

MINUTES OF MEETING
RSPO BHCVWG The Aloft Hotel hybrid meeting (13 April 2023)

Attendance:

<p><u>Members and Alternates</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Harjinder Kler (HUTAN) 2. Lee Swee Yin (SDP) 3. Ahmad Yudana (GAR) 4. Martin Mach (Bumitama) 5. Lim Sian Choo (Bumitama) 6. Sander Van den Ende (SIPEF) 7. Olivier Tichit (Musim Mas) 8. Marcus Colchester (FPP) 9. Cahyo Nugroho (FFI) 10. Chin Sing Yun (Wilmar) 11. Syhrial Anhar (Wilmar) 12. Anne Rosenbarger (WRI) 13. Ahmad Furqon (WWF) <p><u>Absent with apologies</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Ambang Wijaya (GAR) 15. Benjamin Loh (WWF) 16. Mahendra Primajati (FFI) 17. Eleanor Spencer (ZSL) 18. Arnina Hussin (SDP) 19. Quentin Meunier (OLAM) 20. Bukti Bagja (WRI) 21. Vivi Anita (Musim Mas) 22. Patrick Anderson (FPP) 23. Sally Chen Sieng Yin (SEPA) 24. David Wong Su Yung (SEPA) 25. Michelle Desilets (OLT) 	<p><u>RSPO Secretariat</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ariel Toh 2. Lee Jin Min 3. Wan Muqtadir 4. Kasih Puteri 5. Cheryl Ong <p><u>Facilitator</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ginny Ng <p><u>Invited Guest</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ruth Silva (HCVN) 2. Daneetha Muniandy (HCSA) 3. Adrian Choo (HCSA) 4. Jennifer Lucey (SEARRP) 5. Lanash Thanda (BCI)
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Meeting Agenda:

Agenda	PIC
1. Opening remarks	Co-chairs
2. Confirmation of previous meeting of minutes	Co-chairs
3. RaCP updates from Integrity Unit	Integrity
4. Timeline for the draft 0 of RaCP v2	Facilitator
5. RSPO BioD unit priorities for 2024 with Impacts team	Impact
6. End of meeting	Co-chairs

No.	Agenda	Action
1	<p>Opening remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All members were welcomed by the co-chairs to the hybrid meeting. The RSPO antitrust policy statement was presented, and members declared any conflict of interest. ● The co-chairs introduced the addition of 3 new members to the BHCVWG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ahmad Furqon (WWF) ○ Sally Chen (SEPA) ○ David Wong (SEPA) ● The co-chairs also welcomed the invited guest for the BHCVWG meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Daneetha and Adrian from HCSA ○ Ruth from HCVN ○ Jennifer from SEARRP ○ Lanash from BCI 	
2.	<p>Confirmation of previous meeting of minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The minutes of meetings 25 November 2022 were presented to members by RSPO Secretariat. ● As the previous BHCVWG meeting did not have quorum, the action points noted down in the latest minutes will be further discussed in this occurring meeting. 	
3	<p>RaCP updates from Integrity Unit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On the staffing update, there will be a new joiner in July for Specialist of Environment to replace Siti Joanni and a future plan to hire a specialist in Environment in LATAM in next financial year due to increasing cases and gaps (e.g. language barrier) in the region. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The hiring process will consider the roles and responsibility of the person and the skill sets required to ensure good productivity/efficiency. ● Integrity provided the following updates to BHCVWG members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Operational updates e.g. the progress of concept note, LUCA review and remediation and compensation cases review. ○ Alignment on content and challenges. ○ Seek supports from BHCVWG for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist RSPO in recruiting more Compensation Panel Members; ▪ Ensure review of timeline is met by panel members; ▪ Empower RSPO Secretariat to approve remediation plans; ▪ Support Integrity Unit RaCP Reduction Program V2 ● Two suggestions for further improvement to the RaCP process were suggested by Integrity Unit: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>In-house reviewer for RaCP</i> Caveat: Need better 'delegation of authority' between units as currently the Integrity Unit sits under the Assurance Department, while the Certification Unit is also under the same department. 2. <i>Secretariat to review and approve remediation plan</i> Current team members of the Integrity Unit have the capacity to understand the RaCP documentation and processes, particularly on simple cases like remediation plan, which the Secretariat can be the reviewer and approval. Furthermore, the remediation plan 	

is related to the Best Management Practices (BMP), which will further be checked by the certification bodies (CB) once the company undergoes certification. Therefore, the risk is not as high as the compensation plan and this can alleviate the burden off the compensation panel and speed up the RaCP process.

