

# Procedural Update of 2024 RSPO Standards

The Secretariat is preparing to release and circulate Version 4-1 of P&C 2024 and V2-1 of ISH Standard 2024, which incorporates the following changes:

- 6 procedural updates (based on the Decision Paper approved by the SSC in May 2025)
- Guidance: Annex 5 of P&C 2024 and Annex 3 of ISH Standard (based on the structure agreed by the SSC in March 2025)
- Annex 2 of P&C 2024 - Key international laws and conventions applicable to the production of palm oil
- Updated Change Log of P&C 2024 and ISH 2024, with explanatory notes on the above changes
- Editorial corrections (spelling, grammar, US-> UK English)

The following changes are still pending - future update to Version 4-2 and V2-2

- Annex 4 - Approved HRDD Methodology - drafted by HRDD Subgroup, pending discussion and approval by the HRWG. Expected end-July
- Any other procedural updates for clarity that have been discussed but not yet approved by the SSC through a decision paper

# 53<sup>rd</sup> SSC Meeting: Procedural Updates in the revised standards

- Based on concerns raised by members and stakeholders, and/or from internal identification by the Secretariat, the following potential procedural updates for clarity have been identified in the adopted text of the P&C 2024 and the ISH Standard 2024 (as of 9 May 2025).
- At the 52<sup>nd</sup> SSC Meeting in April 2025, a list of identified procedural updates of the 2024 standards was discussed.
- Following the meeting, it was agreed to present the procedural updates to the SSC as a formal decision paper, to incorporate the identified changes into a Version 4.1 of the P&C 2024 and a Version IS\_V2-1 of the ISH Standard 2024. This will coincide with the publication of the completed designed version of the standards targeted for late June.
- A total of 6 procedural updates have been identified.

# Procedural Update #1 (ISH Standard 2024)

Section	Text requiring clarity (with explanation)	Proposed change
ICS, Indicator A1.2 E  Annex 3	<p><i>The Group Manager shall have and maintain documented evidence of the smallholder group's RSPO <u>membership</u> that include:</i></p> <p><i>A) Legal formation (if necessary as per country of register requirements);</i></p> <p><i>B) Fair and transparent decision-making and governance; and</i></p> <p><i>C) Additional documents per requirements for group formation and management, where applicable</i></p> <p><b>Context: The requirements of this indicator concern how an ISH group is established, not how the group became an RSPO membership. An ISH group's RSPO membership must happen after the group has been legally formed (requirement A). However, requirements B and C may happen before or after membership. The current wording implies that all three requirements must be met at the point of RSPO membership.</b></p>	<p>Update the text for clarity to:</p> <p><i>The Group Manager shall have and maintain documented evidence of the smallholder group's RSPO <u>establishment</u> that include: ...</i></p> <p>Include guidance note in Annex 3 (Guidance) to define 'establishment' as:</p> <p><u><i>RSPO establishment refers to the foundational elements regarding the formation, governance and operational management of the smallholder group. This can occur prior to, or after, a group's RSPO membership. Updates to these foundational elements are allowed.</i></u></p>

## Procedural Update #2 (P&C 2024)

Section	Text requiring clarity (with explanation)	Proposed change			
Annex 6 Indicator 6.8.3 (C)	<p><b>Context: In the list of supplementary and derivative documents of the 2024 P&amp;C, the RSPO document on Repayment of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs is incorrectly labelled as normative.</b></p> <p><b>The title of the document is also misleading, as a Procedure should be normative, while an informative document should be a Guidance</b></p> <table><tr><td>RSPO Procedure for the Repayment of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs - <a href="#">in development</a></td><td>6.8 / 6.8.3 (C)</td><td>Normative</td></tr></table>	RSPO Procedure for the Repayment of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs - <a href="#">in development</a>	6.8 / 6.8.3 (C)	Normative	<p>Update the title and applicability for clarity to:</p> <p><i>RSPO <u>Guidance</u> for the Repayment of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs</i></p> <p><i>Applicability: <u>Informative</u></i></p>
RSPO Procedure for the Repayment of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs - <a href="#">in development</a>	6.8 / 6.8.3 (C)	Normative			

