districts, including Simpang Kiri, Penanggalan, Rundeng, Sultan Daulat, and Longkib. Several local NGO and companies are also partners of FORTASBI in the implementation of several activities, such as the Earthworm Foundation, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), APKASINDO, PT. Musim Mas, Swiss Contact, Coltiva, Sustainable Initiatives Foundation, and SMART. Several Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD) in Subulussalam City are also partners of FORTASBI in several activities, including Distanbunkan, BAPPEDA, DPPKB, Disperindagkop, DLH, DPMP2TSP, and Land Registry Office Subulussalam City.

2.1.2. Regional Response to the RSPO Program

The issuance of Presidential Instruction / Executive Order (INPRES) No. 6 of 2019 concerning the National Action Plan for Sustainable Palm Oil in 2019–2024 mandates 14 Ministries, Institutions, and Regional Governments producing palm oil, including in this case the City of Subulussalam, which has published the RAD-KSB Regional Compilation Team through the Mayor's Decree No. 188.45/133.2/2022. The presence of several NGO working in Subulussalam, including FORTASBI, and also involving the Syiah Kuala University Palm and Coconut Research Center (PRSK-USK), will support the implementation of the regional RAD-KSB preparation to jointly formulate program actions. The seriousness of issuing the RAD-KSB has so far been shown by the Subulussalam Regional Government through Distanbunkan, which has started the stage by organizing a kick-off meeting and launching as well as FGD in March and June 2023 as the initial stage of the implementation of the RAD-KSB preparation. The follow-up activity was continued by holding a joint public consultation in July, which focused on discussing the formulation of the proposed priority programs and activities of RAD-KSB in Subulussalam City. The Draft Matrix of RAD-KSB Subulussalam City that has been prepared in the public consultation resulted in 27 components of the formulation, among others as shown in the table.

Table 2. 1 Draft Matrix RAD-KSB Subulussalam City

<p>1. Strengthening good plantation governance through updating basic data on smallholders and oil palm plantation companies, mapping, and sectoral statistics that are updated regularly and continuously.</p> <p>2. Institutional strengthening and implementation of the Thematic Geospatial Information (IGT) system for oil palm plantation cover.</p> <p>3. Increase the socialization of regulations and policies related to sustainable oil palm plantation businesses for smallholders and other stakeholders.</p> <p>4. Increasing synergy between interested institutions in relation to oil palm plantation businesses.</p> <p>5. Establishment of a multi-stakeholder forum on sustainable palm oil that supports the strengthening of institutional infrastructure for sustainable palm oil development.</p> <p>6. Construction and improvement of roads to support the improvement of the quality of oil palm plantation businesses.</p> <p>7. Increase legal compliance for business actors in the oil palm plantation business in a coordinated manner.</p> <p>8. Increasing the capacity and capability of plants through the use of certified</p> <p>9. Increasing the capacity and capability of smallholders in implementing</p> <p>10. Increasing access to funding for plant replanting for planters.</p> <p>11. Accelerating the formation and strengthening of smallholder institutions.</p> <p>12. Increasing agricultural extension in oil palm production center areas.</p>	<p>15. Reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions across sectors in gardens and land.</p> <p>16. Measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) of potential GHG emission reductions in oil palm plantations.</p> <p>17. Increasing the use of critical land as an effort to reduce GHG emissions in oil palm plantations.</p> <p>18. Utilization of palm oil waste to improve the economic value chain.</p> <p>19. Accelerating the realization of the company's obligations in facilitating the development of sustainable oil palm plantations for the community.</p> <p>20. Handle oil palm plantation land disputes in other use areas.</p> <p>21. Settlement of the status of oil palm plantation business land indicated in forest areas.</p> <p>22. Legalization of land resulting from settlement of plantation status indicated in forest areas and settlement of land disputes.</p> <p>23. Settlement of plantation business land status indicated in peat ecosystems.</p> <p>24. Implementation of labor regulation review and dissemination related to supervision of the implementation of the Occupational Safety and Health (K3) system and Labor Social Security in the oil palm plantation business.</p> <p>25. Implementation of ISPO socialization for national stakeholders.</p>
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13. Protection of High Conservation Value Areas (HCV).	26. Accelerating the implementation of ISPO certification for companies and smallholders.
14. Implementation of garden and land fire prevention.	27. Implementation of diplomacy, promotion, and advocacy towards ISPO acceptance by the international market.

If viewed in the draft formulation above, explicitly, the last three points in the table lead to efforts to implement and accelerate ISPO certification organized by the Government of Indonesia. Although in the context of substance as a whole, it leads to continuous efforts to strengthen good oil palm farming practices through individual and institutional capacity building of independent oil palm farmers, which is also in line with the goals of RSPO certification. The latest update on the RAD-KSB of Subulussalam City is in the stage of completing documents to be immediately issued through the Mayor's Regulation. The information was obtained from an interview with Mr. Rikto of the Earthworm Foundation, who was involved in the preparation of the document. Meanwhile, the interview with the Regional government through Distanbunkan has not been answered until this final report comes out.

2.1.3. Responses, Models and Approaches to Established Partnerships

Local Government

The involvement of FORTASBI as a development partner of Regional Development Planning Board (BAPPEDA) and a program partner with Distanbunkan is one of the important aspects of being able to pave the way for sustainable palm oil transformation for independent farmers in Subulussalam City. Being directly involved means that FORTASBI must be indicated so that it can contribute to providing input both in terms of policy and the implementation of local government and OPD programs. Multi-stakeholder cooperation is needed to support independent oil palm smallholders in implementing sustainable good practices in implementing RSPO standards. Through the process of preparing the Subulussalam City RAD-KSB, at least the regional government's encouragement to support sustainable palm oil certification can be reflected.

Local NGO

The presence of FORTASBI in EF's view adds color to the NGO engaged in the Subulussalam area to support each other and complement the vacant work areas. Furthermore, Mr. Rikto said that FORTASBI's activities to pave the way for independent oil palm farmers to obtain RSPO certification are in line with and complementary to EF, which focuses on good agriculture practices (GAP) based on the Landscape Approach (LA).

".....What FORTASBI has done is appropriate; we ask that it be continued after socialization and training that has been carried out, such as ICS, for several parties, both the government and farmers. I think farmers are currently ready, but assistance regarding RSPO is very lacking..." (Rikto, Earthworm Foundation).

The training and mentoring conducted by FORTASBI in EF's view has been quite effective in understanding the technical aspects of obtaining RSPO certification, but it has not yet reached the outcome stage of the program on how farmers understand the concept of Sustainable Palm Oil. This is reasonable considering the minimal mentoring time and the absence of offices or PICs that live in Subuluusalam City, especially since intense mentoring is carried out by local cooperatives.

..... I see it from the perspective of outsiders, in fact, it may be because the lack of communication or assistance carried out by FORTASBI has not reached the outcome stage. So, FORTASBI delegates to cooperatives (Mainul – Earthworm Foundation).

Independent Smallholders Association

FORTASBI activities are to be able to access more farmer groups in Subulussalam City and are often connected to the Sada Katata Cooperative. This cooperative reaches independent smallholders throughout the region, including Simpang Kiri, Penanggalan, Rundeng, Sultan Daulat, and Longkib districts, with a total of 1,200 independent oil palm farmers. The relationship model built to reach independent smallholders is carried out by FORTASBI and the Sada Kata Cooperative through the implementation of various activities such as socialization, mentoring, and training to increase the capacity of knowledge about RSPO certification centrally and through cooperative units in each district.

The participation of farmers at the beginning of the socialization of RSPO certification was quite minimal, and only a few independent smallholders participated. Most of the other participants were followed by companies and "tie-in" farmers who already had sufficient access to knowledge. Based on an interview with Mr. Wahda as the Chairman of the Cooperative, he said that after the first socialization, the partnership pattern to reach independent smallholders was carried out massively through a technical approach that could help independent smallholders to know and understand the technicalities and benefits when they have obtained RSPO certification.

More deeply, Mr. Wahda conveyed the enthusiasm of several independent smallholders who have reached the stage of collecting complete files to be able to start the certification process. The involvement of the local government through Subulussalam City Distanbunkan in various socialization activities and capacity building of independent smallholders is enough to strengthen the legacy of FORTASBI and convince farmers about the benefits of sustainable palm oil management practices by conducting RSPO certification.

2.1.4. Policy Advocacy

The process of preparing the Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Palm Oil Plantations (RAD-KSB) in Subulussalam City is a form of joint commitment to coordinate all sectors and initiatives that focus on sustainable palm oil management. FORTASBI's involvement in the preparation of the draft formulation of the RAD-KSB program needs to be balanced with an intense partnership pattern with the Regional Government and other drafting teams such as NGO, Companies, and Farmer Communities to be able to ensure that the RAD-KSB is linear and in line with the local needs of Independent Farmers. So that

there are efforts to increase awareness and implement good practices for sustainable palm oil, which will later make it easier to access both ISPO and RSPO certifications.

2.1.5. The Organizational of Farmers

Increasing the level of understanding

Several activities to increase the knowledge capacity of independent oil palm farmers are carried out by FORTASBI through activities such as socialization, training, and mentoring. Although at the beginning the level of participation of farmers in socialization was quite minimal, the intensity to reach farmers more widely was carried out by the Sada Kata Cooperative as a FORTASBI partner in Subulussalam City to all sub-districts by forming a coordinating unit. In addition to FORTASBI, EF also supports capacity building for independent oil palm farmers through various activities, one of which is the GAP Training in collaboration with PT. Musim Mas, with technical training content such as fertilization, cultivation techniques, and pest and disease prevention. Support for increasing knowledge also comes from the Regional Government through the involvement of Subulussalam City Distanbunkan in the implementation of socialization and training.

Organizational Model

In reaching independent oil palm farmers, FORTASBI partners with the Sada Kata Cooperative to carry out the intensity of mentoring. With access to reach the entire sub-district area in Subulussalam City, with a total of 1,200 farmers. Deepening the interview with Mr. Wahda, he said that currently the Internal Control System (ICS) has been formed since 2022 which functions to ensure that institutional implementation is carried out based on RSPO principles and criteria. The following is the



organizational structure of the Sada Kata Cooperative ICS Team

Figure 2. 1 Organizational Structure of TIM ICS

Source: Facebook Sada kata Cooperative

RSPO certification changes at the farmer group level (possibilities and problems)

The deepening of the interview with Mr. Wahda as the Chairman of the Sada Cooperative explained the capacity and knowledge of farmers who already understand the stages towards RSPO certification. This is evidenced by the desire of several farmers who have prepared files for certification preparation.

“ Slowly the community already knows that good palm oil meets the certification standards when they are going to sell it to companies” - **(Wahda – Chairman of the Sada Kata Cooperative)**

From EF's point of view, FORTASBI has paved the way for independent oil palm farmers to increase their understanding of the importance of certification and its social, economic and ecological impacts. EF highlights changes at the farmer group level that have not yet been achieved at the outcome stage on how to implement sustainable practices.

2.1.6. Opportunities and challenges for the program sustainability

- a. The need for a multi-stakeholder division of roles that is directed by local governments, NGO, companies, and farmer groups to support sustainable palm oil which has been seen to be running individually between parties. Not only in legal contexts such as the preparation of RAD-KSB, but in the realm of achieving outcomes, it is necessary to have a joint discussion.
- b. The Open Transportation Road Program by FORTASBI is good enough as a bridge for independent oil palm farmers to understand the urgency of RSPO certification.
- c. The fundamental problem of land legality and obtaining a Surat Tanda Daftar Budidaya (STDB) is still the main challenge. Therefore, FORTASBI needs to take a multi-stakeholder approach with relevant stakeholders.
- d. The socialization, training, and mentoring activities carried out by FORTASBI are considered to have not achieved an outcome in terms of how independent oil palm farmers understand sustainable palm oil practices.
- e. The enthusiasm of independent oil palm farmers to obtain RSPO certification can be an opportunity to conduct a pilot project to obtain certification.
- f. The partnership pattern through farmer groups to reach independent oil palm farmers in the implementation of training and mentoring requires continuous assistance and monitoring, and the appointment of a person in charge of the field for direct interaction is needed.

2.2. Pesisir Selatan (Sumatera Barat)

2.2.1. An overview of the program area

Pesisir Selatan regency is one of the FORTASBI program locations on the island of Sumatra and covers two districts, namely Lunang and Silaut. These two districts have similar demographic patterns because they are transmigration areas. Transmigration in Kecamatan Lunang started in the 1970 - 1980 from Java Island, with the main focus on food agriculture, especially rice fields. The same is true for Silaut district. Transmigration in this district began later, at the end of the 1990, in line with the opening of oil palm companies in the Silaut area. Now, almost 100% of Silaut residents depend on oil palm plantations for their livelihoods. The shift from an agricultural economy to oil palm plantations also took place in Lunang district, especially after the entry of oil palm companies in the 1990. However, smallholder oil palm only entered massively around 2010 in Lunang district.

Based on data from FORTASBI and the Agriculture Office of Pesisir Selatan, there are approximately 41,938 ha of oil palm plantations, with productivity reaching 2 tons/ha. There are at least seven oil palm companies operating in this area, including PT Incasi Raya, PT Citalaras Cipta Indonesia, PT Sumber Andalas Kencana, PT Sumatera Jaya Argo Lestari, PT Sukses Wijaya Wood, PT Sapta Sentosa Jaya Abadi, and PT Sumbar Andalas Kencana, all of which cover an area of 36,758.61 ha. The study confirmed that most oil palm farmers in Lunang and Silaut districts are part of the People's Palm Oil Replanting Program (PSR). According to Liusman, a staff member of the Pesisir Selatan regency Agriculture Office, The Indonesian Palm Oil Fund Management Agency (BPDPKS) facilitated the (PSR) program in Pesisir Selatan regency to increase the productivity of oil palm farmers through the use of quality seedlings and assistance with fertilizers and medicines.

2.2.2. Regional Response to the RSPO Program

In Pesisir Selatan regency, FORTASBI has established a partnership with the local government, especially with the Agriculture Office. The local government is quite responsive to the implementation of the program, especially with the momentum of the People's Palm Oil Replanting Program (PSR) in this region, supported by The Indonesian Palm Oil Fund Management Agency (BPDPKS). The local government also supports the efforts of independent farmer groups in Pesisir Selatan to carry out ISPO and RSPO certification through the registration of the Cultivation Registration Certificate (STD-B). According to Liusman, the Agriculture Office will have issued 500 STDB by 2023. At the program site, two cooperatives were proposed to obtain STDB for 700 parcels of land, namely Bina Usaha Mandiri Cooperative and Amanah Alam Semesta Cooperative in Lunang district.

