

**RSPO**

Roundtable on  
Sustainable Palm Oil

Quarter 3 2022



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# RSPO ASSURANCE PROGRESS REPORT

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Updates on Work Plan: Quarter 3 2022



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

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<b>AB</b>	Accreditation Body
<b>ASC</b>	Assurance Standing Committee
<b>ASI</b>	Assurance Services International
<b>BHCVWG</b>	Biodiversity and High Conservation Values Working Group
<b>BoG</b>	Board of Governors
<b>CB</b>	Certification Body
<b>CSPO</b>	Certified Sustainable Palm Oil
<b>CAP</b>	Complaints and Appeals Procedure
<b>GU</b>	Grievance Unit
<b>HCSA</b>	High Carbon Stock Approach
<b>HCV</b>	High Conservation Area
<b>HCVN</b>	High Conservation Value Network
<b>HRD</b>	Human Right Defender
<b>HRWG</b>	Human Rights Working Group
<b>ISPO</b>	Indonesia Sustainable Palm Oil
<b>ICLUP</b>	Integrated Conservation & Land Use Plan
<b>IMO</b>	Intermediary Organisation
<b>JAPBUSI</b>	Jejaring Pekerja Buruh Sawit Indonesia (Palm Oil Trade Union Network Indonesia)
<b>LUCA</b>	Land Use Change Analysis
<b>MSPO</b>	Malaysia Sustainable Palm Oil
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MEL</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
<b>NIWG</b>	National Interpretation Working Group
<b>NPP</b>	New Planting Procedure
<b>P&amp;C</b>	Principles and Criteria
<b>RaCP</b>	Remediation & Compensation Procedure
<b>RSPO</b>	Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil
<b>SEPA</b>	Sabah Environmental Protection Association
<b>SDD</b>	Standard Development Division
<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedure
<b>SSC</b>	Standard Standing Committee
<b>SC</b>	Standing Committee
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>WG</b>	Working Group



## Background

The Gap Analysis of the RSPO Assurance System was published in September 2021. The main objectives were to identify weaknesses in the overall RSPO Assurance System, analyse its root causes and find solutions for improvements. This was accomplished through an internal gap analysis and a brief review of external reports, which included those commissioned by the RSPO as well as recent unsolicited constructive feedback from stakeholders. This resulted in a comprehensive work plan which was later incorporated into the RSPO Operational Plan 2021-2025 with the purpose to strategise and implement necessary measures in key areas of our Assurance System that require strengthening.

The following table presents the three thematic areas identified and the key issues highlighted in the Gap Analysis Report.

Thematic Areas	Description/Remarks
Cross-cutting Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Chronic understaffing and under-investment</b> in the Secretariat have resulted in reduced capacity of the Assurance Division, impacting on their effective implementation of the Assurance System.</li> <li>● Lack of <b>clear and comprehensive management systems</b> to ensure joint implementation, including operational relationships with partner organisations such as ASI, HCVN and HCSA.</li> <li>● Lack of a <b>holistic approach</b> to deliver assurance outcomes, including AB and CBs' compliance levels, outreach to different stakeholder groups, and measures to build wider compliance in the sector.</li> </ul>
Labour & Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Prevailing weaknesses</b> in labour conditions in certified operators.</li> <li>● Extremely likely that labour abuses and non-compliances are significantly <b>under-detected</b> by CBs.</li> <li>● <b>"Pervasive" non-compliance</b> with labour requirements by certified operations.</li> </ul>
Deforestation & Land Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Two predominant issues in ASI's case history and findings are land rights and FPIC, and environmental protection and deforestation.</li> <li>● Weaknesses in terms of <b>CB verification against NPP requirements</b>, including FPIC compliance.</li> <li>● Compounded by weakness in terms of CB evaluations against new planting requirements during certification assessments.</li> </ul>

Table 2

The identified issues above can be categorised into two: first, failings that are specific to assuring compliance with RSPO requirements relating to three main themes, namely deforestation, labour conditions and land rights; and second, underlying generic weaknesses that reduce the effectiveness of the overall Assurance System.

## Summary of Progress Status

The Secretariat had committed to publishing a quarterly progress report of the work plan. The first progress report (Quarter 1, 2022) was presented to the Assurance Standing Committee (ASC) in May 2022 and published on the RSPO website in June 2022. The second progress report (Quarter 2, 2022) and third progress report (Q3, 2022) were created with the aim to provide an update on **actions taken by the Secretariat as of June 2022 and October 2022** respectively. It is divided into three sections based on the three key thematic impact areas that were identified in the Gap Analysis Report; (1) Cross-cutting Assurance, (2) Labour & Human Rights, and (3) Deforestation & Land Conflict. (See Table 2 in the Background Section for further details on the recommendations for each thematic area). The table below provides a summary of the Secretariat's progress and actions thus far.

