

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### INDEPENDENT REVIEW

#### INTERMEDIARY ORGANISATION (IMO) of COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR INDONESIA (PHASE 2)

##### Project Title:

**“Promoting RSPO’s Responsiveness to Enhance the Effectiveness of Remedy Mechanism by Strengthening the Civil Society Consolidation and Engaging with the Business Association and National Human Rights Institution”**

## 1. Background

As a multi-stakeholder initiative that promotes the production and uptake of certified sustainable palm oil, the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) aims to leverage its impact to make palm oil sustainable.

The RSPO Principles & Criteria (P&C) were introduced in 2007, with the latest revision adopted in November 2018. They form the basis for certification and serve as the global guidelines for sustainable palm oil production. The RSPO P&C consists of a set of environmental, social, and economic principles as well as best management practices; compliance with these requirements enables palm oil producers to claim that their palm oil is sustainably produced. Among the aims of the P&C is ensuring that the fundamental rights of landowners, local communities, plantation workers, small farmers, and their families are respected and fully considered.

In its pursuit of transforming the oil palm industry to make it more sustainable, RSPO faces many challenges, complaints, and disputes with varying circumstances that require different approaches. The RSPO Board of Governors recognises the need for more comprehensive outreach efforts through a network of intermediaries drawn from related or affected communities within producing countries to support and assist RSPO, thus paving the way for a more effective engagement process that will then play a key role in RSPO achieving its mission.

Subsequently, RSPO commissioned an assessment of the organisation’s capacity to engage with communities impacted by palm oil development through ‘intermediary organisations’ (such as local NGOs), with recommendations regarding how RSPO could enhance such outreach. The conclusions from the assessment were that:

- The RSPO operates as a multi-stakeholder platform that relies on the active engagement of all concerned parties to function effectively and credibly.
- Lack of resources, knowledge, and capacity prevents customary landowners, workers, and smallholders from having a voice in RSPO.
- The main barriers to engagement include lack of knowledge of RSPO, limited resources, linguistic and educational barriers, and the fact that some groups may not yet be involved in the palm oil sector or may be engaged in multiple commodity sectors.
- The long-term success of RSPO in providing ‘conflict-free’ palm oil to the global market therefore depends on improved engagement with these groups.
- There is a need to enhance RSPO’s capacity to reach workers, women, local communities, and Indigenous peoples through intermediary organisations at national, regional, and local levels, as well as to strengthen the capacity of these intermediary groups to engage with RSPO.

The assessment was carried out by the Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) across 21 countries between June and October 2014 through a series of reviews.



## 2. Context

The RSPO Secretariat initiated a Community Outreach Programme in Indonesia as an implementation phase following the decision by the Board of Governors. The programme was designed to address the findings and recommendations from the assessment conducted in 2014. The programme aims to secure the informed and vigorous engagement of communities with RSPO at all levels, by establishing a strengthened outreach through intermediary organisations in Indonesia to rebuild RSPO's credibility with civil society, ensuring alignment with its Standards.

The Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy (ELSAM) Indonesia was engaged and contracted as the Intermediary Organisation (IMO) to implement the programme for Indonesia.

The programme, entitled "Intermediary Organisation (IMO) of the Community Outreach and Engagement Programme for Indonesia," was implemented over 36 months (May 2022 to April 2024). The overall objectives of the programme were:

- To transform RSPO into a responsive institution committed to human rights values, including providing remedies for the local community affected by palm oil industry activities.
- Strengthening the standard for sustainable palm oil in accordance with human rights values, including establishing various channels and forums for dispute resolution for local communities affected by oil palm industry activities through an alternative dispute resolution approach.
- To ensure synergistic cooperation between multi-stakeholder initiatives and business associations to support sustainable palm oil production.
- To increase the acceptance and trust of civil society organisations, affected communities, and workers, including women's groups, in RSPO's mechanisms as a tool for remedy.
- To improve the capacities of local government and national human rights institutions in responding to and handling human rights issues within the palm oil industry.

The community outreach programme for Indonesia was completed in April 2025. The status and progress of all proposed activities are elaborated in the Final Project Report, which will be submitted in April 2025. To understand and assess the effectiveness of the programme's impact on the targeted grassroots stakeholders, gather feedback from the ground, and evaluate how the programme contributes to RSPO's mission of promoting sustainable palm oil, it is critical to conduct an independent review.

## 3. Objectives

The purpose of this review is to conduct an independent evaluation of the Community Outreach and Engagement Programme for Indonesia implemented by the IMO partner, the Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy (ELSAM) Indonesia. The review will be undertaken by a contracted neutral third party appointed by the RSPO Secretariat.