For the local government, especially the Agriculture Office, through the socialization of the RSPO program, there are opportunities for smallholder oil palm plantations in Pesisir Selatan District to move towards ISPO and RSPO certification. As far as can be analyzed, the involvement of the Agriculture Office in ensuring that smallholder oil palm groups move towards RSPO is through the facilitation of Cultivation Registration Certificate (STD-B) registration. It is not yet clear how the commitment of the local government leads to facilitation and assistance for target groups that are ready to carry out ISPO certification. At least the PSR program supported by BPDPKS in Pesisir Selatan contributed to strengthening the quality of oil palm production and cultivation as important capital towards RSPO certification in the future.

2.2.3. Responses, Models and Approaches to Established Partnerships

Local Government

In this program, partnership with the local government is crucial to ensure that the region takes on a role after the end of the program. In Pesisir Selatan, the absence of local NGO is a challenge. However, the openness of the local government to the RSPO program is one of the important achievements of the FORTASBI program in Pesisir Selatan regency. The implementation of the 2019 RISS Socialization Program held in November 2021 received a good response from the local government and farmer groups. At least this program was quite successful in creating an enabling environment for the process towards RSPO certification for independent oil palm farmers in Pesisir Selatan District. Some of the programs implemented by the Agriculture Office and the Palm Oil Plantation Fund Management Agency (BPDPKS) that create this enabling environment is Cultivation Registration Certificate (STD-B) registration and oil palm replanting (PKS) program. Unfortunately, the local government itself does not have an overview of future plans to ensure that there are groups from this area that are able to nominate themselves for RSPO certification. If this is not monitored, then the program investment made by FORTASBI will be difficult to ensure its sustainability, considering that the district government is the most reliable actor in this program.

Local NGO

In Pesisir Selatan District, there are no local NGO involved in program implementation, either as partners or participants. In general, there are no NGO that have an interest in sustainable palm oil issues in Pesisir Selatan. In interviews with the FORTASBI team, they stated that it is very difficult to find local NGO that meet the requirements to facilitate the implementation of this program in Pesisir Selatan. According to informants from local farmers and agricultural extension workers, in some activities, the team from FORTASBI directly organized both socialization and capacity-building activities for district stakeholders and independent smallholders. Thus, the continuation of this program in Pesisir Selatan district is largely determined by government actors, which in this case are represented by the Agriculture Office. On the other hand, several companies identified around Lunang and Silaut districts also did not show their commitment to collaborate in this program. This is because these companies are not yet included in the RSPO scheme, so they do not feel interested in ensuring that independent oil palm smallholders in their area are also registered with the RSPO. In the reviewer's communication with the company, there is one company in Silaut Sub-district that is preparing for ISPO certification, PT Sapta Sentosa Jaya Abadi.

Farmers Association

Farmer associations involved in the program in Pesisir Selatan seem to be more institutionally organized. There are two cooperatives that have been part of the program in both RISS socialization and capacity-building activities, namely Bina Usaha Mandiri Cooperative and Amanah Alam Semesta Cooperative in Lunang Sub-district. In addition to Lunang and Silaut districts, in Airpura district, cooperatives have developed mini palm oil mills from PENAS (National Week). Cooperatives in Silaut implemented STDB for around 200 people and participated in PSR. Joint Venture Cooperative (KUB) Bina Usaha Mandiri and Koperasi Amanah Alam Semesta in Lunang district.

Community self-reliance smallholders and cooperatives responded to the program quite openly and considered the program encouraged by FORTASBI to be a new thing for those who have been developing oil palm cultivation for a long time. In terms of knowledge, the program has improved their

knowledge of sustainable cultivation and processing techniques. However, the obstacle they still face is related to the funding needed to advance themselves in the RSPO scheme, considering the many administrative and documentary needs for RSPO registration.

2.2.4. Policy Advocacy

Given the absence of local NGO that can bridge local government policy advocacy, FORTASBI's program in Pesisir Selatan district did not touch on the policy advocacy aspect. The head of the Plantation Division of the Agriculture Office, Syafrianto, admitted that there has been no discussion from FORTASBI on the policy development of the Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Palm Oil Plantations (RAD KSB). The office itself is currently only at the stage of forming the decree of the RAD KSB drafting team. The RAD KSB preparation program itself in Pesisir Selatan district is part of the program supported by the palm oil revenue sharing fund (DBH). According to Syafrianto, the plantation office is currently prioritizing STDB registration for independent oil palm smallholders (ISH). In addition, proposing ISPO registration to ISH is the next priority of the plantation office.

2.2.5. The Organizational of Farmers

Increasing the level of understanding

The socialization on RISS 2019 organized by FORTASBI in Pesisir Selatan improved the knowledge and understanding of independent smallholders and cooperatives on the benefits and stages towards RSPO standardization (RISS 2019). Although RSPO is not mandatory, in the understanding of Redi (staff of Bina Usaha Mandiri Cooperative in Lunang district), RSPO provides facilitation to farmers through cultivation guidance as well as access to capital and a more secure market. In simple terms, for farmers, RSPO benefits them by guaranteeing better market prices. So far, farmers recognize that the palm oil they plant does not come from seeds of clear origin and quality. Therefore, it is easily manipulated by middlemen and companies. Currently, farmers are also supported by the People's Palm Oil Replanting (PSR) program. Under this program, farmers receive quality-assured seedlings, fertilizer, and capital. Farmers participating in this program must meet a number of requirements, such as legality, productivity, ISPO certification, and sustainability. Therefore, farmers participating in PSR will be facilitated to obtain ISPO certification in the first harvest. Bina Usaha Mandiri Cooperative in Lunang district is one of the beneficiaries of the PSR program and most of them have also obtained Cultivation Registration Certificate (STDB).

Organizational Model

The institutional model of farmer groups in Pesisir Selatan regency can be recognized as better than in other regions, such as North Bengkulu. In both Silaut and Lunang districts, there is a cooperative institution for palm oil producers that houses palm oil farmers. According to Perry, a PPL (field extension officers) in Lunang district, there are three well-developed cooperatives in these sub-districts, namely Bina Usaha Mandiri Cooperative, Amanah Alam Semesta Cooperative, and LKM-A Damar Rumput Jaya Inderapura Cooperative. In addition, Redi, one of the management of Bina Usaha Mandiri Cooperative also mentioned that his cooperative has received a program from the Palm Oil Plantation Fund Management Agency (BPDPKS) in 2020 for the replanting of 65 ha of community oil palm in 2020 and 150 ha in 2021. In Lunang district alone, 226 STDB have been issued until 2022. This is an example that oil palm smallholder institutions in program locations are relatively more solid with a credible enough capacity to access a several of programs from the government.

RSPO certification changes at the farmer group level (possibilities and problems)

The opportunity for the transformation of farmer groups towards RSPO in Pesisir Selatan regency can be said to be quite high for a number of reasons. First, the government provides ample opportunities through the STDB registration program and the smallholder oil palm replanting (PSR) program that allow smallholders to participate in these programs, thus ensuring the legality and productivity of smallholder oil palm plantations. This can improve the sustainability dimension required for RSPO certification. Secondly, independent smallholder organizations in the form of cooperatives in Lunang and Silaut districts are considered quite ready to be facilitated further so that they can access RSPO certification. In terms of knowledge, they have also gained an adequate understanding of the urgency and stages of the RSPO proposal and the requirements that must be met.

2.2.6. Opportunities and challenges for the program sustainability

Based on the findings of the review above, there are considerable opportunities to encourage the sustainability of the program in Pesisir Selatan regency. The local government has a strong commitment to facilitate the legality of oil palm smallholders. This can be seen from the facilitation of STDB issuance as one of the requirements for both ISPO and RSPO certification. In addition, the replanting program for smallholder oil palm plantations is also an opportunity for farmers to later move towards RSPO standardization, along with strengthening their legality and productivity. The presence of PPL (field extension officers) from the Agricultural Extension Center of Pesisir Selatan regency is also one of the key actors in strengthening assistance for independent oil palm smallholders.

However, there are also challenges that arise in this program. First, the absence of local NGO that focus on sustainable palm oil development is a challenge for Pesisir Selatan regency. If the program is to be continued, then the program manager needs to ensure that there is assistance both from the local area (local) and external assistants. Secondly, there is a lack of commitment from companies to supporting this program. One indication of this lack of commitment is the difficulty in seeking discussions with company contacts regarding the review of this program. Of the four companies provided with contacts, only one confirmed, although until this report was written, the company also could not provide certainty to discuss with the reviewer team.

2.3. Bengkulu Utara (Bengkulu)

2.3.1 An overview of the program area

The North Bengkulu Regency encompasses an area of oil palm plantation land in the Ketahun district of 10,597 hectares, with a 1,794-hectare plantation in the Lais district. The district has the second largest area of smallholder oil palm plantations in the province, after Mukomuko, with a total area of 90,504 ha in 2022, followed by rubber (27,663 ha) with a production of 1,114,557 tons (Disbun North Bengkulu, 2023). The increase is quite significant when compared to the data from FORTASBI in 2020, which indicated that the area of smallholder plantations was 41,595 ha with a total production of 463,443 tons. There are 29 palm oil companies in BU with 7 factories.

A number of large companies are present in North Bengkulu Regency, including: (1) PT Sandabi Indah Lestari (SIL), (2) PT Alno Agro Utama, (3) PT Julang Oca Permana (JOP), (4) PT Mitra Puding Mas (MPM), and (5) Agricinal. According to Safarudin (Head of Plantation at the Plantation Office of North Bengkulu Regency), some of these companies are expected to be RSPO certified, including PT Sandabi Indah Lestari. One of the factories closest to the program site is PT Bio Nusantara, which has now been acquired by PT SIL.

The final report of the FORTASBI project indicates that the two villages selected for the program were Talang Rasau in Lais district and Urai in Ketahun district. The distance from Bengkulu City, the capital of Bengkulu Province, to Talang Rasau is 50 km, while the distance to Urai is 78 km. The majority of YKRL staff reside in Bengkulu City. In the context of the program, the long distance of the location is a challenge, especially in the context of program implementation that has a direct impact on the local community, especially oil palm farmers.

The implementation of the FORTASBI program in North Bengkulu is facilitated by local NGO partner Yayasan Kulama Rafflesia Lestari (YKRL), led by Sahadan, and managed by coordinator Rifi Zulhendri. YKRL is a local NGO established in 2019, focusing on oil palm and food governance. The program with FORTASBI is the first of its kind for this new NGO, so YKRL also has a vested interest in the success of the program at the site.

2.3.2 Regional Response to the RSPO Program

In general, the district government provides support and commitment to the IMO program organized by FORTASBI and YKRL in North Bengkulu district. This was evidenced by their attendance at the RISS Dissemination, which was represented by the Head of the Plantation Office and the Head of Plantation Division. The partnership with the local government and the company was established through a visit by YKRL to the Plantation Office of North Bengkulu Regency, where a positive response was received from the Head of the Office and the Head of Plantation (search for his name). According to Rifi, the Plantation Office is dedicated to providing assistance to the group and facilitating the processing of the Cultivation Registration Certificate. Thus far, no partnership or multistakeholder forum has been established as a result of this program, nor has it been utilized for that purpose.

2.3.3 Responses, Models and Approaches to Established Partnerships

Local Government

In the FORTASBI Final Report (2023), the program noted that one of its achievements was the involvement of the local government in the process of legalizing plantations through the granting of a Cultivation Registration Certificate (STDB). In North Bengkulu District, the Plantation Office is also accelerating the issuance of STDB for individual and group oil palm farmers. The issuance of STDB is one of the legal requirements needed in the certification process for both ISPO and RSPO. More broadly, STDB is also needed to ensure the quality of smallholder oil palm plantations because it includes the position of smallholder land and the quality of seeds. However, it is quite difficult to distinguish whether the realization of STDB issuance by the Plantation Office is a significant achievement of this program, or indeed, in terms of work plans, STDB issuance is a program of the Plantation Office. Because the issuance of STDB is a mandate from the Director General of Plantations

of the Ministry of Agriculture to encourage the legality assurance of independent oil palm smallholders.

The program lacked sufficient strength to guarantee a partnership between FORTASBI, YKRL, and the local government. The engagement process was initiated through a visit by YKRL to discuss the smallholder outreach plan in North Bengkulu district. In response to the program, the local government demonstrated its commitment to accelerating the registration of Plantation Registration Certificates (STDB). The program has not fostered more sustainable partnerships with local government and relies on a single pivotal figure within the agency, namely the head of the plantation sector.

Nevertheless, in this program, FORTASBI and YKRL are able to encourage the involvement of key actors in the North Bengkulu district, especially with the Plantation Office. One of the key actors in the Plantation Office who partnered with the program team is the Head of Plantation Division, Safarudin. In the activities carried out by FORTASBI, the Plantation Office also showed its commitment to support the RSPO implementation plan by independent oil palm smallholders in the North Bengkulu Regency, especially to assist groups and facilitate STDB registration. According to YKRL, this achievement was supported by two activities of the program, namely the RISS (RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard) dissemination activity and visits to the local government or plantation office by the YKRL team.

Beyond the program achievements driven by FORTASBI, the Plantation Office also has several programs that support the implementation of RSPO in North Bengkulu Regency, both directly and indirectly. For example, the Plantation Office of North Bengkulu Regency, with the support of the Palm Oil Plantation Fund Management Agency (BPDPKS), runs several programs, including (1) replanting smallholder oil palm, (2) developing facilities and infrastructure, and (3) increasing human resource capacity (officer training, smallholder training, and oil palm smallholder scholarships). Indirectly, this program encourages wider involvement of the local government (Plantation Agency) in supporting ISH to implement RSPO. However, there is insufficient evidence to determine whether this is a follow-up to the previous RSPO program.

Local NGO

The local NGO, YKRL, which is responsible for implementing the program in South Bengkulu district, has yet to develop the capacity required to address the issue of sustainable palm oil development. Furthermore, the involvement of other NGO, such as WALHI, was encouraged in the program by FORTASBI and YKRL with regard to the issue of sustainable palm oil in North Bengkulu regency. However, there is no evidence to suggest that collaboration between NGO in North Bengkulu can be established to encourage the implementation of the RSPO in this area. Furthermore, the character of the local NGO in North Bengkulu represents a challenge in the establishment of this partnership. Local NGO organizations are afflicted by a number of challenges, including the fragmentation of their activities and other institutional vulnerabilities.