Thematic Areas	Description/Remarks
Cross-cutting Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 12 deliverables with 53 detailed activities</li><li>• Status of detailed activities; 19 completed, 26 ongoing and 8 scheduled to begin as planned.</li></ul>
Labour & Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 deliverables with 10 detailed activities</li><li>• Status of detailed activities; 2 completed, 5 ongoing, 2 scheduled to begin as planned and 1 have not started.</li></ul>
Deforestation & Land Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 8 deliverables with 20 detailed activities</li><li>• Status of detailed activities; 8 completed, 8 ongoing and 4 scheduled to begin as planned.</li></ul>

Table 1

### Cross-cutting Assurance

The major contributors for most of the completed activities in both work plans are the improvement of the Secretariat systems and SOPs, and the strengthening of the auditing and accreditation process. A few activities have been initiated, for example, wide-sector engagement by RSPO to multi-stakeholders with the inclusion of local government and a series of outreach programmes with estate-level management trade unions and communities. Subsequent to the remodelling of IMU, a new activity has been added which is to establish an Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) for the Secretariat. Moving forward, a few activities are suggested to be removed from this progress report due to the fact that the Impacts, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (IMEL) unit was moved from the Assurance Division to the CEO's Office. There are no pending activities to start this quarter and nine activities will commence in the next quarter.

### Labour & Human Rights

Labour Auditing Guidance was completed and endorsed by the ASC in September 2022. Progress has been made with regard to increasing outreach and involvement of key parties through a wider programme to build labour compliance. One of them is supporting the community workshop organised by Komunitas Sahabat Tenaga Kerja Indonesia (KSTKI) in collaboration with Malaysian Care.

### Deforestation & Land Conflict





In September 2022, the Secretariat published a call for Expression of Interest to appoint a third-party project management team to assist in the development of the Pool of Experts (PoE). In order to enforce NPP compliance and ensure effective verification of NPP by CBs, the Secretariat conducted NPP Verification Training to CBs during the CB Interpretation Forum in Medan, Indonesia in August 2022 as well as initiated the NPP post-monitoring programme to monitor members' concessions with approved NPPs. Development of a checklist for improvement on CBs' verification of NPP is expected to start in quarter four of 2022.

## 2022 Progress Updates on Activities



This section presents updates on the actions taken by the Secretariat in implementing the Gap Analysis Work Plan up until the end of June 2022. The progress updates are divided into the three thematic areas (1) Cross-cutting Assurance, (2) Labour & Human Rights and (3) Deforestation & Land Conflict.

A status code is used to indicate the current status which is up to 30 June 2022 of each activity's implementation.

<b>Status Code Legend</b>	 Completed
	 On track / Ongoing
	 Scheduled to begin as planned
	 Delay






## Thematic Area 1: Cross-cutting Assurance











## THEMATIC AREA 1: Cross-cutting Assurance




This section provides updates on the progress of the work plan under Thematic Area 1: Cross-cutting Assurance with the aim to address underlying specific weaknesses that reduce the effectiveness of the overall Assurance System. These include the shortfall in the capacity of the Secretariat, improvement in the Secretariat's management system and enhancing CBs' performance and review.

Work Plan: Secretariat capacity strengthening		Unit Responsible: All	
Deliverables	New recruitment of personnel to increase the Assurance Division resourcing to target level. Enhance capacity and capability, particularly in relation to the critical thematic areas.		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Recruitment for remaining positions: Integrity Unit	All positions have been filled.	
	Recruitment for remaining positions: Impacts & MEL Unit	Two positions have been filled, three positions remaining.	
	Recruitment for remaining positions: Risk Unit	Three positions have been filled, two positions remaining.	






Work Plan: Secretariat systems and SOPs improvements		Unit Responsible: Certification	
Deliverables	Design an improved template of compliance checklist and Palm Trace approval checklist.		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Review of CB Audit Checklist	The CB audit checklist is maintained as is, and the Conformity Assessment Bodies (CAB) Performance monitoring procedure has been submitted to ASI for review and update.	
	Pilot digitisation of CB Audit Checklist	It will be part of digitisation of RSPO audit. This will be part of the FY 2023 budget.	
	Revision of PalmTrace approval review process	An RSPO PalmTrace Review Task Force (PRTF) is currently active to identify any gaps, opportunity for improvement and how to strengthen data traceability management within the platform.	


Work Plan: Secretariat systems and SOPs improvements		Unit Responsible: Compliance	
Deliverables	Design an improved internal procedure of Compliance (incorporating the Certification Unit and the Integrity Unit)		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Development of new SOP and flowchart: Self-declaration of non-compliances by RSPO members	SOP is being reviewed by the RSPO management. A few self declarations were received in 2021. A trial verification was done at one of the declared units.	
	Development of new SOP and flowchart: Advisory Notes	Development completed. A few advisory notes were issued in 2021. Implementation is currently being put on hold by the RSPO management.	


Work Plan: Secretariat systems and SOPs improvements		Unit Responsible: Certification	
Deliverables	Design an improved internal procedure of Compliance (incorporating the Certification Unit and Integrity Unit)		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Development of SOP for time bound plan	New SOP completed and announced in December 2021 ( <a href="https://rspo.org/news-and-events/announcements/rspo-announcement-for-time-bound-plan-revision">https://rspo.org/news-and-events/announcements/rspo-announcement-for-time-bound-plan-revision</a> ).	



