

Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil

NEWSLETTER

For RSPO Members

Issue #13

November-December 2007



RSPO Certification System for Sustainable Palm Oil Launched

The 5th Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil Meeting.

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RSPO

Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil

RSPO

Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil

The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) is a global multi-stakeholder initiative on sustainable palm oil that was formally established under Article 60 of the Swiss Civil Code on 8 April 2004. The not-for-profit Association will have members representing major players along the palm oil supply chain. The RSPO is a unique platform for pragmatic co-operation to contribute to the expansion of sustainably produced palm oil and its uses.

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President's Welcome Message



Dear Sustainable Palm Oil supporters,

Is it fair to say that RT5 was a success? I think it is. I think the Organising Committee, under the inspirational leadership of Teoh Cheng Hai, have managed to put a programme together, and a format of interaction

that fitted the programme, which allowed all of the 500-plus participants to dive deep into the future of certified, sustainable palm oil. Congratulations and compliments therefore to the Organising Committee.

You will remember that the Honourable Minister Datuk Peter Chin, Minister of Plantations, Industries & Commodities of Malaysia, not only launched the RSPO certification scheme, but also spoke some critical words about RSPO. Specifically, he asked RSPO to convince him that smallholders will be able to benefit from the scheme. I am happy to be able to tell you that RSPO have managed to secure financial support of the Government of The Netherlands to ramp up our efforts directed at smallholders. We hope to be able to follow this up with specifics shortly.

All this happened against the backdrop of the Climate Change conference on Bali, which started on December 3. Over 10,000 people gathered on Bali to talk about Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol (which will expire in 2012), how to bring the U.S.A. and China and India on board, etc. etc. Personally, I often have the feeling that matters are complicated without good reason.

If climate change is the problem, and if our use of fossil fuels is causing the problem, then we should reduce our use of fossil fuels. There is a whole raft of options available. Designing buildings to be energy neutral for instance (can be done in most climates without additional construction costs). Adjusting heating and cooling systems in buildings so as not to heat or cool more than necessary (will make you money right away). Making clean technology for power generation available to countries who need it. Putting a cap on engine size in cars (not popular). Building more wind mills (United Kingdom announced on December 10, that they want to have enough wind mills to provide electricity for all households in the U.K. by 2020). And of course, replacing fossil fuel with renewable fuel.

For those of you who attended the General Assembly after RT5, you will remember that I spoke about changing the way we work in RSPO. Please look elsewhere in this Newsletter to see what they might look like, and how you can sign up for it.

End of December, just before Christmas, Dr Vengeta Rao assumes the position of RSPO Secretary-General, in succession to Andrew Ng. Dr Rao made some of his free time available already in the week of RT5, not only to be at RT5 but also to participate in the RSPO Executive Board meeting. Please join me in welcoming Dr Rao to RSPO at such an exciting point in RSPO history.

Finally, immediately after RT5, I travelled to Buenos Aires, Argentina, to attend a Board meeting of the Roundtable on Responsible Soy. Their Criteria Development Group is now in place, and working. A first public consultation is in progress. If you are interested please have a look at www.responsiblesoy.org.

I will keep you informed.

Jan Kees Vis

RT 5: Follow-Up

Dear RSPO Members,

Thank you once more for your participation and all the hard work you have done during and before our Fifth Roundtable Conference on Sustainable Palm Oil. I for one look back on the event with satisfaction. I hope we have managed to create a clear overview of everything that had happened, and with that a clear snapshot in time of where RSPO is in terms of bringing certified, sustainable palm oil (CSPO) to the market.

At the same time, it is clear that more work needs to be done, more perhaps than ever before in order to make it work, in order to make sure that smallholders are not left behind, in order to ensure that the markets for palm oil understand what RSPO CSPO actually is, in order to ensure that there is sufficient capacity for the audits that need to be done, etc. etc. Even during RT5 there were several discussions about supply chain options which created new insight with the participants in those discussions. This means that even more discussion of options is required, before we decide what the optimum solutions are.

Immediately after RT5, the Executive Board had a full day meeting, in which it was decided to set up four separate work programmes:

- *Certification and standards*
- *Trade and traceability*
- *Communications and claims*
- *Projects*

I would like to introduce these four programmes to you briefly. Full terms of reference will be developed in due course. This special edition newsletter is an early heads up inviting RSPO members and service providers to sign up for these programmes and get involved.

Certification and standards

The RSPO P&C, with the National Interpretation documents, and the verification framework, form the basis for certification. Clearly, we will learn as we enter into this. Auditors will come with comments and feedback on P&C and guidance. Auditees might complain about how difficult it is to comply. Indicators may not be clear enough. So there is a need for a working group to look at all these aspects, collect all comments and feedback and prepare for a review of the RSPO standard in due course.

Accreditation of Certification Bodies needs to be transferred to national or international accreditation bodies. First sets of RSPO audit reports need to be peer reviewed. Training of auditors on the RSPO standard needs to be organised.

Smallholder engagement has lagged behind in the last couple of years due to lack of funding. As a matter of fact, in view of the hopelessly inadequate funding, the Smallholders Task Force has done a magnificent job as it is. Hopefully, funding is in the process of being solved. With more funding becoming available, more work can be initiated which then needs to be executed and coordinated.

All of the above is going to be the responsibility of the Certification and Standards programme. RSPO EB members who have indicated an interest in being involved include Simon Lord, Chew Jit Seng, Purwo Susanto, Rudy Lumuru, & Darrel Webber.

Trade and Traceability

Much discussion has been devoted to supply chain options and no doubt much discussion is still to come. We know that there will be two separate (but linked) instruments to monitor trade in certified sustainable palm oil. The GreenPalm platform for trade in Sustainable Palm Oil

Certificates, and the Utz Central Registry, in which transactions in CSPO will be registered to ensure there is no double counting involved and to protect the credibility of the scheme as a whole. Issues of segregation, mass balance, chain of custody control etc. remain largely unresolved, although the reality of palm oil trade and shipping may not be as vague as some believe.

During RT5, an ad hoc discussion group concluded and agreed that there are two separate ways in which RSPO can add value to the consumer market for palm oil. One is by allowing producers to be certified against the RSPO standard and to provide incentives to producers to increase the volume of CSPO. In effect, this is what GreenPalm will do. The other one is by bringing CSPO to market in segregated, traceable supply chains. Without traceability, it is not really possible to make any other claim than that of an end user who has bought GreenPalm certificates: "We support the production of sustainable palm oil."

If the presence of CSPO in the actual product cannot be proven, no other claim will be allowed by regulators. This means that attention must be given to Chain of Custody standards and the role of superintendents. There are a number of existing Chain of Custody standards which could be applied to the palm oil supply chain, e.g. for organic produce or for Global GAP produce. Another possibility would be to develop RSPO's own Chain of Custody standard.