# Procedural Update #3 (P&C 2024)

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

# Procedural Update #4 (P&C 2024)

Section	Text requiring clarity (with explanation)	Proposed change
Indicator 7.3.4 (C)	<p><i>In the event there is any replanting on marginal soil(s) and/or fragile soil(s), the Unit of Certification <u>shall manage the area in accordance</u> with the 'RSPO Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Soil'.</i></p> <p><i>Procedural Note : RSPO shall develop the 'RSPO Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Soil' guidance document.</i></p> <p><b>Context: Identified during the MYNI TF. The text of the adopted indicator contains an inherent contradiction, in that the indicator uses the strictest verb form – ‘shall’ – but in reference to a guidance document, which is informative and not normative. The guidance is also unlikely to be ready by November 2025, which raises compliance risks. Based on the discussion notes from the MSCTF (September 2024), the intention of the guidance was as a supplementary informative document without precluding the use of other soil management approaches.</b></p>	<p>Update the text for clarity to:</p> <p><i>In the event there is any replanting on marginal soil(s) and/or fragile soil(s), the Unit of Certification <u>should manage the area in line</u> with the 'RSPO Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Soil'.</i></p> <p><i>Procedural Note: RSPO shall develop the RSPO Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Soil' guidance document. <u>Other soil management approaches to maintain the environmental integrity of marginal soil(s) and/or fragile soil(s) may apply.</u></i></p>

# Procedural Updates #5 (P&C and ISH 2024)

Section	Text requiring clarity (with explanation)	Proposed change
Terms and Definitions	<div data-bbox="268 342 1064 419"> <p><b>Medium Grower</b> Medium Growers are beneficial owners, land owners, or businesses with more than 50 hectares (ha) and up to 500 ha (accumulative) of cultivated and harvested oil palms.</p> <p>Please also refer to other related definitions: 'grower', 'smallholder'.</p> </div> <p><b>Context: The definition of Medium Grower (MG) in the adopted text does not reflect the <u>updated definition endorsed by the RSPO BoG in September 2021</u> per the recommendations of the Medium Grower Task Force.</b></p> <div data-bbox="268 601 1029 776"> <p>1. The interim definition of Medium Growers:</p> <p>Medium Growers are land owners or small businesses with more than 50 ha and up to 500 ha (accumulative), who cultivate and harvest oil palms using hired labour rather than family labour. They may have diverse sources of income including from multiple crops, may not reside near their oil palm plantings and may employ administrative staff. (National Interpretation is encouraged).</p> </div> <p><b>MG may operate mills or only produce FFB (outgrowers). Different certification pathways apply. MG without mills can seek P&amp;C certification of their FFB through Group Certification. MG with mills fall under P&amp;C certification.</b></p>	<p>Update the definition of Medium Grower (with additional clarity) to:</p> <p><i>Medium Growers are land owners or small businesses with more than 50 ha and up to 500 ha (accumulative), who cultivate and harvest oil palms using hired labour rather than family labour. They may have diverse sources of income including from multiple crops, may not reside near their oil palm plantings and may employ administrative staff. <u>Medium growers may or may not operate mills.</u> (National Interpretation is encouraged).</i></p>

## Procedural Update #6 (P&C and ISH 2024)

Section	Text requiring clarity (with explanation)	Proposed change
Annex 5 (P&C)  Annex 3 (ISH)	<p>The title of Annex 5 and Annex 3 in the adopted text is Compliance Requirements and Informative Guidance, reflecting the previous understanding of the Annex's applicability. This applicability has been superseded by the decision to make Annex 5/3 informative.</p> <p><b><u>Annex 5 - Compliance Requirements and Informative Guidance</u></b></p>	<p>Update the title of Annex 5/3 for clarity to reflect the correct level of applicability:</p> <p><i>Annex 5/3 - <u>Guidance</u> <del>Compliance Requirements and Informative Guidance</del></i></p>