Work Plan: Secretariat systems and SOPs improvements		Unit Responsible: Integrity	
Deliverables	Design an improved internal procedure of Compliance (incorporating the Certification Unit and Integrity Unit)		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Revision of SOP: New Planting Procedure	New Planting Procedure 2021 endorsed in June 2021. New SOP for NPP implemented with three submissions approved as of Q3 2022.	
	Revision of SOP: Remediation and Compensation Plan	Process improvement has been implemented. SOP for RaCP Version 2 may be updated based on the revision.	
	Revision of SOP: Global Information System	Integration of Post-New Planting Procedure Active Monitoring (HCV Area) and Post-New Planting Procedure Retrospective Monitoring (HCV Area).	






Work Plan: Secretariat systems and SOPs improvements		Unit Responsible: Certification	
Deliverables	Revision of previously established SOP		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Revision of SOP: Market Data	SOP remains for the time being. New reports circulated on the 15th of each month.	
	Revision of SOP: Public Announcement	SOP remains for the time being.	
	Revision of SOP: Trademark Review	The latest RSPO C&C Documents has been presented and approved by SCC	
	Revision of SOP: Trader Distributor Approval	New SOP has been implemented with more scrutiny on trader licences.	
	Book & Claim Automation	Rainforest Alliance was briefed in June 2022 to develop a mock-up and it is expected to be ready in Q4 2022.	


Work Plan: Secretariat systems and SOPs improvements		Unit Responsible: Risk	
Deliverables	Revision of previously established SOP		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Remodelling of Investigation & Monitoring Unit ('IMU') into Risk Unit (gap assessment of previous IMU practices, revamping of SOP and internal guidance, capacity building of staff)	The Remodel report was finalised in May 2022. Key recommendations from the report highlighted the following: 1) Risk Unit to cover risks that are related to certification, in addition to social and environmental risks; 2) Enhance risk processes into the Enterprise-wide Risk Management (ERM) process. An ERM training session was conducted for the Risk Team and Heads of Certification and Integrity Units in June 2022. Findings and recommendations from the remodel project were socialised internally within the Secretariat in August 2022.	



Work Plan: Secretariat systems and SOPs improvements		Unit Responsible: Impacts & MEL	
Deliverables	Revision of previously established SOP		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Redesign of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning unit.	The Impacts, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (IMEL) unit was moved from the Assurance Division to the CEO's Office, with additional functions and scopes to be added. Therefore, this activity will no longer be reported in the Assurance progress report.	

Work Plan: Secretariat systems and SOPs improvements		Unit Responsible: Assurance and Operational Excellence	
Deliverables	New learning and evaluation mechanism aligned with the operational excellence process (ISO 9001 or beyond).		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Desk Review to mirror good practise of best quality management systems by benchmarking with companies that adopt ISO 9000 series	To begin in FY 2023.	
	Comparison between RSPO adoption of ISO 9000 series with benchmarking results for process improvements	To begin in FY 2023.	

Work Plan: Consideration of P&C complexity and impact, linkage to MEL and 2023 review		Unit Responsible: Impacts & MEL, Certification	
Deliverables	Explore a new model of RSPO Certification System in 2025 through Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) for improvement over time.		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Development of integrated platform framework	PalmTrace review is ongoing as part of the internal Secretariat PalmTrace Review Task Force. Plans for integrated assurance platform and digitisation/digitalisation of Integrity and Certification processes are being integrated into an organisational-level Digital Framework and roadmap, which is part of the PalmTrace Review. Digital Framework is expected to be completed in March 2023. Short-term focus on digitising current and past audit reports is ongoing in preparation, with support from ASI.	




	Mapping of requirements	This will be done in parallel with the P&C Review 2023.	
	Initiation of comparative study with other certification schemes (ISPO & MSPO)	A brief internal report was completed and submitted to the standards review team. This was done on an analysis of competing standards and the wider landscape for Voluntary Sustainability Schemes (VSS).	


<b>Work Plan:</b> Consideration of P&C complexity and impact, linkage to MEL and 2023 review		<b>Unit Responsible:</b> Risk	
<b>Deliverables</b>	P&C Review 2023		
	<b>Detailed Activities</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Sharing identified gaps from the review of cases in Risk Registry with Standards Development Division (SDD)	The observation and recommendations from the Risk Unit have been shared with the Standard Development Division. The input was collected from the Risk Unit's assessments (desktop review and on-site visit).	




<b>Work Plan:</b> Mechanisms to actively engage with AB and monitor its performance		<b>Unit Responsible:</b> Compliance	
<b>Deliverables</b>	Design and implement reviews to strengthen accreditation processes		
	<b>Detailed Activities</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Monthly coordination meeting with ASI	Monthly meetings have been conducted since March 2021.	
	Incident Review between RSPO-ASI on CBs' performance to improve accreditation process	Bi-weekly reviews have been conducted since March 2021.	




<b>Work Plan:</b> Enhanced mechanisms for monitoring CBs performance		<b>Unit Responsible:</b> Compliance	
<b>Deliverables</b>	Driven by the RSPO-ASI Agreement - Strengthen the role of peer reviewer during audit - Enhanced mechanisms for monitoring of relative CBs' performance levels to inform actions by the Secretariat and ASI, supported by greater transparency.		
	<b>Detailed Activities</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Status</b>







	Development of peer reviewer database and frequent capacity building programme	The Peer Review Training by ASI was held on 14 and 15 July 2022. The Certification Unit will be leading the development of the Peer Reviewer training in collaboration with ASI and the Training Unit. This will become a permanent activity for the Assurance Division.	
	CB Appraisal - joint performance review by ASI and the Secretariat	First phase of performance review conducted in 2021.	
	Development of stakeholders consultation guidance document	Public consultation was done in July 2021 and the guidance document will be developed.	