In addition to the local government, FORTASBI and YKRL also build communication with identified companies working in North Bengkulu, especially in the two villages that are the location of the program. In the Smallholder Engagement Strategies document, FORTASBI and YKRL have engaged PT Kencana Ketara Kewala (KKK) and PT Sandabi Indah Lestari (SIL) to encourage RSPO implementation by independent oil palm smallholders. The document mentions that PT KKK has disseminated information on ISPO among its smallholders and committed to RSPO certification, as did PT Sandabi.

However, the reviewer found it difficult to access the contacts of companies that attended dissemination activities or were visited by the YKRL team. According to YKRL, the company seems to be quite resistant to local NGO in North Bengkulu, as they are considered to be more looking for projects by blackmailing the company instead of doing collaborative work with the company. YKRL acknowledges that it has found it particularly difficult to access the company's management and establish communication with them. On two occasions, YKRL accessed the company through formal communication channels, but on the third occasion, YKRL managed to access it through informal channels.

Farmers Association

In North Bengkulu, the FORTASBI program commenced with the establishment of farmer groups in two villages, namely Talang Rasau and Urai. This was undertaken as there was no established farmer association in the area, such as a farmer cooperative. However, in terms of institutions, the organized farmer groups have not yet reached the stage of forming a cooperative, as agreed in Talang Rasau Village. Meanwhile, in Urai Village, FORTASBI and YKRL have not been able to consolidate farmer groups to join the institution, whether a farmer group or a cooperative.

2.3.4 Policy Advocacy

In general, the preparation of the Local Government Action Plan (RAD) for Sustainable Palm Oil (KSB) is a form of multi-stakeholder partnership approach and commitment of regions that have superior potential in the oil palm plantation sector to improve sustainable palm oil governance. However, in North Bengkulu Regency itself, the RAD KSB has not yet been designed. According to an interview with Safarudin (Head of Plantation, Plantation Agency), the approach to the preparation of RAD KSB will be purely carried out by the local government through consultancy services instead of providing space for NGO to be involved in its preparation. YKRL itself, so far, has also not shown its commitment to advocate for this RAD of sustainable palm oil in North Bengkulu regency. Apart from the lack of resources for this advocacy, the palm oil issue itself is still a new issue for YKRL.

2.3.5 The Organizational of Farmers

Increasing the level of understanding

In general, the FORTASBI and YKRL programs in Bengkulu has received a good response from farmers, especially in terms of increasing their knowledge of sustainable palm oil cultivation and management. Although not massive, this relatively new knowledge for them is partly starting to be practiced in the management of their plantations. This was confirmed by Bambang, a regional facilitator from YKRL, who explained as follows:

"There are some people who are willing to listen [to practice], starting from equipment to the garden, for example, helmets. Even though it's one or two people, I'm happy because there are people who want to listen. Related to fertilizer spreading. Yesterday, I remembered the material presented by Mr. Imam about cultivation techniques; some of them were practiced or applied" **(Bambang-Regional Facilitator, 2024).**

According to Mr. Bambang, they are quite responsive to seeing the opportunity for RSPO to be adopted in the long term for their group. The RISS socialization activities at the beginning of the program showed strong enthusiasm and commitment from the farmers.

"Their activeness in asking questions and their seriousness in answering questions are visible. The interaction with the resource persons was active yesterday, especially when Mr. Imam from RSPO and Mr. Narno explained. Their enthusiasm was visible." **(Bambang Regional Facilitator, 2024).**

According to Rifi (YKRL Program Coordinator), the resource person's explanation regarding RSPO certification and the incentives that can be accessed by farmers provided strong motivation for farmers to be able to advance their groups in RSPO certification.

In Urai Village, the achievements of this program are difficult to measure since YKRL, as a local NGO is not intensive enough to do facilitation work in this village. In the dissemination activities conducted at the beginning of the program, these activities were attended mostly by village officials instead of independent oil palm farmers who were directly interested in the program. Rifi admitted that this made it difficult for YKRL to establish communication with independent smallholders in this village, including when the reviewer requested the contact details of the smallholder partners from this village. The problem in the implementation of the program in Urai Village is due to the lack of identification of independent smallholders who are potentially involved in the implementation of the program as well as the opportunity to participate in RSPO certification.

Organizational Model

The program successfully reached two villages: Talang Rasau Village in Lais district and Urai Village in Ketahun district. However, the dynamics in the two villages are quite different in terms of responding to the presence of this IMO program. In Talang Rasau, the formation of independent farmer groups was initiated with an initial number of 40–60 members. Related to this, they began to choose what kind of institution would accommodate their group. They were given the choice of whether to form a farmer group, a farmer group combined, or a cooperative. In the process, they finally chose the cooperative institution as the common platform for the independent oil palm smallholder group. They have prepared administrative documents for the registration of the cooperative and a fee for notarization of Rp 100,000 per person. Rifi, YKRL coordinator, explained: *"[This group] already has a name. Yesterday, we wanted to legalize it after the village head election. The structure already exists; we want to go to a legal entity; we just need to notarize it."* **(Rifi Zulhendri, YKRL Program Coordinator, 2024).**

RSPO certification changes at the farmer group level (possibilities and problems)

Institutional formation is one of the important aspects of both the ISPO and RSPO certification processes. Opportunities for institutional formation are quite open in Talang Rasau Village because they have agreed to form an oil palm smallholder cooperative. However, the next process was not carried out due to the constraints of the program, which will soon end. Meanwhile, YKRL itself is concerned that if the formation of this cooperative continues, YKRL must facilitate the post-formation assistance process. In reality, YKRL, as a relatively newly established NGO, does not have enough portfolio and resources to continue the intensive mentoring process. Technically, YKRL personnel are

concentrated in Bengkulu City, which is about 50 km away from Talang Rasau. In addition, the dynamics of the village head election have caused divisions among the independent smallholders. Rifi explained.

"We are confused about what to do with this. We have formed it, and we have designed it like this. When they asked, we were confused. In that group, there is one group that is vacuumed. Because we are confused about how to answer (sustainability). ...Great potential but no program." (Rifi Zulhendri - YKRL Program Coordinator, 2024).

In Urai Village, as explained earlier, the challenge was much greater because, from the beginning, the management team did not identify the potential beneficiaries of the program strongly enough. As a result, since the socialization at the beginning of the program, most participants were dominated by village government officials, and few came from ISH. This phenomenon is due to a lack of strong commitment from the beneficiaries to involve themselves in efforts towards RSPO certification.

2.3.6 Opportunities and challenges for the program sustainability

From the government office's perspective, the program contributed to increasing the knowledge of independent smallholders in plantation cultivation and how to get involved in RSPO certification. However, from the aspect of sustainability, this program did not result in the existence of a partnership or multi-stakeholder forum formed from the results of this program, and there has also been no effort to optimize the existing forum as a form of multi-stakeholder involvement in RSPO management.

In addition, the dynamics of the village head election also had an impact on program achievements in Talang Rasau Village. The program was already considered a political tool by the incumbent village head to capture electoral votes in the village. This caused some group members to begin to waver and lose interest in the development of this group.

However, after the end of the program, YKRL set aside savings from the program to continue the program (hospitality) in two villages that are quite far from the YKRL office. This activity was only able to extend the sustainability of the program for one month as the funding for this program ran out. Communication after the end of the program relied more on WA groups in each village. Finally, a representative from a farmer group questioned the continuation of the program, but YKRL did not respond because YKRL also did not have enough information about the continuation of the program.

Another challenge is that farmers' expectations were quite high at the beginning of the program, but because the program design was not designed to provide more intensive assistance, group formation faced serious problems. This was conveyed by Bambang:

"We have formed a group; we must be responsible. Because our presentation at the beginning was "wow," they did. 40 people with around 300 ha, up to the certificate collection stage. This is what I'm saying: they disbanded. Being invited to gather again after that is rather difficult. At most, we can meet one or two farmers that we know." (Bambang Regional Facilitator, 2024).

However, opportunities for sustainability exist in the neighboring village of Talang Rasau, Jagobayo Village. For YKRL, a similar program in Jagobayo is expected to provide dynamics and competition between groups in these two villages. They also see that the character of the community here always wants to see evidence and real examples, so the success of one group can be a motivation for the

success of another group. This kind of situation is very common in farming communities. Changes in knowledge and practices in farming communities need to be changed by showing the real successes of similar groups.

2.4. Barito Kuala (Kalimantan Selatan)

3.4.1 An overview of the program area

Barito Kuala Regency is one of the work areas chosen by Fortasbi in the program to empower independent oil palm smallholders for RSPO implementation. According to the Plantation and Livestock Service Office of Batola Regency, there are 6700 HA of smallholder oil palm plantations and 47,000 Cultivation Rights Title (HGU) land. Meanwhile, previous data in the Fortasbi report stated that there are 3,191 independent oil palm smallholders who are members of 159 smallholder groups in 16 sub-districts, with a total plantation area of 4,013.5 ha.

According to the Plantation and Livestock Service Office, palm oil licenses in Barito Kuala have been issued since 2008–2009. There were 8 large palm oil companies (PBS), and only 3 companies had ISPO. Meanwhile, smallholder oil palm plantations have started since 2010–2011. Palm oil is one of several other regionally superior commodities besides rubber, coconut, leprotonia articulate (purun), and sago. Palm oil productivity in Barito Kuala is currently increasing significantly and has increased by 29% since 2018, so the local government considers it important to strengthen policies and arrangements for sustainable palm oil in Barito Kuala Regency.

Based on interviews with the Plantation Office of Barito Kuala, there are several general challenges faced in the context of sustainable palm oil governance in Barito Kuala, namely: (1) the lack of understanding and awareness of farmers about sustainable palm oil cultivation. The selection of fertilizers and seeds is still haphazard. (2) the challenge of being able to encourage companies to commit to sustainable palm oil governance, including in efforts to strengthen independent palm oil farmers and plasma farmers. Because the company itself is still faced with its own management and business problems. (3) Local government strategies are still recognized as weak to encourage the strengthening of farmers, especially at the site level. However, so far, the local government has tried to open itself up to the improvement of sustainable palm oil management, including through the acceleration of STDB.

3.4.2 Regional Response to the RSPO Program

Barito Kuala regency government has a concern for sustainable palm oil governance. Currently, the local government is preparing the RAD KSB; therefore, the local government's response to the RSPO program is quite good and open. The local government has high hopes and expectations for the partnership program to strengthen independent oil palm farmer groups with FORTASBI. According to the plantation office (Disbun), for example, the presence of the FORTASBI program has opened a space for dialogue and opened up opportunities for the future direction of sustainable palm oil management, especially in terms of strengthening farmers. However, in practice, the local government admits that strengthening is still needed in the aspect of partnerships and the division of roles between parties. After the identification of independent oil palms in two sub-districts, namely

Barabai and Wanaraya, the local government admits that it has not received any results or follow-up that leads to a strategy for the sustainability of the program.

3.4.3 Responses, Models and Approaches to Established Partnerships

Local Government

In the context of sustainable palm oil governance, Barito Kuala regency government has a policy direction to increase palm oil production and increase added value. However, the local government is faced with several challenges and obstacles, including: (1) there are still smallholder oil palm farms whose status is not yet clear or are in the area; and (2) the local government found that many oil palm farmers still have difficulty getting quality seeds, seedlings, and fertilizers. Since 2022, the local government has initiated the RAD KSB, and the process of making the role-sharing matrix is targeted to be completed in 2024.

In the context of the implementation of the Fortasbi program in Barito Kuala, the local government of Barito Kuala is quite open to dialogue on the implementation of the program, but there are only 2 forms of activities in the form of socialization carried out with Fortasbi in the context of strengthening independent oil palm farmers for RSPO implementation, so there is no model or form of partnership that is portrayed to grow as a strategic cooperation pattern and has a clearer orientation or direction. The local government considers that the strategy and pattern of strengthening the implementation of RSPO must be encouraged not only at the level of independent oil palm farmers but also at the company level. The local government has started dialogue and initiated cooperation with Indonesian Palm Oil Association (GAPKI) and the Indonesian Palm Oil Farmers Association (APKASINDO) to strengthen independent palm oil farmers and encourage programs that strengthen ISPO and RSPO but are still in the early stages.

According to the local government of Bartio, the FORTASBI program does provide a basic understanding of the importance of RSPO and ISPO. However, this activity is still not enough because direct assistance is actually needed at the site level to strengthen farmer groups.

"The FORTASBI program provides an understanding of ISPO and RSPO, which is important; we really appreciate it. But that is not enough because there must be more concrete assistance on the ground for farmer groups" - **(Mrs. Nana, Barito Kuala Plantation Office).**

Local CSO

The local NGO partnering with FORTASBI for the implementation of the program to strengthen independent oil palm smallholders is LHI/Lingkar Hijau Indonesia. According to LHI, the program took place in 2022 for several months with a focus on the socialization and identification of independent smallholders in two sub-districts, namely Barabai and Wanaraya. LHI itself is not a local NGO that specifically focuses on assisting independent oil palm farmers with RSPO implementation.

According to LHI, the program PIC, who was previously responsible for managing the program and connecting with Fortasbi and the local government, has passed away, so the clarity and sustainability of the direction of the program partnership with Fortasbi have been disconnected. The identification process that has been carried out in two districts has also not received further feedback from Fortasbi.

"As far as I know, the program with FORTASBI was only for a few months. There was an identification process in the field, but as far as we know, there has been no feedback or follow-up. We also don't know what the results of the meeting between the local government and Fortasbi are." - Ryan, LHI

Farmer Group

The farmer group recommended by LHI, Karya Makmur Bersama with 65 members, who received education and socialization about RSPO, admitted that they did not know about the LHI and Fortasbi programs but admitted that they had received RSPO socialization. This farmer group became one of the farmer groups that received support from the local government for the 80 HA oil palm replanting program, began to know and practice sustainable oil palm cultivation, and already had an initial understanding of the RSPO.

"For the RSPO program, there has been socialization, but until now it is still not running. Next, we have to prepare STDB. RSPO was socialized by LHI. Farmers here are given the understanding that to achieve RSPO, they must cultivate in an environmentally friendly manner, and there are many stages and standards" - (Umar, Farmer Group, Karya Makmur Bersama).