The Trade and Traceability programme will have to take care of all of this, and act as a partner and sounding board to both the GreenPalm and the Utz Central Registry platforms. RSPO EB members who have indicated an interest in being involved include Tim Stephenson, Dr Vengeta Rao, Tony Lass, Don Grubba, Matthias Diemer, and Johan Verburg.

Communications and Claims

Many stakeholders, many audiences out there follow RSPO developments and want to be kept informed. Producers, obviously, including smallholders, but also traders, processors, retailers, banks, social NGO's, environmental NGO's, but also regulators, consumers, governments. And perhaps I missed a couple. The Consumer and Branding Working Group has done good groundbreaking work in looking at Communications and Claims and the possible added value of developing RSPO into a brand of itself, protected by a trademark.

However, here again is a discussion that is likely to continue for quite a while. If indeed people agree that RSPO can add value by both certification of producers and bringing traceability into the oil palm markets, then a different set of claims can be developed from what the CBWG did (**please remember, this is just a draft**):

RSPO Silver: supports sustainable palm oil producers

This claim would be used by GreenPalm certificate buyers. Since the sale of the certificates provides a premium to producers, the claim is credible. However, since there is no traceability, no claim can be made on the oil in the product.

RSPO Gold: fully traceable, partly sustainable

This claim would be used by buyers of oil from segregated supplies from certified oil mills, allowing for the fact that not all the fruit supply to the mills come from certified growers. Batches of oil from certified mills could still be mixed, but mixing with batches from non-certified mills would have to be prohibited (segregated supply chains). Once established, mass balance options could be added, although there is a feeling among some distinguishing between Volume Credit ("assigning" a full sustainability label to part of the volume in the supply chain) and making a Percentage Based claim (based on the actual percentage of certified sustainable oil in the segregated supply chain) would confuse end consumers.

RSPO Platinum: traceable, sustainable

Only oil from fully certified mills may enter this segregated supply chain. The claim is clear, and the basis for the claim is also clear. This claim can only be used if the producer of the consumer product can show all oil in the product comes from this segregated supply chain. This could apply to consumer goods as well as to energy applications.

A comprehensive communications strategy needs to be developed. This would include targeting different audiences, probably differentiating between producer's countries and countries of consumption, developing specific messages, and specific ways of keeping these various audiences up to speed with developments. RSPO EB members who have indicated an interest in being involved include the Secretariat, Jan Kees Vis, Samantha Lacey, Robert Keller, Johan Verburg, Don Grubba and Derom Bangun.

Projects

There have always been more plans to set up projects in RSPO than there have been resources. The list of potential projects is quite long, and was shown during the General Assembly.

- *Smallholder Task Force (STF)*
- *Smallholder Task Force – Indonesia*
- *Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC)*
- *Papua New Guinea National Interpretation*
- *National Interpretation Working Group Indonesia*
- *Verification Working Group (VWG)*
- *Interim accreditation (Certification - VWG)*
- *Consumer Branding Working group (Phase 1)*
- *Final Principle and Criteria (P&C) Review (CWG)*
- *Approval/review of NIs*
- *Alternatives to Paraquat*
- *Biodiversity Training*

- *Smallholder Training (Chemicals)*
- *Group Certification for Smallholders and Producers*
- *Mass Balance Project*
- *Trademarking & Claims (CBWG Phase 2)*
- *Communication of Certified SPO*

The Projects programme will largely be coordinated by the Secretary-General.

Member involvement will be invited on a project by project basis.

Jan Kees Vis

INVITATION

All RSPO members are invited to sign up for one of the four programmes mentioned above. Moreover, we intend to approach non-RSPO members, service providers with specific expertise, to join these programmes as well.

Please send a message to the RSPO Secretariat (rspo@rspo.org) indicating which programme or programmes you would like to join. We will revert to you early in 2008 with a follow up.

Outgoing Secretary-General's Report



RSPO Members,

I bid a warm welcome to the incoming RSPO Secretary-General, Dr. Vengeta Rao. I wish him well and leave the organisation feeling much encouraged by the progress RSPO has made through the efforts of its members during my

time here.

As RSPO has aggressively pursued its goals of bringing sustainable palm oil to the market expectations and pressure from stakeholders and consumers has increased. We now come to the major point in our path where we reach our primary goal of being able to provide the world with a set of tools that can promote sustainability in the palm oil industry that promotes the good practices already in place within industry while meeting concerns from stakeholders on biodiversity and social issues. The components for providing the market with sustainable palm oil are in place.

Getting to this stage has been a journey of excitement, tensions, understanding and ultimately, co-operation that has allowed for us to develop credible, practical and measurable tools for the entire supply chain, from primary production to final product. RT5 is the culmination of 3-years effort by a host of different actors and Members at the unveiling of the Principles & Criteria to bring us to this point of commercialisation.

Congratulations to all RSPO Members and partners for excellent work and meeting the objectives of RSPO. I will leave RSPO missing the interaction and energy. I would wish all RSPO Members a Happy 2008 as I end my term. I wish to express deep thanks to my team at the RSPO Secretariat, who have worked continuously in the background supporting this organisation.

Thank you all, for everything!!

For sustainable palm oil,

Andrew Ng

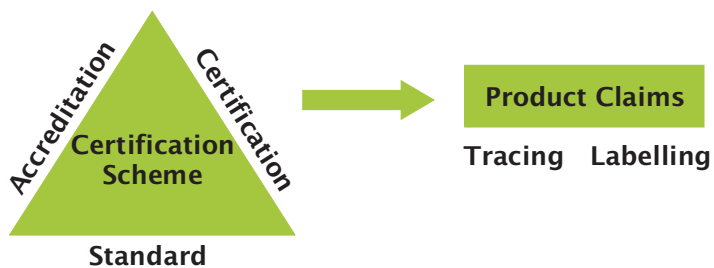
31 December 2007

RSPO Certification System for Sustainable Palm Oil Launched at RT5

The 5th Roundtable Meeting (RT5) on Sustainable Palm Oil that attracted the participation of 540 delegates from 28 countries witnessed the launch of the RSPO Certification System for Sustainable Palm Oil by the Hon. Minister of Plantations Industries & Commodities, Malaysia, Datuk Peter Chin Fah Kui in Kuala Lumpur on 22nd November, 2007. With the certification system in place the Market is expected to see the availability of RSPO Certified Sustainable Palm Oil in the first quarter of 2008. The launch was the culmination of the concerted effort of the past four years by RSPO in developing a credible framework and mechanism for certification that would be globally acceptable to the entire supply palm oil that supply chain and its stakeholders, including civil society.

Secretariat's Note:

Readers are advised to view the full document at (http://www.rspo.org/RSPO_Certification_Systems.aspx), significant excerpts from which are included or are paraphrased in the next sections.