<b>Work Plan: Piloting assessor independence options</b>		<b>Unit Responsible: Compliance, Impacts &amp; MEL</b>	
<b>Deliverables</b>	Explore options for mechanisms to delink, in some part, business relations between CBs and auditees that align with the applied RSPO Certification System Document or decoupling assessors with companies by gathering baseline information via research		
	<b>Detailed Activities</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Gathering baseline information via research - Comparative study on delinking with other sustainability schemes (e.g. SMETA)	Not started yet and has been planned for FY2023.	

<b>Work Plan: Certification assessment methodology improvements</b>		<b>Unit Responsible: Compliance</b>	
<b>Deliverables</b>	Bringing new innovations in RSPO Certification Process		
	<b>Detailed Activities</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Comparative studies using technology to support remote audit	A baseline study was completed during the development of the Contingency Remote Audit procedure. A comparative study will be undertaken during the development of the digital audit platform for RSPO, in order to support remote audits.	
	Digital platform development to support remote audit	Initial consultation with the CBs was made in parallel with the digitisation of audits. Currently in discussion with ASI on data points to be collected.	
	Link lessons learned with revision certification system and other schemes	Not started yet and has been planned for FY2023.	


Work Plan: Consideration of P&C complexity and impacts, linkage to MEL and 2023 review		Unit Responsible: Impacts & MEL	
Deliverables	Development of standards evaluation framework		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Learnings of Impacts and MEL plus operations for the development of ToR for P&C review	Two reports were delivered for the P&C 2023 review - one with recommendations from an Impacts perspective, and another with recommendations from available research. An additional report will be prepared in collaboration with the Assurance Division on the P&C 2018 implementation and operational lessons. All information has been cascaded to the P&C Review Taskforce.	
	Base setup of Knowledge Management to create learning and knowledge loops between different pillars and functions of the Secretariat to minimise risk of gaps for standard-setting and communication - run together with MEL redesign	The IMEL unit was moved from the Assurance Division to the CEO's Office, with additional functions and scopes to be added. Therefore, this activity will no longer be reported in the Assurance Progress Report.	
	Improve the implementation and operation of integrated data in providing clear impact while learning from the implementation of the Assurance System.	The IMEL unit was moved from the Assurance Division to the CEO's Office, with additional functions and scopes to be added. Therefore, this activity will no longer be reported in the Assurance Progress Report.	



Work Plan: Sector-wide engagement to build enabling conditions		Unit Responsible: Compliance	
Deliverables	Wider sector-level engagement by RSPO to help build enabling conditions and address structural challenges, including participation in government-led and multi-stakeholder processes, and other targeted engagement such as with government labour inspectors.		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Involvement of CBs in P&C Review as an expert panel on practicality of indicators	CB representatives have been invited to join the Technical Committee for the RSPO P&C Standards Review.	
	Lead in pilot testing and provide feedback to the P&C Task Force	Tentatively planned for September 2023.	

<b>Work Plan:</b> Sector-wide engagement to build enabling conditions		<b>Unit Responsible:</b> Compliance	
<b>Deliverables</b>	Wider sector-level engagement by RSPO to help build enabling conditions and address structural challenges, including participation in government-led and multi-stakeholder processes, and other targeted engagement such as with government labour inspectors.		
	<b>Detailed Activities</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Alignment of ToR with related sectors via desk review of the governance/supporting bodies under Assurance (i.e. BHCVWG, Assurance Forum). Formation of ASC's subgroups (i.e governance, standards quality and public domain) to discuss among others, more innovative ways for stakeholders consultation to improve representation and freedom of expression*	The ASC's Standards Quality Subgroup was formed and the first meeting will be held in October 2022.	
	Involvement of Assurance Division in review of standards and requirements to improve and verify consistent interpretation of standards and assurance procedures.	Done in March 2022. All necessary information and lessons learned were shared with SDD. The Assurance Division shared an analysis of NCs and experience from operations.	


<b>Work Plan:</b> Sector-wide engagement to build enabling conditions		<b>Unit Responsible:</b> Compliance	
<b>Deliverables</b>	Wider sector-level engagement by RSPO to help build enabling conditions and address structural challenges, including participation in government-led and multi-stakeholder processes, and other targeted engagement such as with government labour inspectors.		
	<b>Detailed Activities</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Improve and enhance RSPO Interpretation Forum (RIF)	RIF is now accessible not only for the CBs but everyone with Hotspot analysis uploaded to the page.	




