



RSPO is an international non-profit organisation formed in 2004 with the objective to promote the growth and use of sustainable oil palm products through credible global standards and engagement of stakeholders.

# Factsheet on

## RSPO Intermediary Organizations-Community Outreach and Engagement Program



Since its inception in 2016, the program has undergone several processes and achieved significant milestones. The program aims to secure informed and vigorous engagement of communities with the RSPO at all levels. It does so by establishing strengthened outreach through intermediary organizations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, thereby enhancing RSPO's responsiveness and credibility with civil society organizations that uphold its standards. The RSPO Theory of Change (ToC) provides a strategic framework for promoting equity, equality, and inclusivity, which the Community Outreach and Engagement Program operationalizes through actionable interventions. By working directly with communities, the program bridges the gap between policy and practice, empowering stakeholders, fostering collaboration, and ensuring sustainable palm oil practices benefit all equitably.

Under this effort, RSPO has carried out nine programmes in seven countries with nine different IMO partners, with the support of US\$2.96 million in RSPO funding. Through these nine programmes, RSPO has worked with over 200 local grassroot organisations/community groups to reach 6,000 individual affected stakeholders.

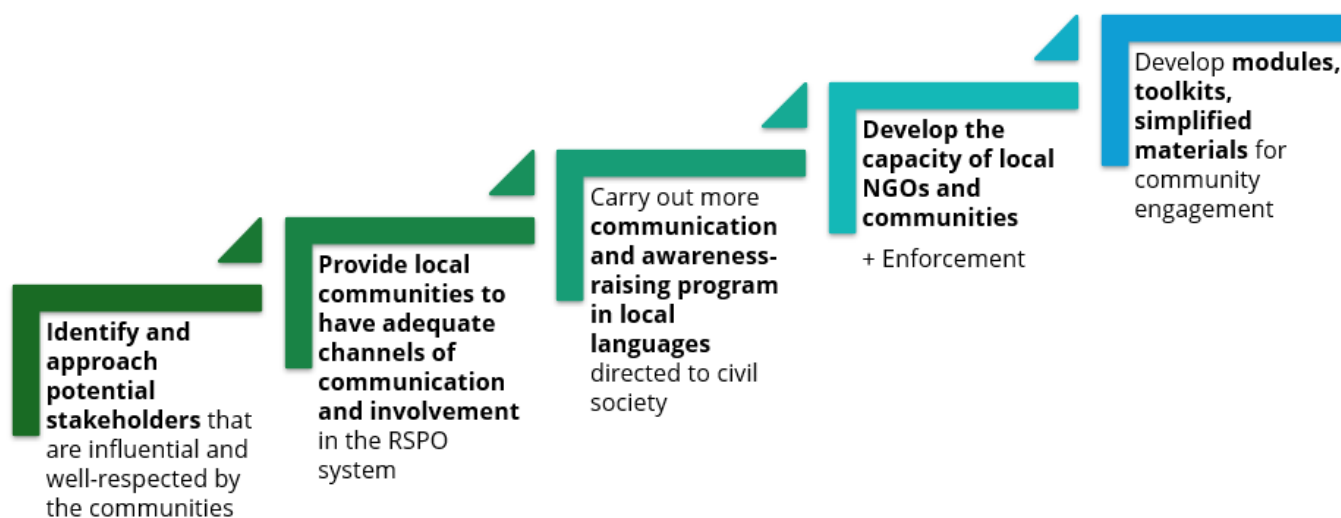
This program was driven by seen the results of palm oil expansion in many countries that was driven by a rapid increase in global demand (4-5% per year), foreign investment, and trade, as well as national government policies that favour the sector for various reasons. While palm oil serves as an important source of revenue, livelihood, and a cheap vegetable oil, its expansion is accompanied by serious social and environmental impacts. According to the Forest Peoples Program report, *Intermediary Outreach and Engagement in Producing Countries: Status Assessment and Outreach Plan (October 2014)*, the major social challenges in the sector include:

- **Lack of effective legal protection:** Workers, communities, and indigenous peoples face inadequate legal protection of their rights, along with insecurity of land tenure for indigenous peoples and local communities.
- **Government policies and corruption:** Lands are often allocated to companies without respecting community rights to land and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). Corruption in land governance and permit allocation further exacerbates the issue.
- **Conflicts and violence:** The sector experiences serious rural violence and extensive conflicts over land and labour. Community divisions arise from the absence of FPIC and consensus-building prior to development initiatives.
- **Smallholder exclusion:** Legal, technical, investment, and market barriers exclude smallholders from benefiting equitably. Additionally, there are few incentives for small producers and local communities to adopt environmental standards related to climate, environmental services, and biodiversity conservation.