The key elements of the of the certification framework are:

- A certification standard which sets the requirements that must be met for sustainable palm oil production (Standard)
- Rules and procedures for approving certifiers (Accreditation)
- The certification process requirements (Certification)
- Rules for claims made in the market with regard to traceability and labeling (Product claims)

While these elements are not new or unique, Dr Jan-Kees Vis, RSPO President in his RT5 opening address stated that the RSPO certification system differed from other existing schemes or frameworks in that it is the first to embrace a commodity market. Others have so far targeted at relatively small niche markets.

Standard for sustainable palm oil production

The RSPO Principles & Criteria (P&C) is the standard for the sustainable palm oil production. Developed by the Criteria Working Group (CWG), the P&C was adopted during RT3 in November 2005 in Singapore. It was agreed then that the P&C should undergo trial implementation for two years and 14 companies and organisations volunteered to test the application of the P&Cs in their respective operations. In the spirit of Principle 1 (Commitment to transparency), seven of the volunteers, namely the Agropalma Group, GOPDC/SIAT, IOI Group, PPB Palm Oil Berhad, PT Musim Mas, PT SMART and Sime Darby Berhad, shared their experiences and results at RT5. Overall, the volunteers have shown that with commitment and deliberate effort, it is possible to implement the P&C in most aspects of plantations and milling operations.

Concurrent with the trial testing of the P&C, effort was made by the

major oil palm processing countries to develop appropriate guidelines and indicators for the national interpretation of the generic P&C and the guidance document. Reports by the National Interpretation Working Groups (NIWGs) showed significant progress made to align national legislation and requirements to the generic guidance of the P&C; national draft Guidance documents for Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and Colombia are being finalised according to the prescribed process and are expected to be approved by the RSPO Executive Board before the end of 2007. Upon approval, these guidance and indicators would provide the basis for certification against the RSPO P&C in the respective producing countries.

As the P&C were originally developed with plantation agriculture in mind, the RSPO established a Smallholder Task Force (STF) at RT3 in November 2005 to examine the P&C and make them relevant and practical to the smallholder sector. A national STF was also established for Indonesia to study the specific needs of their small growers and ensure they can directly participate in the RSPO process. In spite of limited funding, both STFs have worked in earnest to produce the draft guidance document of implementation of the P&C for smallholders and this is expected to be finalised in the 1st half of 2008.

The generic RSPO P&C have also undergone a comprehensive review; the Criteria Working Group reconvened in Bogor, Indonesia in October 2007 to consider feedback from a public consultation process as well as inputs from the National Interpretation Working Groups, Smallholder Task force and volunteer organizations in the pilot testing of the P&C. Most of the comments and suggestions were related to indicators; 24 new indicators were accepted, 10 were deleted while amendments were made to 24 indicators. There were amendments to seven RSPO criteria. The revised and updated P&C have been approved by the General Assembly (GA4) following the conclusion of RT5 and these will be used as the standard for RSPO certification.

Accreditation

Certification against the requirements of the P&C will be undertaken by independent certifying bodies (CBs) that conform to the accreditation requirements to ensure that they competent and produce consistent credible assessments and results. The RSPO mechanism for approving certification bodies is based on accreditation against internationally recognized standards, namely, ISO/IEC Guide 65: 1996 General requirements for bodies operating product certifications systems and/or ISO/IEC Guide 66: 1999 General requirements for bodies operating assessment and certification/registration of environmental management systems. RSPO have supplemented the ISO Guide 65 and ISO Guide 66 with a set of specific certification requirements.

A stringent process is adopted to evaluate applications for accreditation which includes a 30 day period for stakeholders to submit comments on the certifying bodies applying for accreditation. These will be given due consideration by the RSPO Executive Board when discussing approval of the certifying body. At the time of RT5, RSPO has given initial approval of the accreditation of two certifying bodies, namely SGS Malaysia and Control Union. Since RT5, two more certifying bodies have been found to comply with requirements for accreditation and approval will be considered after the period for public comment.

Certification Process

This is the process on how certification bodies would undertake the assessment of compliance the requirements of the RSPO Principles and Criteria. The specific requirements required of certification bodies include:

- Competencies of assessment teams; including the minimum competencies of lead assessors and the assessment teams
- The assessment process – procedures, definition of the unit of certification, planning for time-bound certification of organisations with many management units or subsidiary companies, assessments of conformity or non-conformities with each indicator etc
- Gathering evidence from stakeholders during certifications assessments
- Public availability of documentation, such as assessment reports
- Managing conflicts of interest
- Mechanisms for responding to complaints and grievances.

In the assessment of major nonconformities against the P&C, RSPO has defined compulsory international indicators that must be complied with; failure to do so will automatically trigger a Major Nonconformity. As national interpretations of the international guidance and indicators by the respective producing countries, endorsement of the national interpretations by RSPO will the inclusion of at least one compulsory indicator for 32 criteria and at least 45% of all indicators at the national level must be identified as compulsory.

Product Claims (Chain of Custody requirements)

After the palm oil has been certified at the plantation and mills, the product undergoes many production and logistical steps before the final product reaches the buyer. To allow manufacturers of end products to make appropriate claims on their use of RSPO certified palm oil, the RSPO has approved the following supply chain mechanisms:

- Full Segregation palm oil from certified plantations and mills is physically segregated from palm oil from non-certified sources at every stage of the supply chain.
- Mass Balance or controlled mixing –certified and non-certified palm oil are allowed to be mixed with mechanisms in place to trace the proportion of certified palm oil used.
- Book and Claim – certified palm oil is represented by tradable certificates which are traded separately from the physical oil.

Although the three supply chain options have been discussed at previous RT meetings, real practical experiences in implemented these mechanisms were presented at RT5. The Daabon Group from Colombia shared their experiences on production of organic palm oil that required full traceability of palm oil from the production of the fruit bunches through to milling, refining and export to markets in Europe, USA and the Caribbean. Daabon concluded that full segregation is feasible and profitable and recommended that trade in certified sustainable palm oil follows the approach for organic palm oil which is well established and accepted by consumers.

Full segregation was also evaluated on a commercial scale, along with the mass balance by Golden Hope and Unilever. Results of a Sustainable Palm Oil Traceability (SPOT) project with 3000 MT of sustainable palm oil produced in Sabah, Malaysia for production into margarine at a Unilever factory in the Netherlands showed that complete traceability and tracking of sustainable from source to production of manufactured products is feasible and credible. However, implementation of the full segregation option was not

seen as the best approach at this stage as it could exclude the production from independent smallholders. The mass balance approach based on the 'volume credit system' is considered the practical and credible option for mainstream trade in sustainable palm oil as a commodity.