<b>Work Plan:</b> Sector-wide engagement to build enabling conditions		<b>Unit Responsible:</b> SDD	
<b>Deliverables</b>	Wider sector-level engagement by RSPO to help build enabling conditions and address structural challenges, including participation in government-led and multi-stakeholder processes, and other targeted engagement such as with government labour inspectors.		
	<b>Detailed Activities</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Status</b>

	Mapping of Regulatory framework with governmental agencies via NIWG (Malaysia, Indonesia, South East Asia, Africa, Latin America)	To date, the only regulatory framework done is for Indonesia. While all NIs state relevant local laws, some countries may be more complicated than others (e.g. no proper guidance to resolve land disputes in Africa). All divisions to work with Stakeholder Engagement on the approach.	
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<b>Work Plan:</b> Sector-wide engagement to build enabling conditions		<b>Unit Responsible:</b> Integrity, Global Community Outreach & Engagement	
<b>Deliverables</b>	Wider sector-level engagement by RSPO to help build enabling conditions and address structural challenges, including participation in government-led and multi-stakeholder processes, and other targeted engagement such as with government labour inspectors.		
	<b>Detailed Activities</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Development of a Pool of Experts to look at Assurance issues in collaboration with the IMO.	An Expression of Interest was posted on the RSPO website to appoint a third-party Project Management Team to assist the Secretariat in developing the framework, establishing the database and guidance for future implementation of the PoE system by the Secretariat.	
	Focus on mobilising experts for investigation and audit observation	This will be tabled to the ASC by Q4 2022.	

<b>Work Plan:</b> Sector-wide engagement to build enabling conditions		<b>Unit Responsible:</b> Stakeholder Engagement	
<b>Deliverables</b>	Engagement strategy with prioritised State Actors. Stronger engagement programmes with Government and Investment/Financial Sector.		
	<b>Detailed Activities</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Development of stronger Government engagement programmes including support to identify alignment between regulatory frameworks and RSPO Standard	RSPO is involved in the development of the TERPERCAYA initiative in Indonesia, which is a national instrument to implement a jurisdictional approach. This instrument uses official data available at the national government level and will demonstrate and promote district-level sustainable commodity production in Indonesia.	
	Collaboration with national standards. Participation in government-led and multi-stakeholder processes, and other targeted engagement such as with government labour inspectors	The Market Transformation team will be working closely with the Deputy Director of Malaysia & Thailand and is responsible to ensure RSPO's regional direction and engage with key stakeholders and policymakers.	

<b>Work Plan:</b> Enhance integrated data support		<b>Unit Responsible:</b> Impacts & MEL & Assurance	
<b>Deliverables</b>	System improvement and data integration		
	<b>Detailed Activities</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Digitisation and Digitalisation initiative to create a streamlined Assurance data stream from audit reports and an integrated digital platform for Certification purposes	Preliminary idea was consulted with CBs during the CB Interpretation Forum in March 2022 and received positive feedback. The next step is to identify types of data that are suitable for digitisation.	

<b>Work Plan:</b> Holistic approach to training and capacity building		<b>Unit Responsible:</b> Assurance & Technical	
<b>Deliverables</b>	Collaborative capacity programme with Technical Division - Improve training for staff, members and service providers - Holistic approach to training and capacity building, based on needs assessment and supported by effectiveness monitoring.		
	<b>Detailed Activities</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Status</b>
	New governance and improved training design for auditors	Development of the RISS 2019 training module is currently under SDD which deals directly with the training developer. The Secretariat already recruited the Training Manager.	
	Enhance existing RSPO training programme for auditors, recognising different global benchmarking references in the RSPO P&C, SCC and RSPO ISH Standard	Centralised assessment and feedback process for all training involving endorsed trainers. To be done through the rebooted Sustainability College.	
	Compliance guidance and best practice for growers and certificate holders, focusing on key labour compliance issues, supported by targeted training and outreach to certificate holders to support understanding and compliance	The Social Auditing Training for auditors was concluded in December 2021. Best practices to enhance remote audit and improve confidentiality and confidence in data were gathered during the Assurance Forum in June 2022 and the report was uploaded to the RSPO website and the RSPO Interpretation Forum (RIF) in August 2022.	



Work Plan: Outreach and transparency measures		Unit Responsible: Global Community Outreach & Engagement	
Deliverables	Participation in assurance-related matters in outreach sessions.		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Outreach programmes with estate level management and trade unions, as well as communities and their representative organisations (current IMO scope)	RSPO supported HUKATAN to engage with labour groups through a workshop on ' <i>Gender Mainstreaming in Improving Protection of Women Workers</i> '	
	Outreach to harder to reach stakeholders to support their role in building compliance, such as raising awareness to workers' and community organisations; and promoting transparency by considering opportunities for independent observation of assessments; and allocation of a specific fund to support these activities by relevant parties (current IMO scope except compliance).	The Community Outreach Programme in Colombia is completed and currently, the IMO is preparing the final project report. Programmes that are currently ongoing are Independent Smallholder Outreach with FORTASBI and the 2nd phase of the community outreach program in Indonesia in collaboration with ELSAM. The Secretariat is preparing a programme to launch and kickoff training for the IMO programme in Nigeria in October and will work with FDS for the upcoming 24 months. OXFAM/CNV has been appointed as the IMO for the community outreach programme in Honduras and Guatemala, and the Secretariat is currently working on drafting the service agreement.	






## Thematic Area 2: Labour & Human Rights







## THEMATIC AREA 2: Labour & Human Rights



This section provides updates on the progress of the work plan under Thematic Area 2: Labour & Human Rights with the aim to address ongoing weaknesses in RSPO's Assurance System relating to labour and human rights. These include critical interventions with a robust assessment of compliance with certification requirements by certification bodies, using an approach that is effective in detecting human rights abuse.