Company

According to the Plantation Office, there are not many large palm oil companies operating in Barito Kuala. Currently, there is only one CPO palm oil company operating in the district area. Palm oil companies in Barito Kuala have not played much role in strengthening sustainable palm oil governance in the regency. They are still preoccupied with problems and dynamics within the company, for example, the water management system. Until now, the local government has been trying to build engagement with companies so that they can improve their partnership patterns. Some of the companies identified as being in the process of RSPO certification include PT. TASNIDA AGRO LESTARI

3.4.4 Policy Advocacy

Policy advocacy efforts to encourage sustainable palm oil governance and strengthen farmer groups were carried out by LHI, a local NGO in Barito Kuala. Based on the interview results, there are not many NGO that focus on and concern about this issue. LHI itself was previously not concerned enough with the issue and advocacy of sustainable palm oil governance policies. Meanwhile, efforts to strengthen palm oil governance policies are shown by the initiation of the local government to draft the RAD KSB which is still in the process of being drafted. In addition, based on interviews with the Barito Kuala local government, it can be seen that the Barito Kuala local government is initiating a partnership to strengthen independent oil palm farmer groups with APKASINDO or the Indonesian Association of Oil Palm Farmers, but it is still in the early stages.

3.4.5 The Organizational of Farmers

Knowledge enhancement

The effort to increase knowledge carried out in the context of the FORTASBI program in partnership with LHI is the provision of socialization about RSPO to independent oil palm farmer groups. Based on the results of interviews with the Independent Oil Palm Farmer Group, the socialization provided is related to the requirements and stages towards RSPO.

From this process, a basic understanding of RSPO emerged, but it was not enough to provide farmers with a more massive understanding of the processes and stages that need to be carried out. Therefore, assistance and institutional strengthening of independent oil palm farmer groups are still needed on an ongoing basis.

Organising Model

Based on interviews with the local government, local NGO, and farmer groups, there is no pattern of organizing farmer groups. The program's approach is limited to socialization only. In addition, based on the interviews, there is no organizing model for oil palm farmer groups in Barito Kuala that focuses on strengthening and assisting independent oil palm farmer groups. Both in the context of institutional strengthening and cultivation mentoring.

Changes at the farmer group level (RSPO certification) (opportunities and challenges)

Based on the results of an interview with one of the farmer group representatives, socialization and education about RSPO have provided an understanding and overview for farmers about the importance of RSPO, especially in terms of education on the importance of ensuring the status of plantation land and sustainable cultivation methods. Changes at a more strategic institutional level have not yet been captured since the approach model is still in the form of socialization.

3.4.6 Opportunities and challenges for programme sustainability

- a. The local government's open and enthusiastic response to the strengthening of the independent smallholder program for RSPO implementation is an opportunity for the sustainability of the program.
- b. The absence of a consolidated partnership pattern is a challenge for the development of synergy and cooperation between parties.
- c. Ensure engagement with companies, especially in terms of equitable partnerships, strengthening independent farmer groups to realize sustainable palm oil management.
- d. Ensuring access to quality fertilizers and seeds for farmer groups
- e. Ensure the strengthening of farmer groups at the grassroots, both institutionally and strengthening sustainable palm oil cultivation procedures.
- f. Strengthening and mentoring farmer group facilitators in the field.

2.5. Kapuas Hulu (Kalimantan Barat)

2.5.1. An overview of the program area

Covering an area of 31,318.25 km², Kapuas Hulu Regency is made up administratively of 282 villages and 23 sub-districts. Aside from that, Kapuas Hulu Regency contains 89,648 ha of oil palm plantations. (BPS Kapuas Hulu, 2024)

Meanwhile, the program area in the context of RSPO is located in two districts and three villages: Pala Village in Seberuang District, Kapuas Hulu Regency, and Sungai Sena Village and Seberu Village in Silat Hilir District. In 2020 (WWF, 2020), local oil palm farmers and the Indonesian World Wild Fund (WWF) initiated the formation of a farmer organization (ISH) in the program area under the name Palm Oil Farmers Association (PPSMMB, 2020).

However, GIZ has also carried out essentially the same thing through the GRASS (Greening Agricultural Smallholder Supply Chains) program. It has done so in Setungul Village, Silat Hilir District, by providing support to Village-owned Enterprise (BUMDesa) Bina Sejahtera and Farmer Groups that are part of the United Ensilat Prosperous Farmers Alliance (APESIB), which serves as a forum for all matters pertaining to the Roundtable Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO) certification administration processes in Miau Village and Senggul Village, Silat Hilir District. (GIZ, 2023)

Based on the data provided, the RSPO program area can be considered a pilot project of the WWF and GIZ institutions. The FORTASBI Foundation is engaging in multiple activity interventions in the WWF and GIZ-aided regions in the Kapuas Hulu Regency in 2021 as part of the RSPO program. Among these activity interventions are the following: (1) training; (2) workshops; and (3) establishing and involving ISH as a member of the RSPO.

2.5.2. Regional Response to the RSPO Program

In response to this RSPO-related initiative, the Kapuas Hulu Regency government reacted somewhat normatively; in fact, the Regency government even has a legal framework in the form of Local Government Regulation (PERDA) No. 18 of 2015 concerning Partnerships in Sustainable Plantation Management (Local government regulation/Perda, 2015).

However, field research indicates that civil society organizations, such as the Self-Help Farmers Association, FORTASBI, WWF, and GIZ, have been leading major initiatives pertaining to the RSPO and ISPO issues. The programs that have been put into place by the aforementioned organizations have received a generally positive response from the Kapuas Hulu Regency Government, particularly from the Agriculture and Food Service through the Plantation. A tangible manifestation of this approach is the presence of a plan to draft legislative laws pertaining to RAP, together with a program for gathering data and supporting independent oil palm growers in obtaining STDB, RSPO, and ISPO certification.

2.5.3. Responses, Models and Approaches to Established Partnerships

Local Government

In regards to the RSPO and ISPO issues, the Kapuas Hulu Regency Government, especially the Agriculture and Food Service, a division of the Plantation Service, has reacted somewhat normatively. This is mostly because there is a shortage of field extension workers who are knowledgeable about this subject and a restricted budget in the local government budget for raising awareness of it. The RSPO issue was brought up by GIZ and WWF, who frequently collaborate and interact with the regency government, according to the Head of the Plantation Sub-Department. He also claims that when it comes to FORTASBI, they typically serve as a source person for events that the regency government, GIZ, and/or WWF jointly organize. Together with GIZ, WWF, and FORTASBI, the government of the Kapuas Hulu Regency intends to create a Regent's Regulation about the Regional Action Plan (RAP) for Sustainable Palm Oil Plantations as a response to the RSPO (Fortasbi, 2023).

Local NGO

When it came to inspiring farmers about the value and advantages of RSPO for independent farmers, WWF and its local allies, the PPSMMB independent farmer association, responded to FORTASBI's presence rather well. This affects farmers' awareness, zeal, and commitment to participate in sustainable palm oil management, according to the WWF.

Meanwhile, FORTASBI's participation was well received by GIZ and its local partner NGO Solidaridad. Furthermore, GIZ is expediting the certification procedure for sustainable palm oil in Kapuas Hulu concurrently. It conducts a coaching clinic via the GRASS program to address registration procedures in the SARPRAS BDPKS application, particularly with regard to funding the external audit of Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO). SARPRAS is a facilities and infrastructure application designed to improve productivity and output levels, as well as enhance palm oil plantation management (GIZ, 2023). FORTASBI served as a resource for one of the workshop sessions. The alliance has fulfilled the requirements up to the ISPO internal audit, and this activity is primarily focused on BUMDes Bina Sejahtera Senggul Village. In addition to offering technical expertise to farmers and BUMDesa, GIZ claims that FORTASBI's presence informs the regency government—particularly the Agriculture and Food Service—about the significance of RSPO and ISPO.

Farmers Association

Regarding the RSPO issue, the PPSMMB farmer association had a largely supportive response. This is because people are becoming more conscious of how important it is to protect the environment, but there is also a benefit in the form of a better selling price for palm oil commodities that have the RSPO and ISPO certificates. FORTASBI's presence comparatively gives farmer associations the information and inspiration they need to stay devoted and consistent within the RSPO framework. One of the resources they believe is quite beneficial for corporations is information regarding palm-tracing.

Nonetheless, some administrators of the PPSMMB feel that FORTASBI's presence is still insufficient, and they anticipate that FORTASBI will be able to support them more in the future, particularly with

regard to the marketing procedure and the sustainable palm oil trapping system. This is due to the fact that farmer associations and palm oil firms in the Kapuas Hulu Regency have not yet formed partnerships.

2.5.4. Policy Advocacy

A Regional Action Plan for the RSPO is being pushed for through the policy advocacy process, which was started by GIZ, WWF, and FORTASBI in collaboration with the government of the Kapuas Hulu Regency (Fortasbi, 2022). The Sustainable Palm Oil Plantation Action Plan for 2022–2024, as outlined in West Kalimantan Governor Regulation No. 3 of 2022, is essentially the source of this RAP (governor regulation / Pergub, 2022).

In addition to supporting the RAP policy, the Regency Government reports that GIZ and WWF will help independent oil palm farmers collect data and assist them in obtaining certification for RSPO and ISPO, as well as STDB, through partnerships with the provincial government of West Kalimantan and BDPKPS (Palm Plantation Fund Management Agency) (BPDP or.id, 2020).

2.5.5. The Organizational of Farmers

Increasing the level of understanding

Through a series of mentoring, talks, training, and workshops, WWF and GIZ, in collaboration with PPSMMB and Solidaridad, aim to increase farmers' understanding of RSPO. Concurrently, FORTASBI served as a resource for a number of events, including workshops and training sessions. To be more precise, WWF is now giving the independent farmer group PPSMMB office and warehouse space in addition to business units in the form of cooperatives so that they can become self-sufficient after the WWF program or project is finished in 2025

With FORTASBI present, farmer groups feel that their level of knowledge has increased in the following ways: (1) increasing knowledge about the advantages of RSPO for independent oil palm farmers from an environmental and welfare perspective; (2) obtaining success stories from independent oil palm farmers who have received assistance from FORTASBI to serve as role models and sources of inspiration for farmer members; and (3) gaining knowledge about the technicalities involved in obtaining RSPO and ISPO certification.

Organizational Model

With assistance from WWF, farmer groups (Poktan) in hamlets and farmers groups association (GAPOKTAN) in three villages serve as the foundation for the organizing model for farmer groups in the Silat Hilir District. The Poktan and GAPOKTAN members are combined into a single association, called PPSMMB (Perkumpulan Petani Sawit Mandiri Mitra Bersama), as part of an organization. Following the organizational process, WWF used FORTASBI as a resource person to conduct a mentoring and capacity-building program through a variety of activities, discussions, training, seminars, and other events.

RSPO certification changes at the farmer group level (possibilities and problems)

The rise in the number of PPSMMB members from 201 in 2022 to 301 in 2023 is a fundamental and noteworthy development that can be quantitatively observed. In addition, by beginning to implement RSPO standards—such as land legality, reducing the use of chemical fertilizers, implementing K3, and consciously managing to become a member of the RSPO through membership in FORTASBI—farmers' awareness of the management and cultivation of oil palm has increased qualitatively. Aside from that, the majority of members (218 farmers) presently holds STDB and is in the process of processing RSPO and ISPO certificates. In addition, a minimum of 301 farmers who are members of the PPSMMB and own 418.2 hectares of land will cultivate palm fruit (FFB) in 2023. An annual total of 4,000 tons are produced. However, by 2024, at least 302 farmers who are members of the PPSMMB will own legitimate land. Legalizing member gardens is a task for the PPSMMB work program, which runs through 2025.

Through collaboration or collaborations with RSPO member firms, PPSMMB farmer groups may be able to purchase their palm oil products at affordable and higher rates. Currently, middlemen set the comparatively low selling price of commodities containing palm oil.

Concerning obstacles, the primary one is the need for verifiable proof demonstrating the financial gains that members derive from joining the RSPO. The majority of members continue to hold out hope that they will soon be able to form alliances with businesses that will purchase their palm products at fair pricing, as this has not yet occurred. The managers of PPSMMB are hoping that FORTASBI can help make this collaboration possible. Another issue is that, because of limited land ownership, PPSMMB members have not been able to convert all of their property into oil palm plantations; instead, more than half of the area is still being farmed for food and horticulture products. This indicates that the amount of palm oil production that will be generated is still quite small in terms of quantity.

However, a study shows that one of the impacts of RSPO certification will be changes in the form of reducing the costs of using herbicides and the efficiency of using fertilizers, which will have an impact on increasing the income of independent oil palm growers. (Veriasa, Nurrunisa, et al., 2022).

2.5.6. Opportunities and challenges for the program sustainability

According to the data that is currently available, there is a chance because the farmer organizations that have been established are still in the early stages of sustainable palm oil management and therefore require support. Aside from that, more thorough socialization is still required because this RSPO-related issue is still relatively new to the Kapuas Hulu Regency government and related stakeholders in terms of ideas, policies, and regulations. Engagement is still required for companies to be able to play a role in this RSPO context because the role and involvement of palm oil companies in Kapuas Hulu in this RSPO issue is currently relatively small or even nonexistent.

Meanwhile, the following are the difficulties with program sustainability: (1) the program's limited coverage—5 villages and 2 districts—means that only a small percentage of independent oil palm farmers are aware of and understand the RSPO; (2) the farmer groups that have been formed, such as PPSMMB and Ensilat Sejahtera Farmers Groups, have not yet formed partnerships with RSPO member palm oil plantation companies that will purchase their commodities, so the economic benefits have not yet been felt; and (3) the certification process requires significant funding, which will make it difficult for the program to continue if farmer groups carry the burden.

2.6. Landak (Kalimantan Barat)

2.6.1. An overview of the program area

Landak Regency is one of the regencies in West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. The 1999 expansion of Mempawah Regency resulted in the formation of Landak Regency. With an area of 9,909.10 km² and a population of 406,946 in mid-2024, Ngabang district serves as the regency's capital. There are 156 villages in the 13 sub-districts that make up the Landak Regency, six of which are undeveloped (BPS, 2024).

