

HCV Assessment - Peer Review

Project name: NBPOL - Roka Proposed Mini-estate, West New Britain
Reviewer: Mr Guy Michael Williams
Review Date: 23rd August 2013

This report summarises major findings of the peer review of a High Conservation Value (HCV) assessment for the Roka mini-estate, West New Britain, by New Britain Palm Oil Limited (NBPOL).

This report presents major recommendations and findings of the peer review undertaken, and evaluates whether the assessment team have made decisions that are robust and credible and sufficient to maintain or enhance HCV's.

It is expected that an HCV assessment undertaken to meet the guidelines of the RSPO should exceed certain basic requirements in terms of the scope and context of the assessment, and clearly demonstrate an attempt to manage and monitor ongoing threats to HCV.

This report is accompanied by a peer review template (see 21027_Roka HCV_PRv1-4). This template presents the findings of the peer review and makes corrective actions and recommendations for improvement. This template is based on the table provided in the "*HCV assessments for RSPO certification: Reporting Requirements*" (October 2012).

It is expected that the company (West New Britain, NBPOL) and the HCV assessment team would consider all minor and major findings and put in place a process to ensure effective amendment or corrective action to improve or mitigate the limitations found.

1. Peer review process

Mr Guy Williams undertook the peer review process. Mr Williams is an RSPO approved HCV assessor and an ecologist with more than 10 years experience in undertaking peer review and assessment for ecological and cultural studies.

Mr Williams has some familiarity with the company NBPOL, but is independent and has not had previous involvement with West New Britain operations or the proposed Roka mini-estate area. The peer review undertaken is independent and impartial.

The peer review considered the following key documents:

- *Evaluation of High Conservation Value Forest of the Proposed Roka Mini-Estate West New Britain Province*. Biatas Bito, Ted Mamu and Tom Diwai Vigus – February 2009 - (The initial assessment of HCV).

- *RSPO based social and environment impact assessment report on NBPOL's proposed new planting areas in WNB*. Narua Lovai. December 2012 - (SEIA for various proposed new planting mini-estate area in WNB, including HCV mitigation and management of Roka areas).
- *Managing & Monitoring High Conservation Values & Social and Environmental Impacts within the Roka Mini Estate*. Ashley Barnes and Sander van den Ende. November 2012 – (Management and monitoring plan for HCV areas and items).
- *RSPO New Planting Procedure Summary Report of HCV and SEIA Assessments Proposed Roka Mini- Estate West New Britain Province, Papua New Guinea*. (Public summary of SEA and HCV)
- *High Conservation Value Forest Toolkit for PNG*. HVCF National Working Group, PNG FSC Inc. November 2005. (The national HCV toolkit applied)
- *HCV assessments for RSPO certification: Reporting Requirements*. RSPO / HCV Network. October 2012 - (The peer review guidelines).

It is important to note that the original HCV assessment report (Bito et al 2009) served as a first screening of the likelihood and occurrence of HCVs and did not include any detailed management and mitigation planning and associated recommendations for monitoring. The SEIA report developed some time later (Lovai 2012) included more detailed analysis of mitigation and management measures for HCV identified in the initial assessment. A further report authored by NBPOL staff (Barnes and van den Ende 2012) provided guidance and plans for management and monitoring of HCV and associated SEIA items. For the purposes of this peer review all three reports were considered.

The peer review assessed completeness and accuracy of all sections of these report(s) against the requirements for HCV assessments for RSPO certification (October 2012). All 13 main elements necessary for a credible and robust HCV report were checked.

A modified version of the template for peer review reports was developed to assess each section and to clearly present findings, issues and recommendations. For each section a finding class was provided based on the following four class options:

N/A – For certain sections (namely 6.3, 8.1, & 8.2) guidance was provided that in certain instances an evaluation was not needed, and hence this category was deemed not-applicable.

None – For these findings class it was found that the HCV assessment and related report covers the required recommendation and no further action or activity needed.

Minor – A minor finding suggests improvement in the approach to assessment or incomplete coverage of required details. However effort has still been made to address in assessment and reporting.

Major – A major finding suggests that these section/s require comprehensive improvement, change or action to ensure the relevant requirements are met.

For all minor and major findings some guidance has been provided on recommendations for corrective actions to improve. At this stage detail has not been provided on responsibility for implementing recommendation or timeframes for when these actions need be completed.

3. Summary Findings

3.1 General comments of reports

The HCV reports included the thirteen main elements of a credible and robust HCV report, proportionate to the scale and potential impact of the plantation or development.

The main HCV assessment report (Bito et al 2009) is concise and readable, with most key information presented in summaries, lists, maps and tables within the main report. However, some required sections, notably monitoring measures for proposed management actions and detail on land use and human environment landscape has not been included in this report. As such the summary of findings has considered all three of the key documents; namely the HCV assessment (Bito et al 2009), the SEIA report (Lovai 2012) and the management and monitoring guidelines (Barnes and van den Ende 2012). It is anticipated that the public summary report would bring together key required sections from all three of these reports.

The completeness of each of the key sections is assessed in the table below.