Work Plan: Engagement in sector-level and government processes to build compliance		Unit Responsible: Integrity, Global Community Outreach & Engagement	
Deliverables	Increase outreach and involvement of key parties through a wider programme to build labour compliance		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Design outreach programmes with estate level management and trade unions, as well as communities and their representative organisations in countries where migrant labourers are used.	RSPO will support the workshop organised by Komunitas Sahabat Tenaga Kerja Indonesia (KSTKI) with the following theme: Reflections on 2 Years of KSTKI in Realising the Union for Indonesian Migrant Workers. KSTKI is a forum which was established by a group of migrant workers from Indonesia working in palm oil plantations in Malaysia, the organic establishment of this group was a positive spillover effect of the RSPO Community Outreach Programme in Malaysia, the KSTKI community was initiated by the stakeholder themselves because they realise the benefit of having RSPO certification.	
	Addressing issues from the SEPA's report (specific to Malaysia)	The community workshop in Pahang was conducted in September, and the next program with Malaysian Care group in Perak will be done in mid-November 2022.	
	Development of Pool of Experts to look at labour issues (collaboration with IMO)	Pending the appointment of the Project Management Team (PMT) for a Pool of Experts (PoE).	

Work Plan: Build capacity of estate management and trades unions		Unit Responsible: Assurance, Technical, Global Community Outreach & Engagement	
Deliverables	Collaboration with Technical Division and IMO		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Trade union trainings (JAPBUSI) on awareness of RSPO	To start in Q3 2022.	

	Capacity building for estate management in Indonesia and Malaysia	To start in Q3 2022.	
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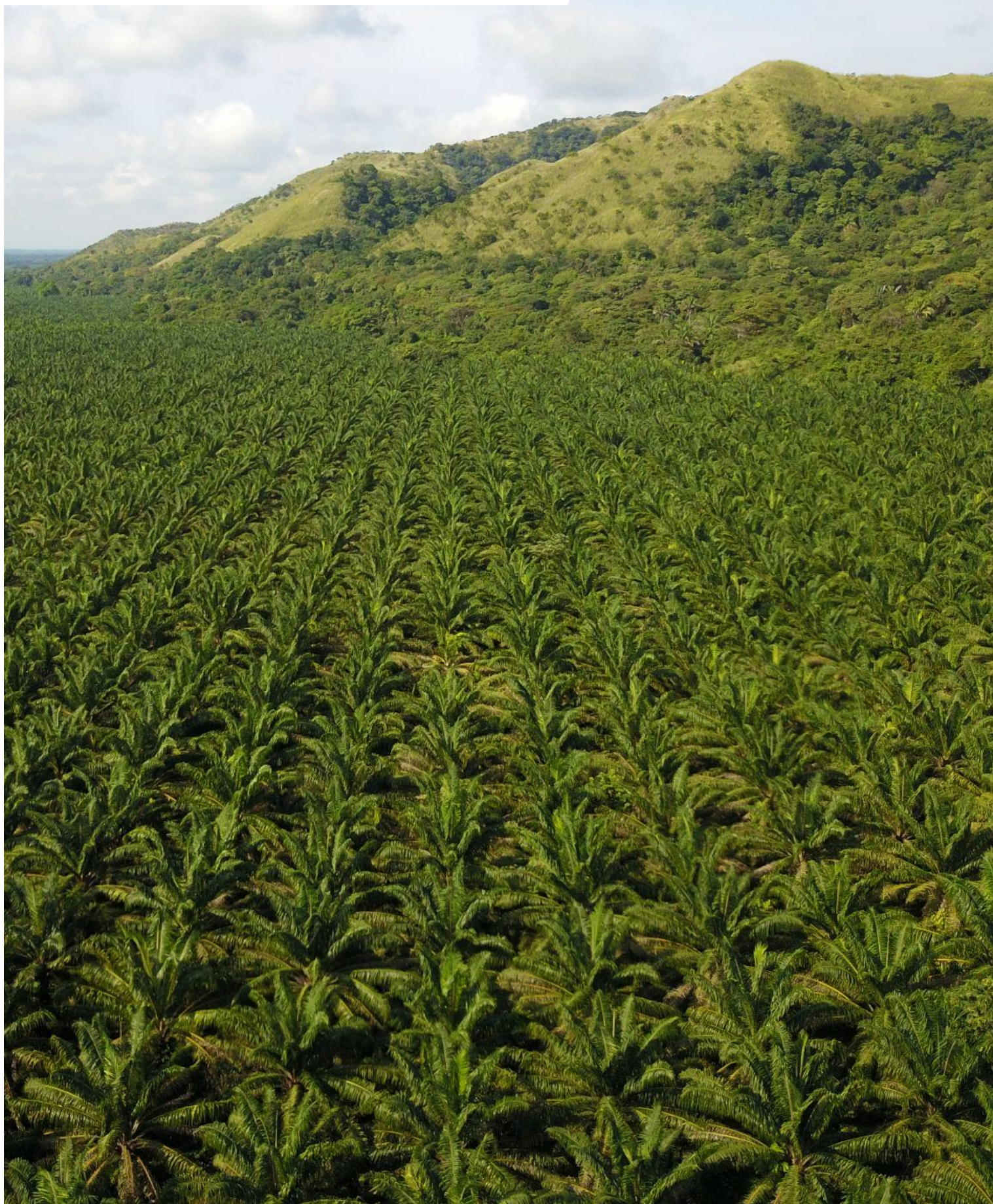
<b>Work Plan:</b> Specific labour assessment guidelines for CBs		<b>Unit Responsible:</b> Compliance	
<b>Deliverables</b>	Piloting Labour Auditing Guidance and acceptance by the ASC - Establish specific labour assessment guidelines for CBs that require more meaningful sampling, more time in the field as opposed to reviewing documentary evidence, higher numbers of worker interviews, and more robust approaches including gender balance of teams and unannounced spot/audits, and measures to build confidence in interviewees, to provide assurance of anonymity and protection. - Increase outreach and involvement of key parties through a wider programme to build labour compliance		
	<b>Detailed Activities</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Produce a guidance document that complements the existing RSPO Certification Systems document, drawing lessons from other schemes such as Social Accountability International (SAI) and other ISEAL members, and supported by targeted specific training and capacity building for CBs.	The Labour Auditing Guidance was endorsed by the ASC in September and will be published in Q4 2022.	