The Landak Regency Government firmly supports this effort, even if the program area is inside the RSPO framework. The Landak Regency Government released a statement in March 2023 outlining regulations governing the buying and selling of Fresh Fruit Bunches (FFB) or Tandan Buah Segar (TBS) of palm oil that are produced by locals and planters (local government regulation / Perbup, 2023). Palm Oil Mills (PKS) can only take Fresh Fruit Bunches grown by growers or the community through grower institutions, as the notification makes clear. Landak Regent's Announcement Letter Number: 500.8.1/III/Disbun, which addresses Planters' and Communities' Control over the Sale and Purchase of Palm Oil Fresh Fruit Bunches (TBS) Production, makes this claim. The purpose of this announcement letter is to draw attention to the state of the practice of purchasing and selling TBS produced by planters' or communities' oil palm plantations. This practice has not been in compliance with the regulations set forth in the West Kalimantan Province Governor's Regulation Number 63 of 2018, as amended by the West Kalimantan Governor's Regulation Number 86 of 2022 concerning Implementation Guidelines for Determining the K Index and Purchasing Prices for Fresh Palm Fruit Bunches Production by West Kalimantan Planters (Pergub, 2022)

One of the firms in this regency that processes palm oil is PT Hilton Duta Lestari (HDL), which is situated in Mempawah Hulu, Menjalin District, Landak Regency. With 15 cooperatives as partners as of right now, PT HDL is progressively approaching its goal of working with 40 cooperatives by 2025. In the Landak Regency, the two districts of Menjalin and Mempahulu are home to PT HDL's target areas and partners. In regencies other than Landak, it is in Monterado District (one cooperative in one village) in Bengkayang Regency, and there are two in Mempawah Regency, namely Tohok and Sarandeng Districts. The Mustard Farmers Producer Cooperative "Sinam Sejahtera," led by Mr. Yakobus, is one of PT HDL's partners. In this district, a notable degree of collaboration has been observed between the local government and the management of PT HDL and Sinam Sejahtera Oil Palm Farmer Producer Cooperative. This is evidenced by the attached Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which outlines the commitment of all parties involved. The company and the farmer cooperative are working towards the goal of obtaining RSPO certification, with the support of the local government.

2.6.2. Regional Response to the RSPO Program

The initiative connected to RSPO received a positive response from the Landak Regency Government. The head of the District Plantation Service in Landak, Yulianus Edo Natalaga, acknowledges that independent farmers in the Landak Regency face a number of challenges. These include independent

oil palm plantations that are more challenging to certify due to problems with land area status and overlap, the fact that many of these farmers' land is not yet legally recognized, and the difficulty of documenting plantation administration tasks like fertilizing and spraying. The Plantation Service offers assistance, particularly with data collection, mapping, and farmer support. Naturally, it collaborates with other relevant organizations like the Environmental Service, DPMPTSP, and PUPR to find various ways to expedite the release of documents that are necessary for full certification.

2.6.3. Responses, Models and Approaches to Established Partnerships

Local Government

The Landak Regency Government has reacted to the RSPO and ISPO challenges in a comparatively normative manner, particularly in the Agriculture and Food Service sub-sector of the Plantation Service. This is mostly because the local government budget has a limited budget for raising awareness of this issue and employs few field extension specialists who are knowledgeable about it. Support is given to oil palm growers who form cooperatives that improve the welfare of the community. In order to promote cooperatives' active engagement in raising plantation productivity and expediting the certification of sustainable palm oil in Landak Regency, the regency government is still working to ensure that ISPO-RSPO is not just interpreted as a technical word.

In the meantime, FORTASBI has been involved, but only to a limited extent, according to Mr. Yulianus Edo Natalaga, Head of the Plantation Service. It is hoped that FORTASBI agents would increase in number. More often than not, FORTASBI serves as a resource in collaborative district government outreach programs aimed at educating farmers about the RSPO. Landak Regency administration will continue to advocate for this cause and intends to create a Regent's Regulation about the Regional Action Plan (RAP) for Sustainable Palm Oil Plantations as part of its response to the RSPO.

Companies

It appears from the study's findings that PT HDL has a significant role in the context of RSPO. Since the sustainable palm oil standard hasn't been applied for very long, there hasn't truly been a big change as of yet. Even though it is not yet RSPO accredited, PT HDL uses a different approach, particularly for smallholder FFB areas. Covering 40 communities within a 30-kilometer radius of the factory, the coverage aims to establish collaborations with local stakeholders. In order to become partners, cooperatives must go through multiple stages, not just legality, which is crucial, but also putting environmental management into practice. The lengthy procedure is due to this introduction, which covers how the system is run in each of the village's cooperatives. In order to regulate the environment, the company is setting up stages for current and future partners who will sign an MOU with it. There is currently an assessment process in place for 21 villages that has just started. It starts with environmental management and participatory mapping, with a focus on environmental areas that need to be protected, particularly conservation areas. Next comes verification, followed by discussion and an annual review of the agreement or agreement on the conservation area.

Cooperation with FORTASBI: Within a year, begin training farmers in RSPO by connecting them to selected cooperatives. In order to help farmers, obtain RSPO certification, they also deploy PICs. As of right now, FORTASBI's contribution to the Landak Regency region consists of one representative.

The FORTASBI Team travels with farmers, whether or not it is necessary. In Landak Regency, there is one citizen of Bengkayang who serves as FORTASBI's representative.

According to PT HDL (Mr. Kurniawan S.Si, Assistant Sustainability Manager), the company offers several initiatives for farmers, such as scoping studies, identifying work areas, and establishing autonomous farmer groups. It is anticipated that the program will enable farmers to receive group training, safeguard the environment, and obtain legal registration in order to become RSPO certified.

Farmers Association

Regarding the RSPO issue, the Sinam Sejahtera Palm Oil Farmer Producers Cooperative has given a largely supportive answer. This is because people are becoming more conscious of how important it is to protect the environment, but there is also a benefit in the form of a better selling price for palm oil commodities that have the RSPO and ISPO certificates. In the case of cooperatives, FORTASBI's presence comparatively gives farmer groups the information and inspiration they need to stay devoted and consistent within the RSPO framework. Aside from FORTASBI's attendance, Mr. Yakobus, the Chairman of the Sinam Sejahtera Cooperative, claims that PT HDL is highly dedicated to their cooperative and genuinely helps farmers with the 20 Stem Palm Oil Movement by Farmers in order to better maintain their farms. Because of PT HDL's numerous contributions, the cooperative is eager to put the MOU's recommendations into practice (MoU, 2023). Aside from that, the lender, Mandiri Bank, is helping them with their cooperative activities in Landak Regency by providing People's Business Credit (KUR) for their palm oil company.

2.6.4. Policy Advocacy

Through effective collaboration between the government, businesses, and farmers who are members of cooperatives in the area of Landak Regency, the policy advocacy process is promoting the creation of a Regional Action Plan related to RSPO, as well as implementing a data collection program for independent oil palm farmers and simultaneously providing assistance in the process of achieving RSPO certification.

2.6.5. The Organizational of Farmers

Increasing the level of understanding

PT. HDL, in collaboration with FORTASBI, organizes mentorship, conversations, training, and consultations to increase farmers' understanding of RSPO. FORTASBI has one specific person stationed in this district to provide direct help, and the FORTASBI team members reside nearby (Fortasbi, 2022). Mr. Yakobus stated that the company's PT HDL commitment is excellent for their understanding's expansion. People are now aware of producing palm oil and adhering to RSPO criteria, despite previously not knowing much about palm oil plants.

The cooperative has learned more about the following as a result of this activity: (1) more awareness of the advantages of RSPO for independent oil palm farmers from an environmental and welfare perspective; (2) success stories from independent oil palm farmers helped by FORTASBI, which can serve as a source of inspiration and guidance for other farmer members; (3) understanding of the

intricacies involved in obtaining RSPO and ISPO certification; and (4) awareness of the need for cooperatives to conduct administrative tasks in an organized manner. As a result, they find it simpler to handle the Mandiri Bank audit procedure and KUR access requirements.

Organizational Model

Menjalin District cooperative base serves as the organizational model for farmer group cooperatives. The training that each cooperative provides is related to agronomy (at least standard oil palm gardening techniques), how to introduce the environment, and how to introduce the RSPO. The organizational model implemented by PT HDL is related to the relevance of RSPO coverage.

Note: Three regencies now have the PT HDL Range 30 KM region. However, FORTASBI is only aware of Landak because PT HDL only made an agreement there, even though the HDL area is spread across three regencies. FORTASBI serves as a resource for these endeavors. (Fortasbi, 2023).

RSPO certification changes at the farmer group level (possibilities and problems)

Following the RSPO process has resulted in a fundamental shift for farmer organizations, as their members can now reflect on past mistakes made on oil palm fields and have standard commitments. Organizations are currently evolving their mindsets to consider not only how to produce regular palm fruit but also sustainability, processing, and industrial phases. By working together or forming partnerships with RSPO member companies, cooperatives have the chance to buy their palm oil products at fair prices.

Meanwhile, distribution is a factor in the difficulties. The palm fruit needs to go to the cooperative within two days of the palm oil being harvested, which means it needs to be easily accessible and arrive on time. However, there are still instances when Landak Regency area has challenges with the topography and transportation, making it difficult to move efficiently. Finances are the next issue; there aren't many local investors. Because Mandiri Bank is currently their primary source of income, they are required to visit the bank once a week in order for money to flow. The lack of understanding among farmers is the third difficulty, and this calls for further workshops and trainings.

On the other side, a study shows that one of the impacts of RSPO certification will be changes in the form of reducing the costs of using herbicides and the efficiency of using fertilizers, which will have an impact on increasing the income of independent oil palm growers. (Veriasa, Nurrunisa, et al., 2022).

2.6.6. Opportunities and challenges for the program sustainability

Hopefully, other companies will make the same commitment as PT HDL. FORTASBI's presence is necessary to be bolstered even further. A cooperative audit must be completed before the certification procedure, which necessitates a large number of papers and financial resources. Attaining RSPO accreditation will be simpler if all requirements are met, not just the administrative ones.

2.1 Berau (Kalimantan Timur)

2.7.1 Overview of the programme area

Berau Regency is one of the seven regions that FORTASBI is working in for its program to strengthen independent palm oil smallholders. The selection of Berau is based on the large potential of the palm oil commodity. In FORTASBI's Smallholders Engagement Report (2023), it is stated that the commodities commonly planted in Berau are oil palm, cocoa, rubber, and coconut. Of these, oil palm is the main one, with 105,503.30 ha of company plantations, plus 16,464 ha of plasma plantations and 19,029.80 ha of independent smallholder plantations. According to its report, FORTASBI identified a number of smallholder groups that were assisted by the Sawit Rakyat Mandiri Association and, in 2022, applied for STDB for 1,000 smallholder plantation plots.

According to the Berau Regency Plantation Office in the Fortasbi report (2023), there are a number of districts that produce palm oil, namely: Teluk Bayur district, Segah district, Kelay district, Batu Putih district, Biatan district, and Tali Sayan district. However, despite the distribution of these oil palm-producing areas, not all areas have farmer groups that are massively assisted. There are 62 large palm oil companies operating in the district. Palm oil production in Berau Regency is experiencing an upward trend from 2,514,017 tons of FFB production in 2022, increasing by 372,223 tons to 2,886,240 tons in 2023. This is the accumulation of the FFB harvest for a full year. Processed derivatives also experienced an increase in production over the years. In 2022, CPO production reached 557,701 tons and rose to 610,330 tons in 2023. The total area of oil palm plantations itself currently reaches 151,386 hectares. This area consists of land produced by large palm oil companies (PBS) and independent community land (Sawitindonesia.com: 2024).

According to an interview with the Berau Regency Plantation Office, the rapid development of palm oil plantations in Berau Regency must be balanced by sustainable palm oil management that is not only concerned with environmental conservation efforts but also pays attention to the rights of palm oil farmers, both independent palm oil farmers and plasma palm oil farmers. In the context of sustainable palm oil management, there are currently several challenges faced by the region, namely: (1) the expansion of oil palm into forest areas; (2) the low understanding of oil palm farmers about the awareness of oil palm cultivation; (3) the legality of oil palm plantation land; and (4) the lack of equitable partnership relations between companies and independent oil palm farmers.

2.7.2 Regional Response to the RSPO Programme

Berau Regency already has a Local Government Regulation on Sustainable Plantation, which was issued through Berau Local Government Regulation No. 3 of 2020. The regulation states that palm oil is one of the five leading commodities developed in Berau Regency. In addition, Berau also has a RAD KSB, although during the field data collection process, the technical OPD, namely the plantation office, could not share the document. Sustainable plantation development also has an orientation to encourage sustainable commodity management, including palm oil in Berau Regency. In this context, the application of RSPO standardization to both companies and independent companies will be an important aspect that can realize sustainable palm oil governance. For this reason, the local government has responded well to the program to strengthen and prepare independent palm oil farmers for RSPO certification.

According to the plantation office, the socialization and training programs have strengthened awareness and education on the urgency and benefits of the RSPO for groups of independent oil palm smallholders. However, despite showing a fairly good response to the program, direct support from the local government to strengthen independent oil palm smallholders in sustainable palm oil governance has not yet been fully implemented due to several obstacles: (1) the limited capacity of local government human resources, especially technical DPOs; (2) inadequate facilities and infrastructure to support the acceleration of STBD issuance; and (3) bureaucratic and administrative challenges regarding the authority to issue STBD in the hands of the regent, which requires a long process and overlaps with the duties and functions of several DPO. NGO and CSO that also partner with local governments, especially in matters of sustainable palm oil governance, such as ASRM and Solidaridad, said that although a good response from the local government has been built, it has not been able to show concrete support that can protect the rights and strengthen independent oil palm farmers due to these constraints.

2.7.3 Partnership responses, models and approaches developed

Local Government

Berau Regency government's response to FORTASBI's program can be said to be quite good. The local government appreciates FORTASBI's step to present RSPO member smallholders to motivate and inspire independent smallholders in Berau. FORTASBI's program is also in line with the local government's program to encourage sustainable palm oil management in Berau regency. The existence of two local regulations related to sustainable plantation management and a sustainable palm oil management action plan shows the commitment of the local government to striving for a more sustainable palm oil management ecosystem from upstream to downstream, although in practice various challenges both internal and external often occur.

