

RSPO Jurisdictional Approach

Following the conventional certification approach, where the focus is on the mill and its supply base, RSPO has begun the journey to upscale its impact and approach onto a Jurisdictional level in 2015. This approach is referred to as the Jurisdictional Approach to Certification (JA). In 2018, the RSPO Theory of Change (ToC) identified the Jurisdictional Approach as one of the key strategies in achieving its vision of making sustainable palm oil the norm.

What is the RSPO Jurisdictional Approach to Certification?

The RSPO Jurisdictional Approach (JA) to Certification is an approach to minimise the negative impact of oil palm cultivation on the environment and on society, at the scale of government administrative areas (Jurisdictions), which involves a stepwise certification of the production and processing of sustainable oil palm products. JA is a framework for Group Certification which allocates legal requirements and authority to a Jurisdictional Entity (JE), with a multi-stakeholder governing body, which will establish an Internal Control System to facilitate full compliance with the RSPO Standards.

The approach requires government leadership, support, and collaboration to play a key role in facilitating multi-stakeholder processes, setting up overall governance, regulations and frameworks to achieve RSPO standards. This provides an enabling legal and policy environment within which industry participants, communities, NGOs and government can work together towards certification. The JA therefore differs from conventional RSPO Group Certification in that some roles and responsibilities are delegated to government bodies.

Why Implement the Jurisdictional Approach?

The RSPO Theory of Change seeks to “improve the quality of life of oil palm farmers, create a more prosperous oil palm industry, and enable us to better conserve our planet and its resources”. In service of this objective, the JA takes a larger perspective than just the oil palm production unit, and seeks to address some of the limitations of individual certification in order to maintain forest cover, support wildlife conservation and promote river system health at a landscape / jurisdictional scale. Furthermore, it seeks to include social dimensions of sustainable development, such as decent living wages, no slave and no child labour, and promoting local communities’ voices in decision-making.

The JA is a way to deliver these objectives, which are an integral part of the global Sustainable Development Goals, because they cannot be delivered through existing site-based certification systems alone. They require landscape and jurisdictional perspectives. The JA also requires the support of government policies and laws which are

consistent with RSPO standards, while still maintaining sovereignty. The JA is a new type of certification, therefore, that helps address externalities and gives value to social and environmental elements that are undervalued in the palm oil trade, to bring about broader and longer-term benefits to all.

The RSPO Pilot Framework

Due to the scale and the complexity of any jurisdiction, the proposed system shall be practical, credible and robust enough to enable the whole Jurisdiction to comply with relevant RSPO standards and requirements.

This Pilot Framework document has been developed by the RSPO Jurisdictional Working Group (JWG) offering guidance and a framework for developing Jurisdictional Approaches to the certification of sustainable palm oil, which will follow the RSPO Standards (Principles & Criteria 2018, Independent Smallholder Standard, etc.) and sets a stepwise approach that is coherent across all regions.

Earlier versions of this document have been the subject of global consultation for feedback on two occasions, 24 June to 23 August 2019 and 28 February 2020 to 1 May 2020, and have built on the lessons from Jurisdictional Approach pilot projects in different parts of the world (<https://rspo.org/about/supporting-bodies#jurisdictional-working-group>).

Building on the endorsed pilot framework, jurisdictional certification can only be achieved if a number of new RSPO institutional arrangements and guidelines are developed to accommodate this new approach. Other non-RSPO factors, such as HCV assessments, will also need to be adjusted to jurisdictional/landscape approaches.

The RSPO JWG continues to provide support for the development of identified gaps within RSPO System arrangements and implementation guidelines.

You can download the RSPO Jurisdictional Approach Piloting Framework document [here](#).

More information about the RSPO JWG can be found here: [RSPO Jurisdictional Working Group \(JWG\)](#).