<b>Work Plan:</b> Compliance guidance and best practice for grower		<b>Unit Responsible:</b> Assurance & SDD	
<b>Deliverables</b>	Collaboration with SDD to define the execution on development of necessary documents.		
	<b>Detailed Activities</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Best Management Practice (BMP) needs analysis	3 BMPs were analysed and proceeded with the development stage. Other BMPs are currently on hold following P&C standard revision.	
	Consultation in the development of BMP	3 BMPs (Peat, GHG, ISH) have been developed so far and are published on the RSPO website.	

Work Plan: Worker Voice mechanism to increase direct access to grievance mechanisms		Unit Responsible: Grievance & Risk	
Deliverables	Improve accessibility of workers to grievance processes		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Worker Voice: SDD to reactivate and deliver Ulula project, starting with pilots	Pilot for Ulula was done in Guatemala. Report to be shared by the Technical Division.	
	Strengthening the HRD policy: Continue the review of HRD policy with implementation review to determine which unit is best placed to take responsibility for HRD implementation under the new Assurance division structure	This item is put on hold for now.	





## Thematic Area 3: Deforestation & Land Conflict











### THEMATIC AREA 3: Deforestation & Land Conflict




This section provides updates on the progress of the work plan under Thematic Area 3: Deforestation & Land Conflict with the aim to address ongoing weaknesses in the RSPO's Assurance System relating to land clearance and new plantings by RSPO members. These include an appropriate remediation and compensation with the RaCP, the implementation of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) to uphold land rights and improve the enforcement of NPP.






Work Plan: NPP implementation review		Unit Responsible: Integrity	
Deliverables	A thorough review of the processes for enforcing NPP compliance and ensuring effective verification by CBs, to identify weaknesses and training needs to be addressed, and to agree on an effective oversight programme by ASI.		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Using baseline data of 2022 when the full NPP 2021 is effective.	Training for CB NPP verification was conducted during CB Interpretation Forum in Medan, Indonesia. NPP post-monitoring has been started (a collaboration between the Integrity and GIS teams) to monitor members' concession areas with approved NPP 2021.	
	Include the linked issues that arise during certification assessments, relating to requirements for uncertified units under the same ownership, and compliance with Principles 4 (land rights) and 7 (deforestation) relating to recent plantings. ASI review on NPPs that are verified by the accredited CBs.	ASI was instructed to start looking into NPPs that were verified by accredited CBs as this is now under the scope of the Certification System Document.	


Work Plan: Review of HCV/HCS management in certified unit		Unit Responsible: Integrity & Impact & MEL	
Deliverables	Improvement of CBs checklist on the HCV/HCS management		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Conduct a baseline study. A thorough review of a sample of certification units to evaluate the ongoing measures to monitor and manage identified HCV/HCS areas, and any related assessment issues.	To start in Q4 2022.	




Work Plan: Effective implementation of RaCP		Unit Responsible: Integrity, Biodiversity	
Deliverables	Ensure effective and credible implementation of RaCP to remediate and compensate for past non-compliances, taking into account recommendations from the recent RaCP review.		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Participate in revision review with SDD	One major concern from the BoG is on improving the social liability aspect. Review of RaCP implementation and gap analysis are in progress. Framework has been developed.	
	Improvements in submission and review process	Training on RaCP was provided for growers and ISH in March 2022. Alignment meeting with compensation panels completed in April 2022. Integration of flowchart is currently in review. Resources expanded by pulling in the GIS unit.	

Work Plan: Ensure all concessions are declared, mapped and monitored		Unit Responsible: Integrity	
Deliverables	Full implementation of remote concession monitoring.		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Ensure through sample checks that all concessions are declared by members to the Secretariat and mapped on RSPO databases	Some of the concession boundaries shared in pdf and jpg formats are still being digitised by the vendor and have been uploaded onto the RSPO databases.	
	Monitoring for evidence of land use change/deforestation and fires, and investigation protocols if any incidents are detected	The current protocol has regulated the land-use change i.e. deforestation, fires, and investigation protocols if any incidences are detected. The SOP regarding the monitoring of deforestation and fire watch has been updated.	
	HCV Monitoring programme with HCVN	Communication with HCVN will be initiated in August 2022, while the joint HCV monitoring programme is expected to be completed at the end of 2022.	