At the local government level, for example, there are several internal challenges faced in encouraging sustainable palm oil governance, including RSPO, namely: (1) the limited capacity of local government human resources; the local government admits that the lack of human resource capacity and the number of human resources in charge of these affairs greatly affect the acceleration of the program. (2) inadequate facilities and infrastructure in supporting the acceleration of STBD issuance; and (3) bureaucratic and administrative challenges regarding the authority to issue STBD, which is in the hands of the regent; besides that, it requires a long process and intersects with the duties and functions of several OPDs. In the midst of these challenges, based on the results of interviews, Berau regency government is also working on several strategies that can support sustainable palm oil governance, including RSPO implementation: (1) The plan to issue 500 STBDs or 1000 ha of independent palm oil land has not been optimal due to constraints from multi-stakeholder authorities related to land legality and RTRW. For the initial stage, only 300 hectares have been submitted and processed. (2) partnership development that encourages companies to partner with independent oil palm smallholders. (3) partnering with NGO, CSOs, and other donor agencies to strengthen sustainable palm oil governance.

"Berau Regency Government still has limited human resources and infrastructure for the STBD issuance process. We also feel that there is still a lack of courage in carrying out the process because the process involves many parties and OPDs. The authority to issue the STDB is with the regent." - (Heri, Berau Plantation office)

Local NGO

Efforts to strengthen sustainable palm oil governance in Berau are also driven by the role of NGO/CSO. Some of the NGO/CSO and donor agencies that have been working on sustainable palm oil issues are: (1) YKAN, (2) GIZ, (3) USAID SEGAR, (4) Solidaredad and (5) FORTASBI, one of the local NGO concerned with strengthening independent oil palm smallholders is the Alliance of Independent People's Oil Palm (ASRM). ASRM (Alliance of Independent People's Oil Palm). ASRM is a local organization that focuses on advocacy and organizing groups of oil palm farmers at the grassroots. Since 2018, ASRM has been a grassroots movement initiated by village heads and continues to grow as a gathering space and movement space for independent oil palm farmers in Berau Regency. As its membership network and partnerships grow, ASRM has finally become an organization with an open membership system and has partnered with several NGO/donors for the agenda of strengthening and assisting independent oil palm farmers.

Prior to partnering with FORTASBI for the independent oil palm smallholder strengthening program in Berau regency, ASRM had been engaged in advocacy efforts to strengthen the rights of independent oil palm smallholders and advocacy efforts for land legality of independent oil palm smallholders. ASRM has a strong grassroots group base. In addition to partnering with FORTASBI, ASRM also receives support from USAID SEGAR which is also provided through FORTASBI for the program to strengthen independent oil palm smallholders. According to ASRM, the program partnership with FORTASBI focuses on strengthening the knowledge and capacity of independent smallholders to prepare for RSPO certification. The capacity building consists of knowledge and understanding of RSPO and capacity building on sustainable palm oil cultivation. The strengthening consists of education and socialization for independent smallholders about RSPO, training on sustainable palm oil cultivation, ToT for local facilitators, and internal audit training.

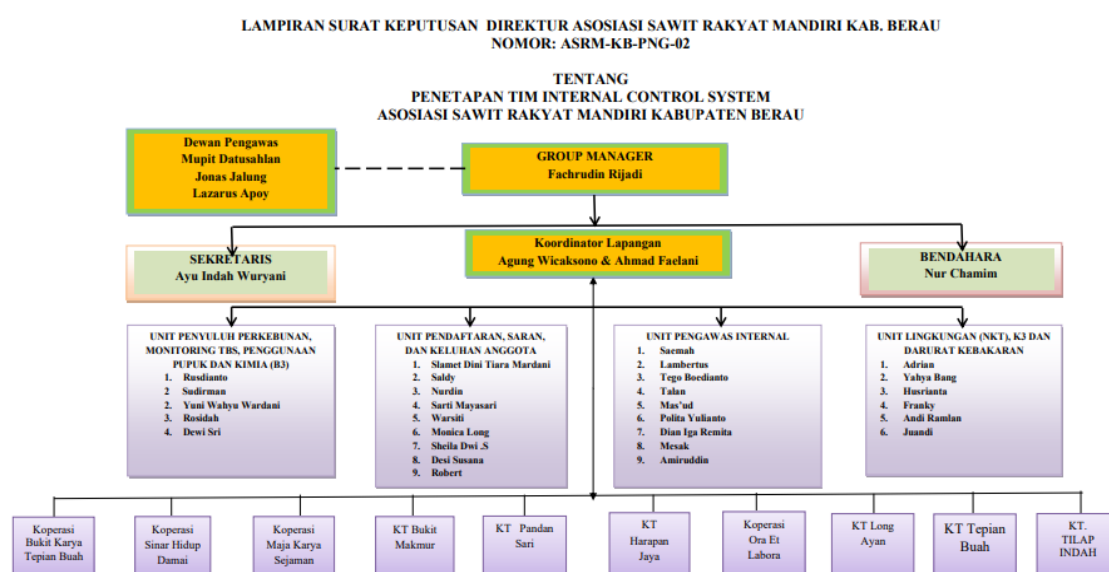
According to ASRM, the partnership with FORTASBI provides several positive achievements related to the expansion of RSPO coverage areas in Berau regency, especially in strengthening and sharpening the direction of ASRM's work. First, the partnership with FORTASBI provides a more specific strengthening of the foundation that has been applied by ASRM in the previous program. If the previous program started with group strengthening through policy and institutional advocacy, the FORTASBI program complements it with more technical and significant capacity building, for example: sustainable cultivation, seed selection, understanding of the importance of certification, understanding of internal audits, etc. (ASRM). Secondly, the understanding built at the farm level is also put into practice in the cultivation of sustainable oil palm planting (ASRM). According to ASRM, these two important points contribute to the strengthening and coverage of potential areas and regions to realize RSPO and strengthen and complement the work that has been and is still being pursued by stakeholders in strengthening sustainable palm oil governance in Berau Regency.

"This partnership with FORTASBI complements ASRM's previous efforts to strengthen independent smallholders. ASRM has started with various efforts to advocate for farmers' rights and efforts to legalize farmers' land. Then there is FORTASBI which supports capacity building for farmers in sustainable oil palm cultivation, how to choose certified seeds, training for internal audit processes, etc." - Fachrudin, PIC of the Partnership Program with ASRM

However, there are several things that need to be strengthened and improved, including: (1) strengthening the patterns and methods of assisting farmers at the grassroots and ensuring that there are networks and linkages between farmers collectively, (2) advocating and strengthening farmers' institutions; and (3) engaging massively with local governments and companies to be able to oversee commitments that can lead to sustainable practices and implementation. (3) Strengthening partnership schemes that can encourage consolidation between parties.

Farmers Group

Independent oil palm farmer groups in Berau Regency are spread across several districts. The basis of



independent oil palm farmer groups assisted by ASRM is spread across two districts, namely Teluk Bayur and Segah districts. In the context of strengthening farmer groups for RSPO implementation, there are around 10 potential farmer groups assisted by ASRM with various capacities and needs. After the identification process, there are several farmer groups that are prioritized to be included and involved as beneficiaries in the FORTASBI-ASRM cooperation program for RSPO implementation and are spread across several sub-districts and villages, including Long Ayan, Punan Malinau, Labanan Makmur, Sumber Agung, and Kayu Indah, with a total membership of approximately 400 farmers and a land area of 869.22 ha. This number, according to ASRM, is a potential list that will be submitted for STDB and RSPO certification.

Figure 2. 2 ICS Struktur in Berau

To strengthen the process of organizing and strengthening institutions that support the strengthening of independent oil palm groups in both institutional governance and sustainable oil palm cultivation, including preparation for RSPO certification, ASRM Berau Regency has formed an Internal Control System team that is based on ASRM-assisted farmer groups spread across several ASRM-assisted districts and villages. Field findings show that the existence of a strong and progressive farmer group

base is part of the mentoring and strengthening efforts that have been and are still being carried out by ASRM since before the partnership program with FORTASBI took place.

The independent oil palm farmer group in Long Ayan Village, for example, has been portrayed as having a collective awareness to initiate groups and organize themselves. Currently, 335 land certificates have been processed for legality. Institutionally, they are not yet organized into formal farmer groups or cooperatives, but there is already a direction towards that that needs to be facilitated further. Meanwhile, the independent oil palm farmer group in Punan Village, Malinau, has formed a cooperative since 2012, the Ora Et Labora farmer cooperative, which is quite strong institutionally and in business development. They have partnered with palm oil companies in the vicinity, with a turnover of around 1 billion Rupiah every month from a total of 70 farmer members. This group has the enthusiasm and awareness to prepare for RSPO implementation but still needs further facilitation and assistance to strengthen their understanding and practice in the field.

"We feel that this assistance has made us understand more and more about how to plant well and how to fertilize. And we feel that we want more assistance to know what we need to prepare to get RSPO and improve the quality of our palm oil production and prices..." - (Dewi, Farmer, Long Ayan)

The average problems and challenges faced by smallholders are: (1) some are still struggling with land legality issues, (2) access to quality seeds and fertilizers is quite difficult, so farmers have to use less quality seeds; (3) the dynamics and complexity of relations with companies, especially for trade partnerships that are not yet stable; and (4) farmer group institutions are still weak and still need to be strengthened.

Company

According to Heri from the Berau Regency Plantation Office, currently there are 35 large palm oil companies (PBS), the majority of which do not have ISPO and RSPO certification. There are only 1 or 2 companies that already have ISPO and RSPO certification, for example, PT KLK Group which has several other subsidiaries. The Plantation Office (Disbun) itself continues to make efforts and communicate strategies to companies so that they have a commitment to strengthen support for oil palm farmers, especially their partners. Dialogue efforts with palm oil companies in Berau Regency are not easy because the bureaucratic process is quite difficult. ASRM, for example, has to send letters in advance to get a disposition, and often companies do not keep their commitments to dialogue. This is also what the independent team found: in the interview process, the large palm oil company, PT KLK, had not conveyed the certainty of the schedule, even though it had expressed its willingness. Efforts to build engagement with the company are a challenge for the local government and ASRM. Despite this, the ASRM team said that there are gaps and opportunities to be able to strengthen the company's engagement, especially to implement RSPO principles in general, including opening up opportunities for dialogue to strengthen partnerships with farmers.

2.7.4 Policy Advocacy

Policy advocacy on sustainable palm oil management in Berau Regency is largely driven and conducted by NGO/CSOs, such as; YKAN, GIZ, USAID SEGAR, and SOLIDAREDAD. YKAN, for example, has escorted the local government to create a local regulation on sustainable palm oil plantations and a sustainable plantation partnership forum, although in practice the division of roles and partnerships between parties has not been optimal due to management and budgeting capacity constraints.

A local NGO that has been concerned with the issue of strengthening independent smallholders, especially in terms of advocating for farmers' rights and strengthening farmer groups, is ASRM/ Aliansi Sawit Rakyat Mandiri. Currently, fertilizer subsidy funds for oil palm farmers have been eliminated from the APBD because it is considered that oil palm is another superior commodity, such as cocoa and coconut, which can develop without financial stimulus from the local government. The local government wants to focus on other regional commodities so that there is a diversification of commodities and the region is not only dependent on palm oil.

2.7.5 Farmer Organization

Knowledge enhancement

ASRM's efforts to strengthen the capacity of farmer groups began with a partnership with KEHATI and after that, ASRM has continued to strengthen independent oil palm farmers until now. Prior to working with FORTASBI, ASRM conducted several education and capacity building activities, such as strengthening farmers' understanding of land legality and training on sustainable palm oil cultivation. The partnership with FORTASBI according to ASRM adds support to ASRM to provide strengthening to farmers in terms of oil palm cultivation, how to fertilize, and making farmers aware of the urgency and benefits of RSPO. The existence of capacity building through education and socialization processes does provide a basis of understanding for farmers, but there is not yet a comprehensive collective awareness and understanding at the site level. So the ToT given to farmer representatives in each group is expected to be a strategy to produce farmer cadres who can spread their understanding to other farmers in their groups.

"The training we attended did give us new knowledge, but we hope that there will also be direct assistance to the village, so that not only some of those who attended the training, but all farmers here can be informed and assisted directly. In the past, we were asked to collect data and ID cards from farmers, said to be for land legalization list. But until now, there has been no follow-up. Farmers in our village still really need to be assisted and educated, because not all farmers understand how to choose fertilizer and good oil palm seeds. But to be honest, we also find it very difficult to get quality fertilizer for our oil palms" - (Jones, Punan Malinau Farmer).

"We have attended training on oil palm fertilization, and we think it is very important. We tried to apply the results of the training to our plantation. We also feel that we can be more solid as a group and that we need to continue to be facilitated." - Agus Long Ayan Farmer

2.7.6 The Organizational of Farmers

ASRM's organization of independent oil palm farmers is done by opening the membership to independent oil palm farmers, both farmers who are already in groups or not. The organizing process

was carried out before the FORTABSI program entered. So that the entry of the Fortasbi program provides support to ASRM to further strengthen the process of organizing farmer groups more specifically on sustainable palm oil management, which also leads to the implementation and preparation of RSPO.

ASRM strengthens the organization by strengthening the group by involving members in a variety of capacity-building activities, facilitating the formation, and strengthening the group to advocate for farmer partnerships with companies. For RSPO preparation, ASRM has organized assisted farmer groups to form Internal Control System (ICS) groups. Findings in 2 villages and groups organized by ASRM show that the initiation of farmer groups in Long Ayan village and the existence of an ora et labora oil palm farmer cooperative in Punan Malinau have the direction and orientation of sustainable palm oil governance oriented towards RSPO implementation. However, these farmer groups certainly need a more massive pattern of assistance and organization, both institutionally and in terms of cultivation and business.

"Before ASRM, our cooperative had difficulty selling palm fruits to the company. The company imposed restrictions on the acceptance of palm fruit, and the purchase price of palm oil from farmers was quite low at that time. But after the ASRM, we were helped to be able to partner with the company and learn to improve the management of the cooperative, including data collection and scheduling of oil palm harvests so that sales can be made in turn. For the RSPO, not all farmers in the village understand, we hope that the assistance and guidance can go directly to the field (training is not enough with representatives)..." - (Jones, Chairman of Ora Et Labora Cooperative)

Changes at the farmer group level (RSPO certification) (opportunities and challenges)

Based on the results of interviews and FGD with farmer groups, there are several good achievements that can be captured, namely: (1) There is an increase in knowledge and understanding of the urgency and benefits of RSPO, although the knowledge of farmers is also at different levels of understanding. The emergence of understanding that leads to awareness to apply RSPO is an opportunity as well as a further challenge to be able to carry out group-based collective organizing. (2) The emergence of enthusiasm and willingness to learn from farmers to be able to apply RSPO standardization; the challenge is to maintain enthusiasm and engagement with farmers, considering that several farmer groups were assisted and facilitated for data collection and there was a break in the process that traumatized farmers. (3) Some farmers have started to practice sustainable oil palm cultivation and fertilization after attending the training. The challenge is to encourage farmers to switch from cultivation methods that still do not apply sustainable planting and fertilizer methods. (4) Conversations about sustainable oil palm cultivation, such as planting methods, fertilizer methods, seed selection, and fertilizer selection, are starting to emerge among farmers. However, farmers are faced with the challenge of difficulty in obtaining access to quality seeds, seedlings, and fertilizers. (5) Farmers begin to have market awareness and value for commodities grown in a quality manner; the challenge is that trade relations are not yet fair enough with companies, and not all farmers are able to access markets at fair prices. (4) the challenge of strengthening farmer groups both institutionally and through sustainable cultivation, market outreach, and fair partnerships.

