

TERMS OF REFERENCE

INDEPENDENT REVIEW

Independent Smallholders Outreach Programme in Indonesia

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 to 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 land owners, local communities, plantation workers, small farmers as well as their families are respected and fully taken into account.

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 land-owners, 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. In Asia this included the following countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Papua New Guinea.

2. Context

The RSPO Secretariat initiated a Community Outreach Programme in Indonesia as an implementation phase to the aforementioned decision by the Board of Governors. The programme was designed to address the findings and recommendation from the aforementioned assessment conducted in 2014. The programme is to outreach and engage with independent smallholders in Indonesia in transforming and accelerating the implementation of sustainable palm oil standards. Indonesia Sustainable Oil Palm Smallholder Forum (FORTASBI) was engaged and contracted as the Intermediary Organisation (IMO) to implement the programme for Indonesia.

The programme entitled *Paving the Way for Transformation and Acceleration of the Implementation of Sustainable Palm Oil Standard by Independent smallholders in Indonesia* originally planned to be implemented in 24 months (August 2021 until August 2023); however, due to some challenges on the ground, it was extended until the end of December 2023. The programme aimed to:

1. Expand the scope of the RSPO to regions not covered by the RSPO.
2. Identify and map key actors in the six priority regions to seek parties/groups or institutions that support and are committed to supporting independent smallholders in implementing sustainable palm oil standards.
3. Encourage more stakeholders (local governments, local companies, and local NGOs) to get involved to support independent smallholders in implementing sustainable palm oil standards through training and workshops.
4. Provide aid and support for independent smallholders already involved in RSPO's Certification System.
5. Compile independent smallholders' success stories, lessons learned and challenges in implementing sustainable palm oil standards to serve as a communication medium for other stakeholders.
6. Open direct access to RSPO's services for Indonesian independent smallholders.

The community outreach programme for Indonesia was completed in December 2023. The status and progress of all proposed activities were elaborated in the Final Project Report which was submitted in December 2023. To understand and assess the effectiveness of the programme's impact on the targeted grassroot 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 Programme implemented in Indonesia by the IMO partner, Indonesia Sustainable Oil Palm Smallholder Forum (FORTASBI). 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 Paving the Way for Transformation and Acceleration of the Implementation of Sustainable Palm Oil Standard by Independent smallholders in Indonesia 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, *Paving the Way for Transformation and Acceleration of the Implementation of Sustainable Palm Oil Standard by Independent smallholders in Indonesia*, 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 FORTASBI project areas in Indonesia (Sumatra and Kalimantan).
- 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 May to June 2024.

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 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, Sr. Manager-Global IMO Program, RSPO at the following e-mail address Tri.Budiono@rspo.org.

Program proposals are to be submitted by or before 30 April 2024.