

NEWS RELEASE

RSPO SEALS STALWART COMMITMENT TO SMALLHOLDERS

RSPO presents Smallholders Support Fund to help oil palm smallholders around the world

International – March 6, 2013: The RSPO (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil), an international multi-stakeholder organization and certification scheme for sustainable palm oil, is pleased to present the **RSPO Smallholders Support Fund (RSSF)** for eligible oil palm growers amongst smallholders around the world. These will include largest oil palm producing countries Indonesia and Malaysia, as well as Thailand, Papua New Guinea, Latin America and Africa, amongst other producing nations.

The RSSF is introduced in acknowledgement of the imperative and dominant role smallholders around the world play in the palm oil sector to promote and increase the production of Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (CSPO) so that market transformation is realized.

In September 2012, the RSPO announced its first certification of independent smallholders in Thailand through group certification. The community comprised 412 smallholders over 2,767.33 hectares of planted land with an opportunity to trade approximately 52,000 mt of certified sustainable Fresh Fruit Bunches (FFB).

Darrel Webber, Secretary General of the RSPO commented that: “The primary challenge for smallholders to become certified include lack of awareness on benefits of being certified; funding support and lack of expertise or capacity building. Given the significant ratio of smallholders in the palm oil sector – it is critical they continue to be central in our strategy to catapult sustainable practices in the sector towards market transformation.

“Smallholders are stewards of natural resources and need to be made aware of the advantages of being certified which include access to international demand markets for sustainable palm oil; longer term efficiencies in terms of yield and productivity as well as effective cost management.” Webber added.

The RSPO Executive Board approved the institution of RSSF and its mechanism on 29 October 2012 whereby 10% of income generated from the trading of CSPO will be allocated for smallholders. In addition to this, 50% of any remaining surplus of income within the financial year of RSPO will be channelled towards the same mechanism.

The deployment of the RSSF will be deliberated by a panel comprising select members from the Smallholders Working Group (SHWG). Its key function is to develop the strategic plans for the RSSF as well as to develop, review, process and identify projects for approval. The Panel will convene 4 times a year i.e. February, May, August and November. Applications can be submitted any time within the year based on the following stipulations.

Eligibility for the RSSF is based the following requirements:

1. The applicant should be a legal based organization, either a group manager or supporting agency (private or non-profit) and not involved in illegal practices or land right conflicts.
2. The applicant should have demonstrable experience in smallholder support in the oil palm sector or may be an independent smallholder.
3. The project should concern activities which are directly related to obtaining RSPO certification and the promotion of sustainable production practices of independent smallholders.
4. The initiative is for a maximum period of three years with clear milestones set for each year. An assessment will be conducted at the end of the first year to gauge the level of progress achieved alongside with the requirement to continue the endowment support for the subsequent year/s.
5. The initiative may work alongside other co-funding opportunities.

Interested applicants may submit their applications by filling up the form, which can be downloaded at: http://www.rspo.org/en/rspo_smallholders_support_fund

The application forms are to be filled and sent to:
RSPO Smallholders Support Fund c/o. RSPO Secretariat Sdn Bhd,
Unit A-37-1, Level 37,
Tower A, Menara UOA Bangsar,
No.5, Jalan Bangsar Utama 1,
59000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Or via email to: julia.majail@rspo.org

About RSPO

In response to the urgent and pressing global call for sustainably-produced palm oil, the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) was formed in 2004 with the objective of promoting the growth and use of sustainable oil palm products through credible global standards and engagement of stakeholders. The seat of the association is in Zurich, Switzerland, while the secretariat is currently based in Kuala Lumpur with a satellite office in Jakarta.

RSPO is a not-for-profit association that unites stakeholders from seven sectors of the palm oil industry - oil palm producers, palm oil processors or traders, consumer goods manufacturers, retailers, banks and investors, environmental or nature conservation NGOs and social or developmental NGOs - to develop and implement global standards for sustainable palm oil.

Such multi-stakeholder representation is mirrored in the governance structure of RSPO such that seats in the Executive Board and project-level Working Groups are fairly allocated to each sector. In this way, RSPO lives out the philosophy of the "roundtable" by giving equal rights to each stakeholder group to bring group-specific agendas to the roundtable, facilitating traditionally adversarial stakeholders and business competitors to work together towards a common objective and make decisions by consensus.

For more information, please contact:

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