2.7.7 Opportunities and challenges for programme sustainability

- a. While local governments have responded well to RSPO implementation, the challenge is to continue advocacy and strengthen local governments to implement their commitments and policies through programs that can accelerate sustainable palm oil governance.
- b. Berau already has a forum for sustainable plantation partnerships, whose birth was advocated by several NGO, including YKAN. After the program ended, the forum's sustainability in the hands of the local government has not been well managed, and the roles between parties have not been consolidated. If this forum can be activated and strengthened, it has the opportunity to become a more strategic and targeted consolidation space.
- c. The spirit and enthusiasm of farmer groups are quite high to implement RSPO; the challenge is to strengthen the basis of farmer groups institutionally and business-wise, because efforts to implement RSPO will and must be parallel with this strengthening. Therefore, massive and intensive assistance is needed for farmer groups.
- d. Ensure that independent oil palm smallholder groups can get access to quality seeds and fertilizers.
- e. The positive response from companies seeking to discuss RSPO implementation presents both an opportunity and a challenge to make sure companies are likewise eager to.
- f. Commit to supporting the strengthening of independent oil palm farmers through an equitable partnership mechanism.
- g. The high cost of RSPO certification is a challenge for the sustainability of RSPO implementation in farmer groups.
- h. The large number of donor agencies and NGO/CSO working on sustainable palm oil governance issues can be an opportunity and a strength if there is consolidation and division of complementary roles. The challenge is to ensure that the work of NGO/CSO can be connected and consolidated.
- i. Field findings show the dominant role of NGO/CSO in encouraging sustainable palm oil governance, this indicates that local governments are quite 'dependent' if the partnership process with NGO/CSO is not accompanied by dialectical capacity building by local governments.
- j. The existence of palm oil mills that accept all types of palm oil, whether planted inside or outside the area, is an obstacle to ensuring the supply chain and value chain of palm oil.

3. OUTCOMES HARVESTING

The objective of the Independent Review, carried out by IRE at the location of the programme "Paving the Way for Transformation and Acceleration of the Implementation of Sustainable Palm Oil Standard by Independent Smallholders in Indonesia," managed by FORTASBI, is to assess the efforts made to achieve results and to identify the most effective approaches to be employed in the future in light of the outcomes observed. The programme comprises four outcomes, namely:

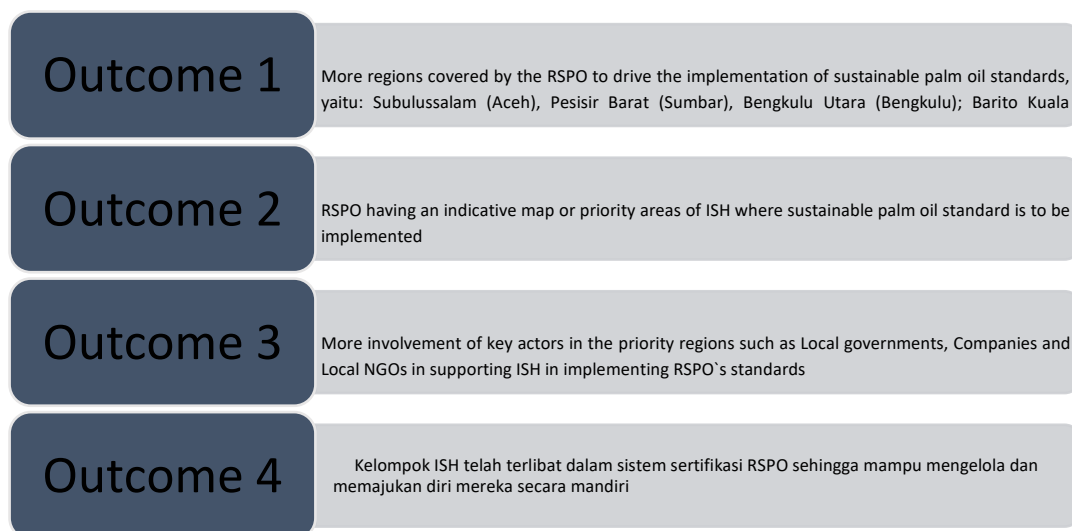


Figure 3. 1 The Outcome of Programme

Outcome 1: More regions covered by the RSPO to drive the implementation of sustainable palm oil standards

The implementation of the programme "Paving the Way for Transformation and Acceleration of the Implementation of Sustainable Palm Oil Standard by Independent Smallholders in Indonesia" by FORTASBI in seven districts was received positively in all areas targeted by the programme. All regions responded favourably to the implementation of this programme, which was perceived as a positive step towards addressing the challenges associated with the sustainability of palm oil. The regions have thus far primarily utilised the ISPO procedure, which is a policy mandate. Consequently, the presence of this programme is welcomed, as the RSPO is not yet widely known at the oil palm smallholder level.

The Regional Government of Pesisir Selatan has demonstrated a high level of receptivity to the RSPO programme. The involvement of other stakeholders, such as the BPD PKS, has created an environment conducive to the achievement of farmer group certification (ISH) in this area. In North Bengkulu Regency, the local government has expressed appreciation and support for the RSPO programme through the Plantation Office. Similarly, the knowledge of the RSPO certification mechanism among farmer groups in two villages has been enhanced. This encouraging response manifested in a request to maintain and extend the RSPO programme after its completion.

Prior to the implementation of the RSPO-FORTASBI programme in 2023, the Berau District had already established a Regional Regulation on Sustainable Plantation. One of the key objectives of this

regulation was to encourage the sustainable governance of plantation commodities, including palm oil, which was overseen by Yayasan Konservasi Alam Nusantara (YKAN). At that time, the Berau District did not yet have a RAD KSB. The ISPO and RSPO have indeed become issues and subjects of discussion among local government officials, yet they have not been specifically integrated into the involvement and interests of independent smallholders. The strengthening of independent smallholders at the grassroots level has been carried out by ASRM, which focuses on strengthening farmer institutions, applying for land legality, and sustainable palm oil education. This last point is also indirectly a requirement for RSPO submission. Following the FORTASBI programme, which was funded by USAID SEGAR, a process of socialisation, understanding and capacity building was initiated for independent smallholders on the urgency and benefits of RSPO. The Berau District Government, through the Plantation Office, acknowledges the value of this programme, which is perceived as more effective in strengthening farmers at the grassroots level. This will ensure that the RSPO is not merely a topic of discussion among local governments and companies, but also one that can be understood by independent smallholders in Berau.

Meanwhile, the regional response in the Subulussalam, Kapuas Hulu and Landak districts was open and positive. This was in line with many regions' aspirations to establish a sustainable development ecosystem, encompassing the formulation of policies pertaining to the production and trade of palm oil. This was seen as a means of creating economic prosperity for communities, particularly those engaged in palm oil farming, while also reducing the environmental impact associated with the industry.

Outcome 2: RSPO having an indicative map or priority areas of ISH where sustainable palm oil standard is to be implemented

Indicative maps have been produced through a mapping process that is primarily carried out by local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and farmer groups, although some are facilitated by local governments. The indicative map is necessary to identify the areas of greatest priority for ISH intervention, which will inform the programme's subsequent actions.

The Sada Kata Cooperative has conducted mapping in several areas of Subulussalam City, including the Sultan Daulat Rundeng and Longkib areas, which have the largest plantation areas. Nevertheless, this focus has not yet been designated as a priority for the certification pilot project. In Pesisir Selatan, priority areas were identified in the Lunang and Silaut sub-districts. The programme intervention in this area is of considerable strategic importance, given that it is one of the priority areas for the oil palm replanting programme.

In the Bengkulu Utara District, the identification of oil palm smallholders in the programme location was particularly robust in Talang Rasau Village. Despite the programme's inherent complexities, including the local political context preceding the Village Head Election (Pilkades), approximately 40 individuals have been identified as committed to the RSPO programme, with land ownership of 300 ha. In Urai Village, the identification of independent smallholders was not optimal, which resulted in the programme achieving only limited success in this village. In Kapuas Hulu, the programme area comprises two villages in the Silat Hilir subdistrict (Seberu Village and Sungai Sena Village) and one village in the Seberuang subdistrict (Pala Village). The total number of independent smallholder members is 301, all of whom are members of the PPSMMB.

Nevertheless, in Barito Kuala, the identification of potential and opportunities for the preparation of independent oil palm smallholders at two points conducted by LHI-FORTASBI has not been followed up, thus preventing the results from becoming a database and indicative map of ISH priority areas for RSPO.

Outcome 3: More involvement of key actors in the priority regions such as Local governments, Companies and Local NGOs in supporting ISH in implementing RSPO's standards.

Local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) play a strategic role in fostering harmony between parties in support of this programme. However, not all areas are serviced by local NGOs, necessitating FORTASBI to oversee the programme directly.

In the Subulussalam District, the RAD-KSB preparation process has thus far involved actors from the local government, companies, and local NGOs, including FORTASBI, in supporting independent smallholders in implementing good practices in oil palm farming. Nevertheless, further consolidation is required that does not solely depend on formal forums but also on non-formal arenas. It is crucial to devise a collaborative work plan to define the respective roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders. In contrast, in Pesisir Selatan, there is no local NGO that is considered capable of assuming a partnership role in implementing the RSPO programme in Pesisir Selatan. Nevertheless, the local government appears to be more responsive to involvement in efforts to encourage ISH to achieve RSPO standardisation. To date, no companies have yet committed to be involved in the programme, particularly given that they have not yet entered the RSPO system. One company, PT Sapta Silaut, is currently preparing for ISPO certification.

The PT HDL initiative in Landak District provides an opportunity to examine the potential for building partnerships with smallholders engaged in oil palm cultivation. The area of coverage is 30 kilometres from the mill, encompassing 40 communities. The objective is to establish partnerships with village stakeholders. In order to become a partner, the cooperative must complete several stages, not just those related to legality. It is also necessary to implement environmental management aspects. This preliminary stage of the process is lengthy, as it encompasses the management of the system within each of the cooperatives in the village. Furthermore, the company has established stages for partners and prospective partners who will enter into Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the company related to environmental management. These stages commence with participatory mapping, which identifies environmental areas that require maintenance, particularly conservation areas. Following this, verification is conducted, after which discussion and agreement or agreement on conservation areas is reached. This is then reviewed on an annual basis. Furthermore, the company employs a system of sanctions, which may result in the termination of the cooperative relationship. The company has entered into a cooperative agreement with Fortasbi. At the time of the introduction of the RSPO to farmers, training for cooperatives was initiated. This training commenced with the targeted cooperatives in the following year. Furthermore, the company deployed PICs to provide assistance to farmers in obtaining RSPO certificates.

Nevertheless, PT HDL's initiative was primarily driven by the company's necessity for RSPO certification. It should be noted that not all companies in the programme sites assumed this role. In general, the role of the local government, in particular the Department of Industry, Trade and Cooperatives, has been to provide support to all cooperative members, facilitate open communication and assist in each stage of the cooperative's legal process. In Kapuas Hulu district, a consolidation of

actors has occurred between WWF, GIZ, independent farmer groups, Fortasbi, the five village governments and the district government. Conversely, palm oil plantation companies have been relatively uninvolved in the RSPO context.

In contrast, prior to the implementation of the FORTASBI programme, several NGOs in Berau were already advocating for the implementation of sustainable palm oil governance. However, their efforts did not yet focus on the direct implementation of the RSPO for independent smallholders. In point of fact, the strengthening of independent oil palm smallholders has been pioneered by ASRM since 2018. The existence of NGOs such as YKAN, GIZ, Solidaredad, and USAID SEGAR has also provided the foundation for advocacy and organising work at the grassroots level, which has been characterised by its dynamism. The FORTASBI programme has not been able to consolidate the roles of stakeholders in order to encourage the implementation of the RSPO for independent oil palm smallholders, as this programme focuses more on education and training for independent oil palm smallholders. Nevertheless, the endeavours of ASRM, both preceding this programme and extending beyond its scope, have demonstrated that there is a promising avenue for encouraging companies to engage in further discourse regarding their role in the implementation of the RSPO.

Meanwhile, the role of the local government in the implementation of the RSPO has been carried out through efforts to encourage the certification of oil palm agricultural land or the issuance of STBD. However, in practice, the local government encounters obstacles in terms of authority, human resource capacity, and limited facilities/infrastructure, which prevent it from completing STBD. The findings in the field also found that the role of strengthening independent oil palm smallholders in the field is mostly carried out by NGOs/donors. The prevalence of NGOs and donors in Berau does not indicate a consolidated pattern of partnership and role-sharing, due to the challenges experienced by each subject or actor. (1) NGOs/CSOs have limited time to conduct programmes, (2) local governments lack the capacity to continue programmes that have been initiated by NGOs, sometimes perceiving the local government burdened by the "unfinished" work of NGOs due to their dependence on donors, (3) companies are preoccupied with their own management, particularly profit and loss calculations.

Outcome 4: ISH groups having been involved in RSPO's certification system to be able to independently manage and advance themselves

FORTASBI, in collaboration with local partners, has achieved notable advancements at the farmer group level. These include an increase in knowledge, which has a positive impact on strengthening awareness and engagement in RSPO procedures. However, it is noteworthy that almost all farmer groups in the FORTASBI programme area have indicated that they still require assistance. The programme has generated a notable change in awareness at the ISH group level, with regard to the establishment of a sustainable production and governance base.

Significant advancements have been made in all programme areas, where the knowledge and awareness levels of ISH groups have been enhanced. This encompasses a range of topics, including land management and the use of chemical fertilisers that have an impact on the environment, as well as the application of OHS requirements, as exemplified by the case of Kapuas Hulu. A similar phenomenon can be observed in Bengkulu Utara, where the introduction of sustainable cultivation and the use of safety equipment (helmets) are beginning to be practised by some independent

smallholders. Furthermore, there is evidence of an awareness of the need to establish economic institutions, such as cooperatives, as demonstrated by the seriousness with which they are preparing the legalities of establishing a cooperative.