The Book and Claim option that was conceived during RT1 in 2003 is now up and running through GreenPalm Ltd which operates a web-based brokerage service system for trading in certificates on sustainable palm oil. There is no physical segregation or delivery of certified sustainable palm oil. Instead, the producer of sustainable palm oil receives a certificate that could be sold separately to a consumer goods manufacturer which intends to support the production and use of sustainable palm oil. The book and claim approach is innovative, simple and could be implemented immediately for trade in mainstream palm oil at a lower cost than the other options but the main disadvantage is there no traceability of the product in the supply chain.

Among the three supply chain mechanisms, the ultimate goal is towards full segregation that will allow traceability of the certified palm oil throughout the supply chain, from the grower to consumer goods manufacturer. However, it is recognised that the mainstream market is not yet ready for full segregation and trade in sustainable palm oil as a commodity product would have to depend mainly on the mass balance and book and claims approaches in the near future.

Feedback on the RSPO Certification System at RT5

Through a facilitated process using The World Café methodology, all delegates at RT5 had the opportunity to examine the merits and challenges of the RSPO certification system. Salient points that emerged from the session are as follows:

Strengths

- The RSPO certification system is a complete multi-stakeholder and process that has no equal among other commodities
- RSPO has one credible global standard for sustainable palm that is externally verified and the practicality of the criteria has been proven on the ground
- RSPO has delivered on time against all targets from beginning till now – an unprecedented achievement for a multi-stakeholder initiative.
- The certification scheme is time-bound with provisions for annual surveillance.
- The process is transparent and has incorporated a formal mechanism for handling complaints and grievances.

Constraints and Challenges

- The availability of qualified auditors as well as their independence is an issue.
- There are apparently too many indicators which may make the certification system unduly complex but effort to reduce them could be at the expense of the credibility of the system. Hence, a practical balance would be required.
- The cost of certification is a concern to producers, particularly if there are no incentives such as price premiums to compensate them for the additional effort to comply with the requirements of the P&C.
- The risk of non-involvement of the smallholder sector especially the independent smallholder is a key concern. There is an urgent need for capacity building and making the certification system relevant to the smallholders.

- A critical challenge for RSPO is breaches of the P&C by producers who are outside the RSPO membership; their misbehaviour would taint the reputation and credibility of the RSPO.
- Lack of greenhouse gas (GHG) criteria is a major concern, particularly for the biofuel industry, as the P&C were originally developed for the food sector. RSPO has recognised this concern and a Working Group will be established to address the issue of emissions.

The RSPO certification system is now a reality and the market can expect to trade in certified sustainable palm oil in the near future. The progress achieved to date is indeed unprecedented. As Dr Jan-Kees Vis pointed out, "the world is watching us. We are under scrutiny because what we are about to do has never been done before – never!" The success of the RSPO will be judged by how well it performs in implementing the certification system and delivers certified sustainable palm oil to the world.

Teoh Cheng Hai
Chairman, RT5 Organising Committee

Snapshots from RT5



Check out more RT5 pictures at:
http://www.rspo.org/RSPO_Certification_Scheme_for_Sustainable_Palm_Oil_Launched_at_RT5.aspx

News from RILO:

Sustainable Palm Oil Production by Oil Palm Smallholders: Efforts to Make It Possible

Smallholders contribute significantly to the palm oil industry in many producing countries. In Indonesia, they cover 42% of total land planted with oil palm or approximately of 2.5 million ha (IPOB 2006). It is therefore vital for mills seeking RSPO certification that the FFB sourced from smallholders is also of certifiable standard according to the RSPO Principles & Criteria (P&C). Acknowledging the problem of scale, the RSPO Certification System allows mills to develop and implement a plan to ensure 100% of associated smallholders and outgrowers are of certifiable standard over 3 years.

Furthermore, it is acknowledged that the RSPO P&C have been drafted mainly with large-scale holdings in mind in the first instance. Hence the current indicators - specific pieces of objective evidence that must be in place to demonstrate the criterion is being met - that will be used as basis for audit certification obviously cannot be applied in full to smallholders as some are not appropriate to smallholdings. If it is difficult for smallholders to implement the RSPO criteria, they may be marginalised from the certification process; and this is unacceptable to RSPO.

The Smallholder Task Force (STF) was established by RSPO because of the above concern, with the proposed activities, amongst others, to conduct trials on the application of the P&C with smallholders. This will test the suitability of the P&C and verification procedures and suggest modifications to meet smallholders' interests, without compromising the goals of the RSPO.

As the STF has a wide mandate covering smallholders in all producing countries, a need to establish STF Indonesia was mooted during the exploratory meeting held by the RSPO Indonesia Liaison Office on 18th January 2007. STF Indonesia aims to deliberate, develop, test and promote a smallholders P&C for Indonesia. The STF Indonesia work is equivalent to the national interpretation process of RSPO P&C in Indonesia currently developed by INA-NIWG, but scaled and modified to smallholders' needs and situation in Indonesia while maintaining verifiable indicators for auditing and eventual group certification against RSPO P&C. This is vital to bring smallholders into the RSPO process and not exclude them as certified sustainable palm oil producers.

As part of the work plan, STF Indonesia organized a public consultation workshop on 12th November 2007 at Hotel Ibis Tamarin Jakarta to collate comments and feedback to the drafted smallholder P&C. About 50 people attended the event and 17 of them are smallholders from Jambi, Riau, West Kalimantan and East Kalimantan provinces. Government officials, including two Directors from the Directorate General of Plantation, Ministry of Agriculture, palm oil companies, national certification bodies, environmental and Social NGOs and bank representatives (IFC) also attended the workshop. About 110 comments to the draft were received.

In early December 2007, the STF Indonesia finalized the interpretation of RSPO P&C for Indonesian smallholders and has submitted the final document to the RSPO Secretariat for further review and endorsement by the RSPO Executive Board.

It was a long journey of the working group as summarized below:



However, the journey is not over yet, and it still has a long way to go!

Developing a smallholder P&C is only the start of the journey. The really important and challenging tasks are actually to extend it to as many smallholders as possible and to receive their wide buy-in to the standard and to improve their capacity building to meet the requirements.

Endorsement by the RSPO Executive Board of the Indonesian smallholder P&C will be followed by the proposed works and activities in 2008 - pilot projects & trial audits of implementation of the P&C with smallholders.

We will keep you updated on the progress and detailed plans for the pilot projects and trial audits.

We take this opportunity to ask your support of the efforts and involvement in the future programs of STF Indonesia to make oil palm smallholders certified sustainable palm oil producers.

Happy New Year 2008!

Submitted by RSPO Indonesia Liaison Officer



Picture 1.
Two Directors from the Directorate General of Plantation, Ministry of Agriculture (sitting on the left first row) at the Public Consultation Workshop on Draft of NI RSPO P&C for Indonesian Smallholders held on 12th November 2007 at Hotel Ibis Tamarin Jakarta



Picture 2.
More than 110 comments to the draft smallholder P&C were received from the participants of the workshop



Picture 3.
Oil palm smallholders having coffee break during the workshop.

