

Request for Proposals

Terms of Reference

Study on Wild palms in West and Central Africa

Background

Wild palm, or wild palm groves, refers to oil palm that grows in the wild, with no known record/evidence of planting and/or maintenance. The occurrence of wild palms is attributed to the fact that oil palm is indigenous to Africa and thus these naturally-occurring palms are of the dura variety¹. The size of wild palm groves vary greatly across countries. In Ghana for instance, it is estimated that there are over 150,000 ha of wild palm groves², and in Nigeria, it is estimated that wild palm groves account for about 80% of harvested Fresh Fruit Bunches (FFB).³ Effectively, wild palms represent a significant proportion of palm oil production across the region and are especially important for smallholders, who harvest and process the FFB.

The RSPO has received requests from current and prospective members about the inclusion of wild palm in the certified supply chain. Indeed, in a study commissioned by the RSPO in 2021, a key recommendation made by the researchers was that either some exceptions are introduced for certifying wild palm or a different standard is introduced for their certification.⁴ While the RSPO recognises the relevance of wild palm in palm oil production in Africa, the current standards - Principles and Criteria (2018) and the Independent Smallholder (ISH) Standard (2019) are tailored to cultivated oil palm, with indicators that cover requirements related to pre-planting, planting and maintenance. By general definition, wild palm is neither planted nor maintained, and as such is not sufficiently covered by the RSPO's social and environmental requirements as defined in the standards and related procedures.

¹chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.proforest.net/fileadmin/uploads/proforest/Documents/Publications/baseline_study_smallholders_ghana.pdf

² Ofosu-Budu, K., and D. Sarpong (2013), Oil palm industry growth in Africa: A value chain and smallholders study for Ghana, In: Rebuilding West Africa's Food Potential, A. Elbehri (ed.), FAO/IFAD

³ RSPO-IMO Baseline Study available [here](#)

⁴ Economic Values of Small scale processing. Unpublished RSPO research available [here](#)

1. Objectives

In view of the increasing request for inclusion of wild palm in sustainable supply chains in Africa, this study is intended to:

- a) provide insight into the prevalence and location of wild palm in West and Central Africa, specifically, the estimated size of wild palm groves
- b) define and characterise wild palm based on the different typologies
- c) determine the key attributes of wild palm such as variety, user/ownership and other associated rights
- d) identify the agricultural practices used in the harvesting and maintenance (if any) of wild palm
- e) estimate the volumes of FFB harvested from wild palm groves (and where possible, the Oil Extraction Rate)
- f) identify the commercial practices used for the transport and sale of FFB from wild palm groves (including any differences in pricing for FFB from wild palm groves)
- g) map out the current market for FFB from wild palm groves and the associated market share
- h) highlight the real and potential socio-economic impacts of increased commercialisation of wild palm (drawing parallels with similar indigenous crops)
- i) identify which indicators of the RSPO ISH standard would be applicable to certify FFB from wild palms
- j) identify what would be the main barriers to applying the RSPO ISH standard to wild palm
- k) identify other elements that should be considered for certifying wild palm which are not present in the RSPO ISH Standard
- l) identify any barriers to compliance of wild palm with the EUDR requirements⁵

⁵ RSPO will make available a gap analysis study between the EUDR and the RSPO ISH Standard commissioned in 2023

2. Locations of study

The study shall be conducted in the five countries below, representing the countries with the highest recorded numbers of wild palm groves and countries from which the RSPO has received requests for the certification of wild palm:

- Cameroon
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Ghana
- Liberia
- Nigeria

3. Methodology

A detailed methodology shall be included in the research proposal, adopting a mixed research methodology including:

- a) literature review,
- b) on-site visits to the five (5) countries listed in 2. Locations of Study, and
- c) interviews with key stakeholders.

The RSPO will provide access to its network of stakeholders across the producing countries.

4. Consultant Qualifications

The selected consultant(s) shall have:

- a) demonstrated experience conducting studies within the agricultural value chain in West and Central Africa, with a strong understanding of the palm oil industry.
- b) demonstrable knowledge of the RSPO Standards. Consultant(s) shall also have excellent verbal and written English skills.

Knowledge of other certification schemes shall be considered an advantage.

5. Timeframe and Deliverables

The study is expected to run for a period of five (5) months from the appointment of the selected consultant(s). The consultant(s) shall deliver a preliminary report detailing the

methodology, analysis, findings and recommendations in relation to the objectives and scope of the study. Upon review and discussion with the RSPO team, the following shall be delivered:

- A final report (in English), integrating input and comments from the relevant stakeholders
- A Powerpoint presentation highlighting key findings and recommendations
- An Excel document summarising the key findings, based on key thematic areas identified
- A database of contacts of the relevant stakeholders interviewed

6. Proposal Submission Guideline

The proposal should take into consideration the following elements:

- Technical proposal shall not exceed 10 pages in length.
- Proposed budget (in US dollars) for the research, broken down by deliverables and timeline, shall not exceed two pages. The prices quoted should be inclusive of all taxes and delivery costs, and shall remain valid for 120 days from the closing date of the tender. Where appropriate, any costs for travel and subsistence must be clearly shown in the proposal.
- Detailed curriculum vitae of the consultant(s) and each member of the team.

7. General Instructions

Proposals should be submitted as PDF documents, strictly via email to edem.asimadu@rspo.org and CC: tender@rspo.org. Deadline for submission of the proposal is 6:00 PM MYT (GMT + 8) on 27 May 2024.

Any enquiries in connection with this ToR shall be submitted to Edem Asimadu at edem.asimadu@rspo.org.