

TERMS OF REFERENCE

INDEPENDENT REVIEW

INTERMEDIARY ORGANISATION (IMO) of

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME

FOR NIGERIA

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 and Criteria (P&C) were introduced in 2007 with the latest revision adopted in November 2018. It is the basis for certification and serves as the global guidelines for sustainable palm oil production. It constitutes 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 as well as 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 which require different approaches. The RSPO Board of Governors recognises the need for more comprehensive outreach efforts through a network of intermediaries identified from the 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 is a multi-stakeholder process which 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 finding a voice in RSPO.
- The main barriers to engagement are knowledge of RSPO, lack of resources, linguistic and educational barriers and because they may not yet be involved in the palm oil sector and/ or may be involved in multiple commodity sectors.
- The long-term success of RSPO to provide 'conflict free' palm oil to the global market thus depends on improved engagement with these groups.
- The needs of enhancing RSPO's capacity to reach workers, women, local communities and Indigenous peoples through intermediary organisations at national, regional and local levels and likewise by enhancing the capacity of these intermediary groups to engage with the RSPO.

The assessment was carried out by Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) in 21 countries between June and October 2014 through reviews.



2. Context

The RSPO Secretariat initiated a Community Outreach Programme in Nigeria as an implementation phase of 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 is to secure informed and vigorous engagement of communities with RSPO at all levels, by establishing a strengthened outreach of RSPO through intermediary organisations in Edo State, Nigeria to rebuild RSPO's credibility with civil society that it upholds in its standards. Foremost Development Services Limited (FDS) Nigeria was engaged and contracted as the Intermediary Organisation (IMO) to implement the programme for Nigeria.

The programme entitled Intermediary Organisation (IMO) Of Community Outreach and Engagement Programme for Nigeria was implemented in 20 months (October 2022 until June 2024). The overall objectives of the programme are:

- Identify individuals, organisations and/or governmental bodies that are influential and well-respected by the communities, to be approached for voluntary involvement in the RSPO network of intermediaries.
- Ensure local stakeholders, i.e. local communities have adequate channels of communication with the RSPO as well as access to information through these RSPO intermediaries.
- Carry out more communications, training and awareness-raising workshops in local languages directed at civil society in promoting sustainable palm oil and improving smallholder livelihoods.
- Communicate more good news and success stories (and enforce the RSPO Standard).
- Develop training modules, tool kits and guides that they can use to engage with communities.

The community outreach programme for Nigeria was completed in June 2024. The status and progress of all proposed activities were elaborated in the Final Project Report which was submitted in July 2024. To understand and assess the effectiveness of the programme's impact on the targeted grassroots stakeholders, feedback from the ground and 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 is to conduct an independent review of the Community Outreach and Engagement Programme for Nigeria by the IMO partner, Foremost Development Services Limited (FDS) Nigeria. The review will be undertaken by a contracted, neutral, third-party appointed by the RSPO Secretariat.

The extent of the review covers:

- The evaluation of the Programme management/coordination by the IMO to assess whether the work carried out by the IMO implementation partner is in accordance with their project objectives to secure informed and vigorous engagement of communities in RSPO at all levels, by establishing a strengthened outreach of RSPO through intermediary organisations as stated above.
- The evaluation of the Programme management/coordination by the IMO; to assess whether the work carried out by IMO implementation partner has been able to address the issues outlined in the Intermediary Outreach and Engagement in Producing Countries, Status Assessment and Outreach Plan (prepared by Forest Peoples Programme, October 2014)
- Evaluation of the entire role, set-up, activities, achievements and impacts of the Programme that have been implemented, including how this programme has contributed to the achievement of the RSPO's mission and vision, and Theory of Change.
- Identification of issues that remain unaddressed, points of contention or conflict, and to assess what were the barriers to 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 to 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) Of Community Outreach and Engagement Programme for Nigeria, and provide a conclusion on whether the programme has met the fundamental objectives of RSPO community and engagement plan, as follows:

- Secure informed and vigorous engagement of communities in RSPO at all levels.
- Strengthen outreach of RSPO through intermediary organisations in Edo State, Nigeria.
- Strengthen local community knowledge and understanding on the RSPO mechanism and provide access to it.

5. Timeframe

The review is expected to take place between Jan-Feb 2025.

6. Deliverables

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

A final report which includes:

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

7. 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 objective above. The applicant is required to meet the following eligibility requirements as detailed below:

- 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 and disclose to RSPO of any real, perceived or potential conflict of interest that they may have with RSPO or any entities 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 will commit to an open and transparent engagement with all relevant parties.

8. Performance Criteria

The performance of the reviewer will be assessed based on:

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

9. Submission of an expression of interest



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

- A brief personal statement addressing your rationale for application based on criteria and skills set required.
- An outline of the proposed approach, including suggestions to the Terms of Reference to improve delivery.
- An overall work plan with a timeframe.
- A breakdown of expenditure and justification.
- Curriculum Vitae.
- Examples of similar or previous projects demonstrating your ability to undertake work of similar nature. All documents submitted in response to this Terms of Reference must be written in British English.

Any inquiries in connection with this Terms of Reference shall be submitted to Tri Budiono, Senior Manager-Global IMO Programme, RSPO at the following e-mail address Tri.Budiono@rspo.org.

Programme proposals are to be submitted by or before 15 December 2024.