We have **MOVED!**

From 2 January 2008 the RSPO Indonesia Liaison Office (RILO) is at the following address:

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Promoting Indonesian Smallholders as Producer of Sustainable Palm Oil

Background

Smallholders contribute significantly to the palm oil industry in Indonesia, where it covers 42% of total oil palm plantation area in Indonesia or approximately of 2.5 million Ha (IPOB 2006). For mills seeking for RSPO Certification, it is therefore vital to ensure that FFB sourced from smallholders are also of certifiable standard according to the RSPO Principles & Criteria (P&C).

However, the RSPO P&C have been drafted mainly with large-scale holdings in mind and the Criteria Working Group has noted that the requirements for compliance with the standard are not well suited to smallholders' situations, thus making it difficult for smallholders to take active part in producing sustainable palm oil. As a result, smallholders may be marginalised from the certification process.

A need to develop practical & applicable P&C for smallholders is therefore very important. Smallholders Task Force (STF) Indonesia working group was established with concern on the above conditions and aims to develop national interpretation of RSPO P&C that is applicable for Indonesian smallholders, both scheme and independent smallholders.

About the Working Group

During an exploratory meeting held by RSPO Indonesia Liaison Office (RILO) in 18th January 2007, a plan has been set in motion for the commencement of the working group on smallholders composed of Indonesian RSPO members and stakeholders to deliberate, develop, test and promote a smallholders P&C for Indonesia, which is vital for smallholder's becoming sustainable palm oil producers. The working group will become part of National Interpretation of RSPO P&C with strong emphasis on smallholders' interests and situations.

The working group, named as STF-Indonesia, comprises of stakeholders from various interests and who have close engagement with smallholders as follows:

- Government – Ministry of Agriculture, IPOC, NGOs – Sawit Watch, WWF-Indonesia
- Growers – GAPKI and its members (nucleus estates)
- Smallholders' representatives – APKASINDO, ASPEKPIR, SPKS
- Smallholders – scheme and independent

Dr. Asril Darussamin of IPOC and Mr. Suhandri of WWF-Indonesia were elected Chairman and Vice-chairman of the working group, respectively, and Mr. Norman Jiwan of Sawit Watch as secretary. RILO serves as facilitator for the working group.

Development and Promote of Smallholders P&C for Indonesia

STF-Indonesia has set preliminary term of reference in order to deliberate, develop and promote a smallholders P&C for Indonesia, as follows:

- Conduct physical meeting to develop draft of national interpretation of RSPO P&C for smallholders – scheme and independent smallholders.
- Conduct field testing for the application of developed criteria in smallholders' plantation
- Conduct public consultation to gather wider inputs and feedbacks
- Finalising NI document of RSPO P&C for smallholders in Indonesia (based on public consultation and field testing results) for further endorsement by RSPO Executive Board.

STF-Indonesia work is equivalent with the national interpretation process of RSPO P&C in Indonesia currently developed by INA-NIWG, but scaled and modified to the smallholders' needs and situations in Indonesia while maintaining verifiable indicators for auditing and eventual certifications against RSPO P&C.



Field testing Smallholders P&C at Sampoerna Agro



Planting beneficial plants (IPM) at smallholders' cooperative at Sampoerna Agro



Field testing Smallholders P&C at Sime Indo Agro

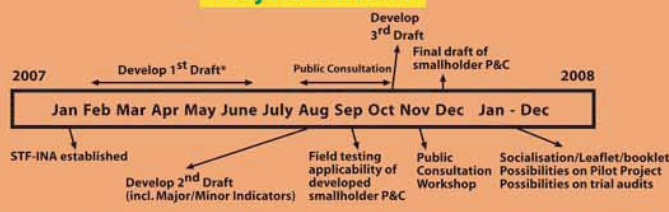


Field testing Smallholders P&C at Inti Indosawit Subur



Public Consultation Workshop for Indonesia Smallholders

Project Timeline



* Based on generic P&C and Input to RSPO P&C for Oil Palm Smallholder by IPOC (a pilot project funded by Trilateral Partnership Indonesia, the Netherlands and Malaysia) and a study by WWF Indonesia on possibilities application of RSPO P&C for oil palm smallholders.

WHAT NEED TO BE DONE

1. To encourage smallholders to form a strong organization. Many indicators require the existence of strong organization
2. To train smallholders how to do a simple management (planning, documentations, recording, book keeping)
3. To encourage government officials to be involved in and supported the socialization and application of the RSPO P&C by smallholders
4. To encourage large plantations to become information and technology source for smallholders around them (one of CSR activities)

CONCLUSION

The working expects that all stakeholders who have close engagement with smallholders may support the efforts and next program of STF Indonesia in making Indonesian smallholders as sustainable palm oil producers a reality.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank RSPO, WWF Indonesia, PT.SMART Tbk and Sawit Watch for financial support and Indonesian Palm Oil Commission (IPOC), PT.Inti Indosawit Subur, PT.Sampoerna Agro Tbk and PT.Sime Indo Agro for the contribution in kind.

Contact:
Smallholders Task Force (STF) Indonesia :
Dr. Asril Darussamin (chairman STF-INA) at dmsl_2003@yahoo.com
Mr. Suhandri (Vice Chairman STF-INA) at suhandri@wwf.or.id
Mr. Norman Jiwan (Secretary STF-INA) at norman@sawitwatch.or.id

RSPO Certification

RSPO completed evaluation of BSI (Singapore), in accordance with the process for SIRIM QAS.

The evaluation of documentary evidence found both certification bodies compliant of RSPO requirements, with some partial exceptions.

(Secretariat Note: This have since been fulfilled at the time of publishing this newsletter)

The BSI application was evaluated and approved by the EB at it's meeting on 20th November 2007.

Note:

A peer review process for all certification reports will be implemented by RSPO for an initial period, until sufficient rigour relating to implementation of RSPO certification systems has been demonstrated by the certification body.

The SIRIM QAS application will next be evaluated by the EB.

Secretariat's note:

More updates can be found at:

http://www.rspo.org/The_RSPO_Audit_Programme.aspx

RSPO Members Annual Communication of Progress 2007

Copies of the booklet -Annual Communication of Progress 2007 - are available from the RSPO Secretariat.

If you would like a copy, please email your request to the RSPO Secretariat at:

rspo@rspo.org.

Copies will be sent out by ordinary post on a "first come first served" basis with RSPO members given priority. over non-members. Only one copy will be given to each member / request.

Omission:

In the Annual Communication of Progress 2007 booklet, the report from IOI Group (Malaysia/Netherlands) - RSPO Ordinary Member and Executive Board Member were inadvertently omitted.

The report can be found on the RSPO member's page:

http://www.rspo.org/resource_centre/IOI3.pdf

We apologise for the omission.