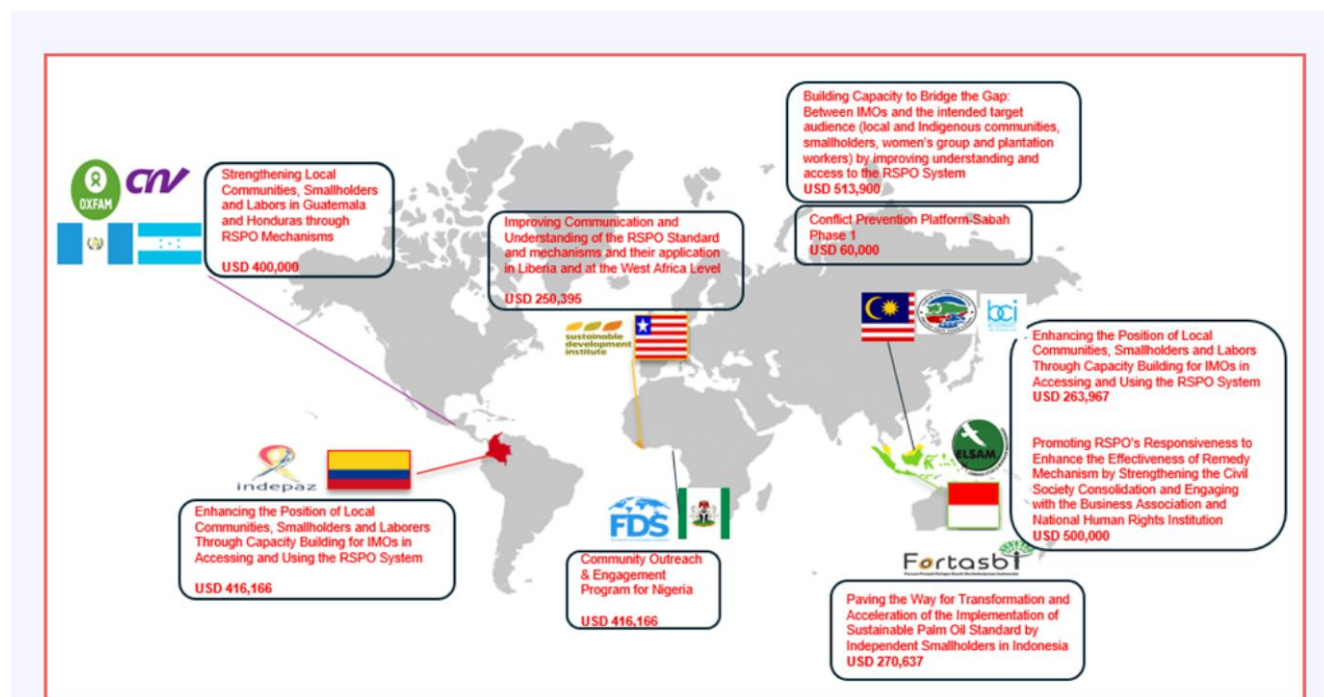
Reflecting on the above conditions, The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) seeks to transform markets to make sustainable palm oil the norm. As a multi-stakeholder and certification platform, RSPO operates through mechanisms such as its Principles and Criteria (P&C), accredited certifying bodies and assessors, a Complaints Mechanism, and a Dispute Settlement Facility.

However, many communities, local NGOs, and intermediary organizations (IMOs) such as trade unions, women's groups, and religious organizations lack knowledge of RSPO and its functions. These stakeholders are critical to the sustainable palm oil ecosystem, and the RSPO aims to inform and capacitate these groups to ensure their expertise, concerns, and needs are fully integrated into the decision-making process.

This is what underlies the initiation of the RSPO community outreach and engagement program which seeks to answer these problems through the following objectives.



## Program Implementing Country and Program Investment



## Key Impacts Number

GEOGRAPHIES	PROGRAMS	LOCAL CSOS/NGOS
<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>200</b>
The community outreach programs have been implemented in 7 countries, 3 continents	9 Programs have been carried out since 2016 up to 2024	Involvement of local grassroots NGO organizations / community groups in the programs
AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS	PROGRAM PARTNERS	MILLION USD
<b>6000</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2,96</b>
Direct exposure to the affected stakeholders of palm oil in target area	RSPO has engaged 7 organisations to take role as Intermediary	Total Fund disbursed by RSPO for community outreach & engagement is 99,8% of pre-approved budget

## Program Key Achievements:

### A. Awareness and Capacity Building:

Over 200 local CSOs/NGOs and 6,000 community members educated on RSPO Principles and Criteria and its grievance mechanisms.

Development of local media content for effective dissemination.

### B. Conflict Resolution:

Inspired 80% of stakeholders to engage constructively with oil palm companies to ensure compliance with RSPO standards.

### C. Local Platforms Established:

- Early Warning System (Indonesia).
- Conflict Prevention Platform (Malaysia).
- Human Rights and Labor Rights Observatory (Guatemala and Honduras).
- Responsible Land-Based Investment Practices (Liberia).
- Mandatory RSPO standards for new investments (Nigeria).

## Program Impacts:

- Increased RSPO credibility with governments, NGOs, and communities.
- Enhanced assurance mechanisms for sustainable palm oil production.
- Strengthened community engagement in promoting sustainability.

Moving forward, RSPO aims to consolidate learnings from the nine programs into a best practices platform to empower communities further, ensuring resilience and independent application of developed mechanisms. Ongoing efforts will focus on dispute prevention and resolution, fostering mutual understanding and sustainable practices.

Find out more at [rspo.org](https://rspo.org)