

## Terms of Reference Study on Fresh Fruit Bunch (FFB) Collection Point in Surat Thani, Thailand

### 1. Background

Palm Oil production only sometimes occurs according to the environmental concerns expressed at the consumption site. Certification schemes such as the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) have been designed to address these concerns, enabling the provision of responsible and sustainable palm oil provision. Today, RSPO certification is the most widespread international palm oil certification scheme. In RSPO chains, producers and mills are the main certificated actors. However, intermediaries such as middlemen also link local producers with the global market, often without certification.

The ramps in Thailand are one example of such intermediaries. Ramps are collection points where fresh fruit bunches (FFBs) from smallholder oil palm producers are collected, purchased, and sold to the mills. Ramps not only collect FFBs but are also involved in supporting production and harvesting among smallholders. The study '*Breaching the black box: The role of ramps in Thai sustainable palm oil certification*' [1] cited that the key intermediaries connecting local producers and global markets (e.g. ramps in Thailand), such as middlemen, should not be ignored when designing global sustainable palm oil certification.

The ramps or FFB collection points are the critical nodes in the Thai Palm Oil chain. Improving the efficiency of the collection and distribution of fresh fruit bunch (FFB) in the supply chain of the upstream oil palm industry, including plantations (farmers), ramps (collectors and distributors), and crude palm oil mills, is crucial for our sustainable supply chain. Hence, to engage ramps or FFB collection points is necessary to enhance the expected outcome of the RSPO traceability system.

Referring to the 2023 FFB collection points data of the Oil palm and Palm Oil Research and Innovation Institution, Prince of Songkhla University cited that there are 2,363 ramps in Thailand, 2,084 located in the south and 279 located elsewhere. Surat Thani has 1,074 ramps, where almost half of them are in Thailand. From 130 Crushing mills, about 80 of them are in Surat Thani as well. Of representatives in terms of the study area, Surat Thani is the most appropriate area as well as the proposed city model of sustainable palm oil of Thailand.

To understand and seek possibilities to segregate the roles of FFB Collection and Trading, and Plantation Management with potential applicable standard (i.e. Principle & Criteria or Supply Chain Certification Standards), since our current RSPO SCC standard did not cover the environmental, legal and social yet.

Filling the black boxes of diverse horizontal networks interacting with the local material flow of RSPO FFBs and within their ramps that compromise coordination in the RSPO value chain are crucial for our current standards revision. The RSPO secretariat is now seeking a third-party to conduct the baseline study addressing the FFB Collection points in Thailand.

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#### Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil

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#### Other RSPO Offices

Jakarta, Indonesia

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Zoetermeer, Netherlands

London, United Kingdom

Bogota, Colombia

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## 2. Objectives

The RSPO Thailand has received stakeholders' requests to certify the FFB collection points. While the RSPO's current Supply Chain Certification Standard (SCCS) has been discussing the inclusion of the FFB Traders in the upcoming certification system. However, we do recognise the situation whereby some of the FFB Collecting Centres are offering the plantation management services activities such as transportation, harvesting, spraying and others, which may increase the risk of human rights, safety and health, legal and even the environment. This is happening in most countries (e.g. Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand).

Hence, the FFB collection points pose significant challenges in the context of certification (s). Thus, this study is intended to:

- Identify the different types of FFB Collection Points and existing functions.
- Estimate the contribution of FFB Collection Points to the value chain based on several ramps within each district's oil palm production area and tonnes of FFB processed.
- Map out the certified RSPO and Non-Certified mills and ramps' location and linkage in Surat Thani
- Identify the gap between the current P&C and Supply Chain Certification standards, and the FFB collection points in Thailand with recommendations.
- Identify Thailand's legislation related to FFB Collection Points and international regulations.
- Define possible pathways for including FFB collection points in the RSPO-Certified Supply Chain or P&C standards.

## 3. Scope of Work

The study shall be conducted in 17 oil palm plantation districts listed below, selected based on interest in certification of FFB collection points, as well as potential interest in line with upcoming RSPO certification:

- |                                       |                                 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. <a href="#">Mueang Surat Thani</a> | 9. <a href="#">Tha Chang</a>    |
| 2. <a href="#">Kanchanadit</a>        | 10. <a href="#">Ban Na San</a>  |
| 3. <a href="#">Don Sak</a>            | 11. <a href="#">Ban Na Doem</a> |
| 4. <a href="#">Chaiya</a>             | 12. <a href="#">Khian Sa</a>    |
| 5. <a href="#">Tha Chana</a>          | 13. <a href="#">Wiang Sa</a>    |
| 6. <a href="#">Khiri Rat Nikhom</a>   | 14. <a href="#">Phrasaeng</a>   |
| 7. <a href="#">Ban Ta Khun</a>        | 15. <a href="#">Phunphin</a>    |
| 8. <a href="#">Phanom</a>             | 16. <a href="#">Chai Buri</a>   |
|                                       | 17. <a href="#">Vibhavadi</a>   |

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It is expected that the contracted vendor will liaise and hold close coordination with the RSPO-Thailand team and Certification Team in the developing and conducting the baseline study.

#### 4. Consultant Qualifications

The selected consultant(s) shall have demonstrated experience conducting studies within the agricultural value chain in Thailand, with a strong understanding of the palm oil industry. The consultant(s) shall have demonstrable knowledge of the RSPO Standards, while knowledge of other certification schemes shall be considered an advantage. Consultant(s) should also have excellent verbal and written skills in English.

#### 5. Timeline and Deliverables

The study is expected to run for a period of Eight months from the appointment of the selected consultant(s). The consultant(s) is expected to 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 comprehensive final report in English and an Executive summary in Thai, which will incorporate input and comments from the relevant stakeholders
- a PowerPoint presentation highlighting key findings and recommendations

#### 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 timelines, 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

Interested consultants may submit their expression of interest to [thailand@rspo.org](mailto:thailand@rspo.org) by 6:00 PM MYT (GMT+8) on 28 February 2023.

For any queries, kindly contact Radda Larpnun, Thailand Technical Manager at [radda@rspo.org](mailto:radda@rspo.org) or Piyaporn Lohutangoon, Executive, Technical (Thailand) at [piya.l@rspo.org](mailto:piya.l@rspo.org)

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