It is also important to note that ISH groups still lack assistance with regard to post-socialisation and training. Consequently, many groups are currently questioning the continuation of the programme, given the obstacles they still face. The findings in Berau indicate that both direct and indirect beneficiaries and mentors have the motivation and willingness to prepare themselves and their groups to implement the RSPO, although they still face a number of obstacles. (1) A lack of clarity regarding the RSPO, (2) constraints on access to quality seeds and fertilisers, (3) the weakness of farmer group institutions, (4) land legality due to constraints in issuing letters. Nevertheless, despite these challenges, some farmer groups have initiated the formation of cooperatives and are engaged in the process of land identification and verification, as well as participating in several capacity-building and training agendas conducted by ASRM-FORTASBI. It is evident that a more substantial, concentrated, and long-lasting programme of group strengthening and mentoring is required.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusion

In general, the program "Paving the Way for Transformation and Acceleration of the Implementation of Sustainable Palm Oil Standard by Independent Smallholders in Indonesia" implemented by FORTASBI together with local partners has recorded many important changes in 7 program locations that illustrate optimism in supporting sustainable palm oil policies and governance. The most obvious change is in the aspect of knowledge and awareness, especially at the farmer group level. Some other important findings in this review activity are:

First, the success of this program in developing the coverage of the RSPO area cannot be separated from the role of Local NGOs who have previously done a lot of community organizing work and the openness of the Regional Government who have the same interest in implementing sustainable development. For example, in Berau Regency, for example, since 2018/2019 ASRM has started advocacy efforts and organized independent oil palm farmer groups in 10 villages spread across Segah and Teluk Bayur sub-districts. The advocacy and mentoring efforts initially focused on advocacy and education on the legality of agricultural land and bridging the door of partnerships to large palm oil companies. Although the focus has not been entirely on RSPO certification, the existence of a farmer group base that has been assisted and educated is certainly a potential as well as a good opportunity to prepare a group of independent oil palm farmers who are institutionally strong and educated in sustainable oil palm management and cultivation. The presence of the cooperation program with FORTASBI complements and strengthens the efforts that have been built for a long time by ASRM.

Second, the relationship between actors that began to build and synergize with each other, experienced disorientation because of the program that had ended. Local NGOs that FORTASBI expects to be able to escort after the program is completed, also have limited resources to continue this program. The sustainability aspect of the program is a serious problem in each region, considering that the exit strategy of this program is not strongly designed, leaving many questions and concerns, especially at the level of local governments, local NGOs and farmer groups. For example, most farmers and stakeholders in the 7 program areas have high hopes for the continuation of this program in the future. This is based on the expectation of independent smallholders to be able to prepare for the needs and requirements required for RSPO certification.

Third, this program has succeeded in increasing public knowledge and critical awareness related to sustainable palm oil, but farmer groups have challenges in managing the RSPO due to suboptimal assistance and budget limitations. Although there have been good initiatives to carry out land management, the use of fertilizers and the fulfillment of K3 procedures. According to ASRM, RSPO certification financing requires a fairly high cost, around 250 million for the cost of one package of certification processes. Of course, this cost is high because it is charged directly to independent oil palm farmer groups. On the other hand, independent oil palm farmers are also still struggling with the challenge of difficult access to quality fertilizers and certified seeds at affordable prices.

Fourth, the Regional Government has a strategic role in encouraging the sustainability of this program, considering that there are regional development policies and programs that can be directed to strengthen the goal of achieving sustainable palm oil. The governments of Berau Regency, South Coast, and Subulussalam City have high hopes that the FORTASBI program can support the Regional Government program.

Fifth, the role of companies is still quite weak in this program, except for companies that do have an interest in conducting RSPO certification. For example, PT HDL which partnered with the Sinam Sejahtera Oil Palm Farmers Cooperative which was outlined in the MOU and supported by the local government. However, not all companies have a strong commitment at the program location. The involvement of companies in supporting ISH to meet RSPO certification standards can be said to be minimal if the company has not met ISPO or RSPO standards. The company may not find the relevance of this program to its business interests. This can be seen from the weak commitment of companies in North Bengkulu to be present and actively involved in activities organized by FORTASBI and YKRL. Likewise, in Berau Regency, where the collaboration ecosystem has improved, the role of companies is still weak, except for those who are interested in managing RSPO. PT KLK in Berau Regency, for example, although it has shown an opportunity to open a dialogue with NGOs related to partnerships with independent oil palm farmers, the dialogue is still in the form of an initial discourse that needs to be followed up through strategic agreements. Therefore, further dialogue and advocacy are still needed to ensure that the company's commitment is contained in concrete actions. On average, the company will prioritize partnerships with its partner farmers so that it also provides benefits to the company. Meanwhile, in Barito Kuala Regency, the company is still busy with governance problems in its internal body, so it is still quite difficult to open a dialogue on partnership opportunities and strengthen independent oil palm farmers.

A detailed account of the conclusions reached in each programme area is provided in the table below.

Table 3 Details of Outcome Review in Each Region

Regency		Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4
1	Subulussalam	The presence of FORTASBI to pave the way for the transformation of independent oil palm farmers is appreciated by farmers and local NGOs. Training, socialization and mentoring activities are quite felt by farmers regarding the advantages of obtaining RSPO sustainable palm oil certification. One of the local NGOs – EF also appreciated FORTASBI's work to fill each other's job vacancies in oil palm plantation activities.	Several areas in Subulussalam City that are the focus of FORTASBI through the Sada Cooperative include the Sultan Daulat Rundeng and Longkib areas which have the largest plantation area. However, this focus does not yet have a special priority that will be used as a certification Pilot Project.	The process of preparing the RAD-KSB so far has been able to involve actors, both local governments, companies and NGOs, including FORTASBI to support Independent Oil Palm Farmers in implementing good practices in oil palm plantation. However, there is still a need to improve the further consolidation that does not only rely on formal forums. The joint work agenda is important to be designed to fill each other's job posts which will be worked on by whom.	Through the Sada Kata Cooperative to reach Independent Oil Palm Farmers is quite effectively run by FORTASBI. In terms of the position of farmers who are ready to advance certification, there are only one or two more things left to be able to improve towards RSPO certification. However, in terms of farmers' understanding of the urgency of sustainable palm oil practices, assistance is still needed with sufficient time and intensity.
2	Pesisir Selatan	The local government has demonstrated a high level of receptivity to the implementation of the RSPO programme in Pesisir Selatan. The provision of support from other stakeholders (BPD PKS) serves to create an enabling environment for the	A process of identifying priority areas was conducted in the Lunang and Silaut sub-districts. The programme's intervention in this area is strategically significant, as it constitutes one of the	It is evident that there are no local NGOs that are deemed capable of partnering with the RSPO programme in Pesisir Selatan. Nevertheless, the local government appears to be more amenable to participating in initiatives aimed at promoting ISH in line with RSPO standards.	Despite an increase in knowledge of the RSPO among farmer groups, the lack of assistance and capital constraints have prevented them from attaining certification. However, institutions in these two sub-districts are comparatively

		achievement of farmer group certification (ISH) within this area.	priority areas for the oil palm replanting programme.	Thus far, no companies have committed to involvement in the programme, particularly given that they have not yet entered the RSPO system. One company, PT Sapta Silaut, is preparing for ISPO certification.	better prepared to pursue certification, largely due to the existence of farmer cooperatives in each programme location.
3	Bengkulu Utara	The local government demonstrates appreciation and support for the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) programme via the Plantation Office. Similarly, the knowledge of the RSPO certification mechanism has been enhanced among farmer groups in the two villages. Furthermore, the programme has elicited a positive response in the form of sustained demand for its sustainability following the conclusion of the programme.	The identification of oil palm smallholders in the programme location is a relatively straightforward process in Talang Rasau Village. Despite the presence of conflicting interests within the programme, approximately 40 individuals have been identified as being firmly committed to the RSPO initiative, with a combined land ownership of 300 hectares.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme was successful in reaching out to local government, companies and local NGOs with the objective of encouraging farmers to implement the RSPO standard in the district. • The local government made a policy commitment through the STDB registration process. • A local non-governmental organisation (NGO), YKRL, collaborated with FORTASBI as the implementing entity for the programme. It is evident that more substantial and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the two villages that received assistance, only the farmer group from Talang Rasau demonstrated a commitment to the establishment of an institution (cooperative). • The termination of the programme led YKRL, a local NGO, to lack the confidence to continue providing assistance to farmers.

				<p>participatory engagement is required in order to ensure the effective implementation of this programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One significant challenge for NGOs is the difficulty in reaching out to companies, given the negative perceptions associated with NGOs in this context. YKRL has been successful in establishing connections with companies, although these have not yet reached a level of strength that would enable the formation of networks or the advancement of policy advocacy. 	
4	Barito Kuala	<p>The introduction of FORTASBI's programme to Barito Kuala (2022) has been met with considerable approval by the local government, as it serves to reinforce the educational and social processes surrounding the necessity of RSPO, particularly among farming communities. Nevertheless, the Barito Kuala local government is currently</p>	<p>The identification of potential and opportunities for the preparation of independent oil palm farmers in the two points that have been carried out by LHI-FORTASBI has not been followed up with the results required to create a database and indicative map</p>	<p>The implementation of the FORTASBI-LHI programme has involved local governments and independent farmer groups on the scale of a socialisation programme only; it has not yet developed into a more consolidated partnership and sharing pattern. The identification activities that have been carried out have not been</p>	<p>The socialisation, understanding and awareness of the farmer groups is gradually developing; however, the group organisation, particularly in relation to RSPO preparation, still requires reinforcement and guidance.</p>

		unaware of the programme's future trajectory and direction following the socialisation process and identification of RSPO readiness potential in two sub-districts, namely Barabai and Wanaraya.	of ISH priority areas for RSPO.	followed up in a systematic manner, resulting in a lack of clarity regarding the subsequent steps to be taken. There is a lack of structured communication, which has led to a disconnect between the various parties involved, particularly between the local government and local NGOs/LHI. This has an impact on the sustainability of the programme and the direction of the partnership.	
5	Kapuas Hulu	The strength of the regional government's response to the introduction of the FORTASBI programme was significantly influenced by the presence of similar initiatives previously implemented by various non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including GIZ and WWF.	The identification of independent smallholders in the region has been facilitated by the establishment of an independent smallholders association (PPSMMB), initiated by WWF. FORTASBI plays a role in facilitating further capacity enhancement of the aforementioned associations.	The presence of several NGOs with an interest in sustainable palm oil has led to the establishment of strong engagement with the local government and NGOs in this region. Nevertheless, this review has not identified the form of involvement of the company in the programme.	The programme has enhanced the awareness and knowledge of farmers regarding sustainable oil palm cultivation within the RSPO framework. Nevertheless, it remains challenging to project the farmers' willingness to register for certification, given the institutional obstacles, significant financial capital requirements, and lack of organisational structure.
6	Landak	The local government and the company (PT HDL) demonstrated a favourable response to the implementation	The identification of independent smallholders was significantly facilitated by the programme initiated	The partnership model that has been established is one of engagement with both the local government and the company.	The collaboration between FORTASBI and PT HDL in capacity building of farmer groups has the effect of

		of the FORTASBI and RSPO programmes in Landak District. The local government identified a number of legal challenges associated with the certification process. The local government is amenable to facilitating the acceleration of the independent smallholders' legality arrangement.	by PT HDL to reinforce the institutionalisation of smallholder associations, particularly through the establishment of farmer cooperatives. The farmer partners supported by FORTASBI are, to some extent, company-assisted groups.	Meanwhile, it is notable that there are no local NGOs currently engaged with this issue in this region. The lack of involvement from NGOs makes it challenging to encourage policy advocacy at the local government level, such as advocating for the preparation of RAD KSB.	improving the knowledge of farmers on the issue of sustainable palm oil development. The sustainability of capacity building is contingent upon the commitment of PT HDL to provide assistance to farmer groups.
7	Berau	Prior to the implementation of the RSPO-FORTASBI programme, the Berau region had already initiated efforts to promote sustainable palm oil governance. Consequently, the introduction of this programme is regarded as a valuable addition to the existing ISPO and RSPO initiatives, which are already the focus of attention of the local government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and donor agencies operating in Berau. In particular, the Alliance for Sustainable Rural Management (ASRM) plays a significant role in organising oil palm farmers, and is also a FORTASBI partner. The government of Berau, through the Plantation Office, values this	Since 2018, the ASRM has been engaged in the process of strengthening oil palm smallholder groups in 15 villages within the Berau District. Prior to the FORTASBI programme's inception, ASRM had conducted a gradual mapping of potential farmer groups, including the identification of land conditions and legality. The FORTASBI programme facilitated the identification of independent oil palm farmers in Berau District, leading to the selection of six priority villages.	Prior to the advent of the FORTASBI programme, numerous non-governmental organisations (NGOs) had already begun to encourage the implementation of sustainable palm oil governance. However, at that time, there was no focus on the implementation of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) standards. Indeed, the ASRM has been at the vanguard of efforts to fortify independent palm oil farmers since 2018. Additionally, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as YKAN, GIZ, SOLIDAREDAD and USAID SEGAR have commenced collaborative efforts pertaining to the governance of sustainable palm oil. The	A number of farmer groups have initiated the formation of cooperatives and other forms of collective organization. Furthermore, they are engaged in the process of land identification and verification, and participate in a number of capacity-building and training programmes conducted by ASRM-FORTASBI.

		programme as it is perceived to be more focused and dedicated to the objective of empowering farmers at the grassroots level.		FORTASBI programme has not been able to consolidate the roles of the various parties involved in encouraging the implementation of the RSPO among independent oil palm farmers, as its focus is on education and training for these farmers.	
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4. 2. Recommendation

Departing from the findings in this activity, several recommendations that need to be considered in program development include:

- a. Sustainability aspects need to be an important consideration in program design so that from the beginning a strong framework can be built with a clear exit strategy, so that the roles of the parties can be regulated according to the capacity of the roles and resources they have.
- b. If this program is to be continued, it is important to think about the aspects of assistance for farmer groups and financing for certification through the right strategy considering that the budget needed is not small.
- c. It is important to build strong partnerships, particularly with companies, to ensure that companies facilitate farmer groups to support RSPO certification.

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