The extent of the review includes:

- An evaluation of the Programme management and coordination by the IMO to assess whether the work carried out by the IMO has aligned with the project objectives of securing the informed and vigorous engagement of communities with RSPO at all levels, by establishing a strengthened outreach through intermediary organisations as outlined above.
- An evaluation of the Programme management and coordination by the IMO to assess whether the work carried out by the IMO implementation partner has successfully addressed the issues outlined in the *Intermediary Outreach and Engagement in Producing Countries, Status Assessment and Outreach Plan* (prepared by Forest Peoples Programme, October 2014).
- A comprehensive evaluation of the entire role, set-up, activities, achievements, and impacts of the Programme that have been implemented, including its contribution to the achievement of RSPO's mission and vision, and its alignment with the Theory of Change.

- Identification of issues that remain unaddressed, points of contention or conflict, and an assessment of the barriers hindering the effective implementation of the Programme.

The results and recommendations of this evaluation will be used to improve the framework of community outreach within RSPO and will be reported to the Board of Governors.

#### **4. Scope of Work**

The reviewer will be expected to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation of the programme, Intermediary Organisation (IMO) for the Community Outreach and Engagement Programme for Indonesia, titled “Promoting RSPO’s Responsiveness to Enhance the Effectiveness of the Remedy Mechanism by Strengthening Civil Society Consolidation, Engaging with Business Associations, and National Human Rights Institutions.” The reviewer will provide a conclusion on whether the programme has met the fundamental objectives of RSPO’s community and engagement plan, as follows:

- Identify individuals, organisations, and/or governmental bodies that are influential and well-respected by the communities, who can be approached for voluntary involvement in the RSPO network of intermediaries.
- Ensure local stakeholders, i.e., local communities, have adequate channels of communication with RSPO, as well as access to information through these RSPO intermediaries.
- Conduct more communications, training, and awareness-raising workshops in local languages directed at civil society to promote sustainable palm oil.
- Communicate more good news and success stories while enforcing the standard.
- Develop training modules, toolkits, and guides to facilitate community engagement.
- Execute the recommendations from the first phase of the Community Outreach & Engagement Programme for Indonesia, which was completed prior to this programme.

#### **5. Timeframe**

The review is expected to take place between April and June 2025.

#### **6. Budget**

The budget for this partnership project should not exceed USD 11,500.

#### **7. Deliverables**

It is anticipated that the review will have the following deliverables:

A final report, including:

- An assessment of programme management/coordination by the IMO.
- An evaluation of the entire role, set-up, activities, achievements, and impacts of the programme that has been implemented (including its contribution to RSPO’s mission based on the RSPO’s Theory of Change).
- A summary of issues that remain unaddressed, points of contention or conflict, and an assessment of barriers to the effective implementation of the community outreach programme.
- Conclusions and recommendations.

## 8. Requirements

RSPO seeks the services of an independent organisation with a proven track record in programme evaluation to carry out the review as per the objectives above. The applicant is required to meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Experience in engaging grassroots stakeholders.
- Comprehensive knowledge of RSPO and other voluntary sustainability standards.
- Familiarity with the palm oil industry and issues related to land use-based commodities will be an advantage.
- Proficient to excellent writing skills in British English.
- The Applicant must avoid conflicts of interest and disclose to RSPO any real, perceived, or potential conflict of interest they may have with RSPO or any entities involved in the review. An apparent or actual conflict of interest may exist where an individual or entity has different, and potentially conflicting, duties or relationships with respect to other individuals or entities within the programme and RSPO.
- The Applicant must commit to an open and transparent engagement with all relevant parties.

## 9. Performance Criteria

The performance of the reviewer will be assessed based on:

- Timeliness of deliverables.
- Capacity and understanding of the objectives, as well as the ability to meet them.
- Responsiveness to questions from the RSPO Secretariat during the assignment.
- The quality of deliverables.

## 10. Submission of an Expression of Interest

Interested parties are invited to submit a proposal that must include the following information in their expression of interest:

- A brief personal statement addressing their rationale for the application based on the criteria and skill set required.
- An outline of the proposed approach, including suggestions for the Terms of Reference to improve delivery.
- An overall work plan with a timeframe.
- A breakdown of expenditure and justification.
- A Curriculum Vitae.
- Examples of similar or previous projects demonstrating their ability to undertake work of a similar nature.

All documents submitted in response to this Terms of Reference must be written in British English.

Any inquiries regarding this Terms of Reference shall be submitted to Tri Budiono, Senior Manager, Global IMO Programme, RSPO, at the following email address: [Tri.Budiono@rspo.org](mailto:Tri.Budiono@rspo.org).

Programme proposals must be submitted on or before 4 April 2025.