Section	Complete?	Comments / Recommendations
1. Status of Report Summary	Yes	Report status outlined in cover & maps. Contact details of key persons involved in project provided in summary reports.
2. Executive Summary	Yes	Good summary of scope and approach. A table outlining each often HCVs (all 6 as per RSPO P&C) and their likelihood and scale to be included in summary report.
3. Introduction	Yes	There is an effective introduction covering all required sections. The public summary has been completed as a separate report, according to <i>HCV assessments for RSPO certification: Reporting Requirements</i> .
4. Scope of Report	Yes	Scope presented clearly and completely with all required sections.

Section	Complete?	Comments / Recommendations
5. Introduction to HCV team	Yes	Name and roles of all HCV assessment team members included.
6. Method	Yes	Complete and effective methodology presented for the purposes of the scale and extent of the assessment.
7. Landscape Context	Yes	Biodiversity and ecosystem context of wider landscape accurately detailed in both the HCV report and SEIA. Relevant information on social and cultural values included in the SEIA report (Lovai 2012).
8. Identification / findings	Yes	Likelihood of presence for HCV clearly presented. The summary of HCV findings has been completed for the allocated portion area assigned as HCVF, but not each HCV class. Systematic presence, absence for each class included in the public summary report.
9. Management	Yes	Management guidelines and prescriptions are clear for identified HCV and mapped in specific HCV management areas. The detailed description of management and mitigation actions is provided in the SEIA report (Lovai 2012) and in public summary report.
10. Monitoring	Yes	Monitoring options and associated responsibilities have been presented for the major HCVs identified in the assessment. There is a link to the terms of references and associated responsibilities. A management and monitoring plan has been provided in the appendices of the SEIA report, and further detailed in the management and monitoring summary report
11. Conclusion	Yes	Effective summary of report findings, however specific reference to a management or monitoring plan has been included in summary report.
12. Appendices	Yes	Appendices include relevant detail and background information. Detail on community and consultation records provided in appendices of SEIA (Lovai 2012).
13. References	Yes	Accurate and complete reference for all source material used has been included in the HCV reports.

3.2 Major findings and recommendations

For each of the major findings in the assessment (as assessed using the peer review template - see 21027_Roka HCV_PRv1-4) some further detail on the associated section of the template, the reasoning for the finding and suggested corrective actions.

Landscape Context

Section - C3

Finding - MINOR

There is a need for more information to be provided on historical land use and maps to indicate the size and areas of past land clearance. The SEIA (Lovai 2012) includes some information on human environment including land ownership, but does not detail past land use, or current use of timber and non-timber forest and water resources.

Corrective action

- Need for more accurate account of past and current use of ecological resources (timber and non-timber forest products, water and related aquatic resources) and other land use, clearance and disturbance patterns for the study area and wider landscape.
- ** Corrective action closed - This information has been provided in the summary report of HCV and SEIA findings.

Absent HCV class (6)

Section - 5.1, 5.3, 5.4

Finding - MINOR

The five High Conservation Values (HCV's 1 to 5) from the national High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) Toolkit of PNG (2005) were used to assess the forests at Roka Estate of West New Britain Province. This is not consistent with the most recent RSPO Principles and Criteria (2013), which has 6 HCV classes. However, the HCV was originally completed in 2009, and there was a benefit in demonstrating consistent with the PNG HCVF toolkit (in the absence of a specific HCV toolkit for palm oil in PNG).

The current PNG RSPO P&C reference the use of the PNG HCV Toolkit. When this Toolkit was being made the PNG HCV Toolkit Working Group consensually agreed to merge HCV5 and HCV6 from the Global Definition so as to make the Toolkit more relevant to the PNG context of traditional landownership and social dependence on habitats both in terms of spiritual and tangible needs.

Corrective actions

- The summary report developed recently uses the information provided in the HCV and SEIA reports to assess the likelihood of HCV class 6.
- Future new planting consider must clearly assess each of the 6 classes of HCV as detailed in the RSPO principles and criteria, and provide an assessment of the likelihood and scale of each HCV, including HCV6.

HCV Monitoring

Section - C7

Finding - MINOR

The HCV / SEIA management and monitoring report (Barnes and van den Ende 2012) provides clear management objectives and mitigation measures including a need to monitor effective implementation. However, both this report and the initial HCV assessment (Bito et al 2009) do not include any monitoring guidelines. The monitoring objectives and associated responsibilities for mitigating identified HCV issues and Associated management measures have been included in the SEIA (Lovai 2012 - Annex 3.0). However, this report considers a wider array of proposed developments, not just Roka, and more specific and systematic monitoring plan is needed for the HCVs identified in proposed Roka mini-estates.

Corrective actions

- There is a need for a comprehensive management and monitoring summary table that includes all of the proposed management measures and monitoring guidelines - within the context of the HCV assessment for Roka (as opposed to the appendices of the SEIA).

- ** Corrective action closed – The monitoring plan and associated summary table has been included in the HCV report or in the HCV / SEIA management and monitoring report.

4. Conclusion

The HCV assessment and reports as undertaken for the Roka mini estate, West New Britain for and on behalf of NBPOL include all of the sections required of a clear, concise and credible HCV report.

A comprehensive management and monitoring plan for the proposed mini-estate would address many of major concerns detailed in the peer review findings. This plan has been subsequently detailed and provided in the HCV / SEIA management and monitoring summary report.

It is recommended that in subsequent HCV assessment and reporting in preparation for certification under the RSPO all of these sections be compiled in a single report. In the absence of such a report the public summary serves to bring together some of sections into a single summary, to ensure coherent consideration of all HCV issues as relevant to the proposed activity.