Revised RSPO Generic Principles & Criteria (P&C) for SPO

During this initial period, national interpretations and trial implementations were also done.

The review meeting was held at Bogor on 8th-10th October 2007.

The revisions following the review were approved by the RSPO Executive Board at its meeting on 19 November 2007 and adopted by the General Assembly on 22 November 2007.

Download Revised approved RSPO Principles and Criteria document [PDF/248 KB]

http://www.rspo.org/resource_centre/RSPO%20Principles%20%20Criteria%20Document.pdf

Final draft Malaysia National Interpretation of RSPO Generic P&C document

The final draft from the Malaysia National Interpretation Working Group (MY-NIWG) document was submitted for EB approval in early December 2007.

The INA & PNG documents were received earlier in November. All 3 NI documents have been forwarded to an outside consultant (ProForest) for their input.

Download Final draft MYNIWG document (English) [PDF/352 KB].

http://www.rspo.org/resource_centre/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20MY%20NIWG%204_NOV_.pdf

Download Final draft MYNIWG document (Bahasa Malaysia) [PDF/388 KB]

http://www.rspo.org/resource_centre/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20MY%20NIWG%204_NOV_BM.pdf

Secretariat's Update:

As of 15 January 2008, the EB sub group on NI are reviewing the NI, including comments from ProForest prior to recommendation for the Board's consideration.

Other Developments

Complaint Against Wilmar International Ltd.

Complaint against Wilmar International Ltd. by FOE received on 23 July 2007.

Details of complaint maybe found at:

www.foeeurope.org/publications/2007/Wilmar_Palm_Oil_Environmental_Social_Impact.pdf
http://www.rspo.org/Complaint_against_Wilmar_International_Ltd.aspx

Wilmar International Ltd. response recieved:

10 Oct 2007 (1st response)
9 Nov 2007 (2nd response)

RSPO Grievance panel met on 8 November 2007

Recommendations of Grievance Panel sent to Wilmar International Ltd on 24 December 2007



News & Views from Members

This column provides a platform for discourse among members to share experiences and ideas on the achievement of RSPO's objective of promoting the growth and use of sustainable palm oil.

Members could use this space to:

- Communicate their views and experiences on sustainable palm oil
- Critique on RSPO activities or decisions
- Provide suggestions for new projects
- Provide ideas for funding of new projects or activities
- Solicit partners for collaborative projects or activities
- Network, etc.

We invite contributions from all members, in any form appropriate. All contributions are welcomed. Articles could include pictures, graphs, figures, etc. for possible inclusion in the next or future issues of the RSPO newsletter. For the Jan-Mar 2008 issue, please submit your contributions to us by **28 Feb 2008**.

Contributions may be edited to improve readability, reduce pages or as otherwise deemed necessary by the Secretariat. Contributors will be informed of any changes. The Secretariat reserves the right to publish or not to publish the whole or part of any contributions.

All views expressed in this section are not necessarily those of the RSPO.



Beneficial Biodiversity: Potentially Beneficial Reptile, Bird and Mammal Species in Oil Palm Plantations

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15 – 16 November 2007

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, the oil palm (*Elaeis guineensis*) has become one of the most rapidly expanding tropical crops in the world (Corley & Tinker 2003; Koh 2007a, b; Koh & Wilcove 2007). Malaysia and Indonesia currently lead the world in palm oil production with a total area of about 10 million hectares. Coincidentally, Malaysia and Indonesia are also located within two of the world's 34 biodiversity hotspots – Sundaland and Wallacea, which contain excep-

tionally high concentrations of endemic species, that is, species not found anywhere else in the world (Mittermeier et al. 2004; Sodhi et al. 2004). The increase in demand for palm oil for food and biodiesel has led analysts to predict a doubling of demand for palm oil during the next twenty years, which means that further expansion of the area of oil palm plantations will almost inevitably occur. Most of the new expansion will take place in Indonesia, which had only about half a million hectares under oil palm cultivation in the mid-1980s, has now over 6 million hectares in production, and plans to plant an additional 20 million hectares in the next two decades (Hans Joosten 2007). This has raised concerns about the apparent conflicts between agricultural expansion and biodiversity conservation in this region, and has resulted in intense media debates between conservation groups and the oil palm industry.

Environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGO) allege that expansion of oil palm agriculture in Southeast Asia destroys huge tracts of tropical forests and threatens the survival of many native species, including the orang-utan (*Pongo pygmaeus*). They have launched aggressive media campaigns that lobby for the boycott of palm oil products (e.g., <http://www.cspinet.org/palm/>). In response, oil palm producers have accused Western ENGOs of unfairly targeting Southeast Asia's oil palm industry while ignoring agricultural activities in other regions (e.g., soybean in South America). They also argue that palm oil production is not a threat to biodiversity because most oil palm plantations have been converted from logged forests or existing cropland, and with minimal disturbance to pristine habitats. Koh and Wilcove (2007) contend that this debate has arisen on the one hand, from the ENGOs' lack of awareness of socioeconomic realities in oil palm-producing countries and on the other, from the oil palm producers' failure to appreciate the threat to Southeast Asia's unique biodiversity, and the conservation potential of disturbed habitats. One of the ways to reconcile this conflict is to search for common grounds between the two agendas. A likely win-win solution is to show that the conservation of natural habitats and biodiversity can provide financial benefits for oil palm agriculture. In other words, biodiversity could be thought of as a natural capital that provides economically valuable ecosystem services for the benefit of humans (Daily 1997).

Although the oil palm is a hardy crop plant, it does suffer from attacks by a variety of pests (Corley & Tinker 2003). Occasionally, severe pest insect outbreaks may occur, causing massive defoliation, when the pest population threshold has built up synchronously, which results in substantial yield reductions and financial costs to oil palm companies (Wood et al. 1973; Corley & Tinker 2003). Usually major pest outbreaks occur due to lack of an adequate monitoring system, which allows the pest population to build up beyond the thresholds, resulting in the failure for timely enforcement of appropriate control measures. Many companies in Malaysia and Indonesia have now successfully adopted the integrated pest management approach, which encourages monitoring of pest population and institute control measures when the pest population has reached the threshold levels. There is also an increasing trend in the use of non-chemical pest control methods in the integrated pest management protocol. For example, the Barn owl, *Tyto alba*, has been widely used as a biological control agent against rodent pests in Peninsular Malaysia and



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Indonesia so are the 'beneficial plants' such as *Cassia cobanensis*, *Antigonon leptopus*, *Crotalaria usaramoensis*, *Euphorbia heterophylla* and *Tunera subulata*, which have been instrumental in enhancing and propagation of the population of parasitoids for long term control of bagworms in oil palm plantations (Basri et al. 1995; Corley & Tinker 2003, Norman Kamarudin et al. 2007). Entomopathogenic fungi e.g. *Cordyceps*, non-occluded spherical and ganulosis viruses and predatory pentatomid bugs have been used to successfully control outbreaks of nettle caterpillars (Khirudin Hashim 2007 cited Ho & Teh 1997). The use of *Metarhizium* fungus as a biocontrol agent for the rhinoceros beetle, *Oryctes rhinoceros*, has now been commercialized and formulated as mass produced for use in oil palm plantations (Norman Kamarudin et al, 2007).