Work Plan: Review of relationship and engagement with HCVN/HCSA		Unit Responsible: SDD	
Deliverables	Review of relationship and ongoing engagement with HCVN and HCS to ensure alignment on roles		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	ALS Review	Written comments provided during review of ALS implementation in June 2021.	
	Finalisation of collaboration HCSA	HCSA proposed an MoU and is currently being reviewed.	
	Implementation of ALS and ICLUPs	Integration of ICLUP requirements into NPP structure was completed and endorsed by the SSC in February 2022.	

Work Plan: Strengthen the expert roster across specific functional areas.		Unit Responsible: Integrity, Global Community Outreach & Engagement	
Deliverables	Design stakeholder database from regional IMO programme for audit activities, to strengthen the link with the Assurance System and processes.		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Creating framework for pool of experts	An Expression of Interest was posted on the RSPO website to appoint a third-party Project Management Team to assist the Secretariat in developing the framework, establishing the database and guidance for future implementation of the PoE system by the Secretariat.	
	Engagement with IMO	Feedback gathered from meeting with IMO proponents on 26 January 2022.	
	ToR development	ToR to be developed once the framework has been finalised.	
	Endorsement by the ASC Criteria for the framework: - Categorised by Subject Matter (i.e. Labour, Social, Environment) - Categorised by regions	This will be tabled to ASC when it is ready in Q4 2022.	
	Pilot testing	Pilot testing to be planned once framework and ToR have been finalised.	

<b>Work Plan:</b> Increase outreach and involvement of key parties		<b>Unit Responsible:</b> Global Community Outreach & Engagement	
<b>Deliverables</b>	Wider sector-level engagement by RSPO to help build enabling conditions and address structural challenges, including participation in government-led and multi stakeholder processes, and other targeted engagement such as with government labour inspectors.		
	<b>Detailed Activities</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Development of Pool of Experts to look at deforestation issues and land conflict (collaboration with IMO)	Pending the appointment of the Project Management Team (PMT) for a Pool of Experts (PoE).	

<b>Work Plan:</b> Identify land rights & dispute risks in SEA, Latin America, Africa (mapping)		<b>Unit Responsible:</b> Risk	
<b>Deliverables</b>	Development of RSPO Risk Register.		
	<b>Detailed Activities</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Establish framework from RSPO Risk Register	The first version of the framework has been produced with consultation from experts and within the Secretariat (Technical and Operational Excellence Units).	
	Identify samples for case study in three regions. The samples are to be identified from Risk Database, complaints records, and membership monitoring	Samples for case study had been identified in South East Asia, Latin America and Africa.	
	Case study (following the samples in 3 regions) by referring to the frameworks	Review on audit report for samples in Africa has been completed; Data collection for South East Asia is still ongoing. Target completion is by the end of October 2022.	

**NOTE:** Activities and prioritisation are also being included in a separate Assurance Division work plan. Given the ongoing scaling-up of the Secretariat's resources, current limited resources would need to be allocated first on the most pressing issues.



## Conclusion

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As of the end of September 2022, activities from the Gap Analysis Report are progressing positively towards the end of Quarter 3 2022. Out of a total of 83 detailed activities, the Secretariat has increased the completion rate from 30% in the previous quarter to 35% in this quarter. 47% of the activities are currently ongoing, 17% will commence as scheduled and the remaining activities that are yet to begin have been reduced from 3% to 1% to date.

The last quarter has seen the completion of a few interesting activities. One of them is the recent NPP Verification training for NPP verification by CBs as well as field exercise for plot boundary mapping using Avenza, QGIS and Google Earth for CBs in Medan, Indonesia. It is the first and one-of-a-kind training conducted by the Secretariat which involved virtual participants in the live exercise. It was a successful event that displayed the continuous effort and process improvement made by the Secretariat with the ultimate goal to increase CBs' capabilities to comply with RSPO's standard, system and requirements.



Despite the low response received by the Secretariat to form three subgroups for the ASC, with persistence, the Secretariat was finally able to form the first subgroup (Standards Quality) for the ASC and will hold its first meeting in October 2022 with two topics for discussion; actions on undisclosed land clearing of HCV areas and NPP 2021 verification checklist for auditors. For activities that require collaborations with other divisions' digitisation and digitalisation initiatives, the Secretariat is currently impacted by a shortage of personnel, especially in the Business Solutions Unit. To resolve this, the Secretariat is looking into recruiting additional contract and non-contract staff as well as building internal capabilities in order to immediately fill in the gaps.

The next assurance report will include a review on the progress made within a year since the Gap Analysis was published and also take into account the ongoing P&C review. In addition, activities under the Impacts, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (IMEL) unit that were initially included in the work plan will be reconsidered since the unit is now under the purview of the CEO's office. Nonetheless, the Assurance Division will strive to close as many gaps as possible.

RSPO is an international non-profit organisation formed in 2004 with the objective to promote the growth and use of sustainable oil palm products through credible global standards and engagement of stakeholders.

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