Studies in a 75 ha forest reserve within the oil palm plantations in the state of Selangor, Peninsular Malaysia have shown that such ecosystem harboured six species of primates, seven frugivorous animals, one insectivore, four squirrels and five predators. Rare and protected species of animals include the White-handed gibbon (*Hylobates lar*), Slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*), Red flying squirrel (*Petautista petaurista*) and Rhinoceros hornbill (*Buceros rhinoceros*). A myriad of other species of plants, invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles and birds were estimated to be present within the forest reserve in this plantation (Khirudin Hashim cited Bennet & Caldecott 1981). Khiruddin Hashim (2007) also reported that other studies in a regenerated secondary jungle on hilly terrain, riparian reserves and fresh water swampland have similarly identified numerous species of flowering plants, birds, bats and other small mammals. Other recent studies also reveal that oil palm plantations can support a community of other organisms including ants, reptiles, birds and mammals (e.g., Hashim et al. 2005; Koh & Gan 2007, Khirudin Hashim 2007). Some of these species could potentially be providing beneficial pest control services for oil palm agriculture. In this paper, we provide a first look at some of these animals. Additionally, a predator exclusion experiment that provides evidence for the role of insectivorous birds in controlling insect pests is also reported.

EXAMPLES OF POTENTIALLY BENEFICIAL BIODIVERSITY

Reptiles

Hashim et al. (2005) recorded six species of reptiles from an oil palm plantation in Selangor, Malaysia, out of which three species of snakes – the Banded rat snake (*Ptyas mucosus*), the Indo-Chinese rat snake (*Ptyas korros*), the Keeled rat snake (*Zaocys carinatus*) – are carnivorous and feed mainly on rats. Furthermore, the Malayan water monitor lizard (*Varanus salvator*) has a varied diet, which also includes rats. These reptile species could be important in limiting rat populations in oil palm plantations.

Birds

A surprisingly diverse community of birds has been recorded in oil palm plantations across Southeast Asia during recent biodiversity studies. Hashim et al. (2005) reported 83 species of birds from an oil palm plantation in Selangor and 22 species of birds from a plantation in Tangkah. Koh & Gan (2007) recorded 35 species of birds from oil palm plantations in East Sabah, while Desmier de Chenon & Susanto (2005) recorded 29 species of birds in North Sumatra. Many of these bird species feed on insects. For example, Desmier de Chenon & Susanto (2005) reported that a pair of Great tit (*Parus major*) collected up to 139 insects (mostly nettle caterpillars) per day. Another common bird species in oil palm plantations is the

Greater coucal (*Centropus sinensis*). This species feeds mostly at the understory and up to 12 prepupae and pupae of the nettle caterpillar (*Setothosea asigna*) were found in the gut of a single bird. Some of the bird species recorded from oil palm plantations are carnivorous. The Black-shouldered kite (*Elanus caeruleus*) had been observed hovering above oil palm fields, foraging for small vertebrates such as rats (Koh & Gan 2007). Other carnivorous birds recorded from the plantations include the Crested goshawk (*Accipiter trivirgatus*), the Crested serpent-eagle (*Spilornis cheela*) and the Brahminy kite (*Haliastur indus*).

Mammals

Hashim et al. (2005) recorded a total of nine species of mammals from oil palm plantations in Selangor, while Koh & Gan (2007) recorded seven mammalian species from plantations in Sabah. The Leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*) is a widespread carnivorous species that had been recorded from plantations in Selangor, Sabah and North Sumatra (E. Fitzherbert pers. comm.). In Sabah, the main diet of this cat was reportedly the Whitehead's rat (*Maxomys whiteheadi*) (Rajaratnam et al. 2007). The Leopard cat could potentially be an important pest control agent for rats, particularly in Sabah, where Barn owl introduction has been unsuccessful. The Common palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*) has also been recorded in Selangor and Sabah (Hashim et al. 2005; Koh & Gan 2007). This species is an omnivore and includes insects in its diet. More research is required to determine the importance of this species in controlling insect pests.

EVIDENCE FOR PEST CONTROL SERVICES

An experiment was recently conducted in an oil palm plantation in East Sabah to investigate whether insectivorous birds (bird species that feed on insects) indirectly defend oil palms from insect pests (Koh 2007c). The main objectives and results of this study are briefly summarized here.

Ecological theory predicts that top-down forces (e.g., predation) are expected to be important in regulating herbivore populations (e.g., insect pests) in most agricultural systems, where primary productivity is high and species diversity is low (Oksanen et al. 1981; Schmitz 1992; Strong 1992). Under such conditions, trophic cascades are predicted to occur when predator populations (e.g., insectivorous birds) are reduced or removed, resulting in increased herbivore populations (e.g., insect pests) and greater damage to crops. The indirect effects of predator removal on herbivory damage to crops in agricultural system remain poorly understood.

Through a bird enclosure experiment, Koh (2007c) tested the hypothesis that insectivorous birds indirectly defend oil palms from insect pests. By comparing the rate at which oil palm seedlings are damaged by insect pests (herbivory rate) between seedlings that were in bird-exclosure treatments (caged and inaccessible to birds) and seedlings that were in control treatments (exposed and accessible to birds), Koh (2007c) showed that bird exclusion significantly increased herbivory damage to oil palms, and that the magnitude of this effect increased with the density of insectivorous birds.

CONCLUSIONS

This review paper shows that despite being a monoculture, oil palm plantations are not completely devoid of biodiversity (i.e., 'biodiversity deserts'). Although obvious not as biologically diverse as pristine habitats, such as tropical rain forests, the plantation ecosystem does harbour a variety of wildlife and plants.

More importantly the biodiversity that exists in the oil palm fields could potentially be economically important for oil palm agriculture. Many of the bird species feed on insects. A common bird species in oil palm plantations, the Greater coucal (*Centropus*



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sinensis) feeds mostly at the understory and up to 12 prepupae and pupae of the nettle caterpillar (*Setothosea asigna*). Results of the experiment has provided evidence that insectivorous birds deliver a natural pest control service for oil palm agriculture, which is important not only for the direct benefits it delivers for human welfare but also in strengthening the economic justifications for conserving the remaining natural habitats and biodiversity in agricultural landscapes.

Other bird species recorded from oil palm plantations are carnivorous, example the Black-shouldered kite (*Elanus caeruleus*) had been observed hovering above oil palm fields, foraging for small vertebrates such as rats. The Leopard cat could potentially be an important pest control agent for rats, particularly in Sabah, where Barn owl introduction has been unsuccessful. The Common palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*) is an omnivore and includes insects in its diet. The reptile species that are found in oil palm plantations could be important in limiting rat populations in oil palm plantations.

This review paper reinforces the call for biodiversity-friendly management practices in oil palm agriculture and this is also outlined under Criterion 5.2 of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil Principles and Criteria (RSPO P&C) on environmental responsibility and conservation of natural resources and biodiversity (<http://www.rspo.org/>).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to acknowledge with thank Princeton University and Musim Mas Group Plantations for the kind permission to publish this paper.



Partnerships for Sustainable Palm Oil Production

Syngenta and its legacy companies have over 40 years of experience in weed control working with the South East Asian plantation and smallholder sectors. We are committed to the RSPO and its objectives, and are willing to work with any stakeholders to ensure progress of sustainability through open and transparent processes.

To this end, Syngenta believes that product stewardship – the ethical and responsible management of a crop protection product from its discovery through to its ultimate use and beyond – in compliance with the Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, is the key. Product stewardship forms a core element of the company's corporate responsibility policy and commitments, specifically in relation to the following articles in the FAO

Code of Conduct;-

1.6 The Code recognizes that training at all appropriate levels is an essential requirement in implementing and observing its provisions. Therefore, governments, pesticide industry, users of pesticides, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other parties concerned should give high priority to training activities related to each Article of the Code.

3.4.5 [Pesticide industry...should] be capable of providing effective technical support, backed up by full product stewardship to field level, including advice on disposal of pesticides and used pesticide containers, if necessary.

Training for Growers and Smallholders

The focal partnerships are therefore delivery of training programs to oil palm growers from both the smallholder and plantation sector. The training in safe and responsible use of agrochemicals and integrated pest management covers pest scouting/counting, choosing appropriate pest control interventions, agrochemical purchase (transport and storage), use (mixing and loading, spraying, knapsack maintenance) to pack disposal. As such the training enable RSPO grower members to comply with *RSPO Criterion 4.8 – All staff, workers, smallholders and contractors are appropriately trained.*

In 2007, safe use training has been provided to Indonesian smallholders in West Kalimantan – including Kabupaten Sintang on 12 April, Kabupaten Sambas on 11 May, and Kabupaten Sanggau on 24-27 July – and in Banten, West Java on 19 July. A series of training have also been conducted for spray operators of PTPN Nusantara V, PT SMART, PT Makin, PT Londsum, PT Sawindo Kencana, PT Sawit Kaltim Lestari and JMS Group during June – July 2007. Training the Trainers of Kulim Plantation at Nam Heng Complex in Johor Bahru, Johor, Malaysia has been conducted on 5-7 November. At RT5 this opportunity for collaborative partnerships are much welcomed and Syngenta received nearly 30 requests from RSPO members for training in 2008.

Moreover, 48 doctors from oil palm and forestry plantations from Bengkulu, Jambi, Lampung Dan, South Sumatra Province, received training in diagnosis and treatment of agrochemical poisonings and incidents in Palembang, Indonesia on 30 October. Such medical training should facilitate compliance with *Criterion 4.7 – An occupational health and safety plan is documented, effectively communicated and implemented.*

Integrated Pest Management

Meanwhile, the 4 year collaborative project on "Sustainable Weed Management on Oil Palm Plantation through Soft & Woody Weed Conservation and Adopting Good Safe Work Practices for Herbicides Usage" in partnership with PT SMART Tbk, is being continued. The project commenced in October 2005, and aims to develop sustainable weed management system in oil palm plantations by applying the conservation of selected soft and woody weeds and adopting safe work practices for herbicides utilization. Other partners include researchers from



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the Weed Science Society of Indonesia in the study of impacts of weed control on environment, soil erosion and nutrient leaching, as well as soil structure and soil fertility.

Preliminary data from the trials suggest that integrated weed management practices enabled better prevention of weed succession, reduction in run-off and erosion, maintenance of soil structure and better soil moisture. The project will therefore support compliance towards:-

Criterion 4.5 – Pests, diseases, weeds and invasive introduced species are effectively managed using appropriate Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques.

Criterion 5.1 – Aspects of plantation and mill management, including replanting, that have environmental impacts are identified, and plans to mitigate the negative impacts and promote the positive ones are made, implemented and monitored, to demonstrate continuous improvement.

Supporting and Enabling Implementation of Zero Burning Syngenta also participated in the meeting on “Prevention of Fire on Land and Plantations by Land Clearance without Burning through Integrated Weed Management to Revitalize Plantations” on 3 July 2007 in Bogor, Indonesia. The meeting concluded that:-

- The clearing of land done manually and mechanically can be combined with chemicals through the use of herbicides at the time when the land is to be cleared and when re-planting is done. Using herbicides such as a combination of paraquat (Gramoxone®) and triasulfuron (Logran®), glyphosate and other chemicals for land clearance have proven to be beneficial to big plantation holders to combat forest fires. In the effort to prevent fires when clearing land, it is hoped that this method can be adopted by small-holders/plasma plantations.

- Attention on health and environment aspects must be given in the use of herbicides for land clearance. The herbicides must be used wisely, according to instructions and dosage, all of which are taught in the training on safe use of pesticides. Training on the safe use of pesticides has proven to be useful in stopping possible dangers which might affect the environment and users.

Hence, the programs contribute towards compliance with:-

Criterion 5.5 – Use of fire for waste disposal and for preparing land for replanting is avoided except in specific situations, as identified in the ASEAN guidelines or other regional best practice.

Criterion 7.7 – Use of fire in the preparation of new plantings is avoided other than in specific situations, as identified in the ASEAN guidelines or other regional best practice.

Syngenta invites fellow members to develop collaborative partnerships with us so as to further progress and expand RSPO.

Requests for further information or queries can be addressed to Ms Alex Yau at alex.yau@syngenta.com.

Syngenta Activities



Agro-chemicals related Health Training in Palembang, Indonesia (30 October 2007)



The project studies impacts of different weed control regimes on soil erosion.



Experts from the Government, universities, plantation, weed research institute and local communities presented papers and solutions at the meeting



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Collaborative Project on “Sustainable Weed Management on Oil Palm Plantation through Soft & Woody Weed Conservation and Adopting Good Safe Work Practices for Herbicides Usage” in Partnership with PT SMART Tbk



Mr. Achmad Mangga Barani, Director General, Directorate General of Estates, Ministry of Agriculture opened the meeting on “Prevention of Fire on Land and Plantations by Land Clearance without Burning through Integrated Weed Management to Revitalize Plantations” (3 July 2007, Bogor)



Training the Trainers of Kulim Plantation at Nam Heng Complex in Johor Bahru, Johor, Malaysia (5-7 November 2007)