Feedback & Concerns from the BHCVWG

- On the compensation panel members update, there will be 4 new NGO members coming in, increasing the total NGO members in the panel to 6 while grower members remain at 5. As a good practice, the new members will not be handling existing cases to ensure continuity.
 - For incoming projects, Integrity unit can provide some comments to the compensation panel members to look at. The compensation panel members will evaluate comments based on their previous experience of handling similar relevant projects.
- A more detailed or concrete data is needed for the BHCVWG to provide recommendations of moving forward with the backlog cases.
 - To determine the urgency of the cases, Integrity Unit needs to map out how many cases were delayed due to lack of compensation panel members, how many cases were remediation plan and compensation plan, at which stage the cases were in, and the number of cases that was held up because of compensation panel members.
 - The slow turnaround communication time between the compensation panel and the Secretariat and growers may be due to the type of question being asked. It would be presumed that technical questions that have not been faced before would need a longer time to review compared to administrative questions.
- To decrease turnaround and clear backlog cases, a suggestion was brought up to hire a full-time consultant for just 6 months to handle all of the backlog cases and to facilitate communication with growers and compensation panel.
 - Integrity Unit clarified that this suggestion has been discussed back in 2018, to have a dedicated consultants/ service provider that clears the backlog. However, it was not done due to several challenges:
 1. There were no job takers;
 2. The consultant do not fully understand the RaCP process;
 3. Backlog on LUCA can be dealt with by hiring professional service, but the concept note still need compensation panel members to go through. The decision process remains the same, which still needs to go through the compensation panel where it could be delayed due to the communication aspects.
- Integrity unit to take note of the submission process moving forward. From the 3rd submission onwards, Secretariat to contact the compensation panel whether direct engagement with the growers is needed to clarify and to shorten resubmission rounds. Anonymity still maintained during the direct engagement.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To enable faster processing response, perhaps the elements of the remediation plan and the compensation plan in Annex 7 and 8 can be separated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Processing of the remediation plan will be faster as if the growers only have a remediation plan, they will only need to complete the relevant section for Secretariat approval. ○ More effort is needed for a compensation plan as growers might not know how to write a project. Two suggestions were brought forth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. To have a group of NGO trains growers to understand the basics of project design and management. Example of such a tool is Miradi (https://www.youtube.com/@MiradiSupport). Currently, such training system is in placed only in Indonesia whereby the Secretariat has an MoU with a consultant company in Indonesia to train Indonesian growers on project design and management. II. To have online training modules or tutorials that the growers are required to do prior to submission so that they understand the process, format and requirement. ● A suggestion was brought forth for issue relating to no response by Compensation panel members after the 15 working days review time (as stated in RaCP), which is to have the alternate member from the same organisation or at least 2 people from the same organisation to join the same compensation panel to handle the same case. ● An arrangement was made between Wan and BHCVWG to have an online meeting at the end of June (doodle poll to confirm the date) to brief and share experience on the following matters: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undisclosed land clearing situation that Integrity Unit has identified through GIS; 2. Self-declaration on HCV clearance area. <p>This session will only involve a high-level discussion, no specific name/case will be mentioned.</p> 	<p>Wan to organise the meeting and send the doodle poll.</p>
4	<p><u>Timeline for the draft 0 of RaCP v2 to be endorsed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilitator briefed the update of the timeline for the completion of RaCP v2, with the formation of various CTF2 subgroups to discuss on the targeted topic of the RaCP v2; and informed BHCVWG members about the number of meetings that have commenced since its formation. The first draft is expected to be ready by August 2023 for CTF2/BHCVWG approval, followed by 30 days of public consultation. The document will be finalised and sent for SSC approval in October 2023, which will then be ready for the GA 2023 in November 2023. ● The CTF2 subgroup responsible to discuss protocol for recertification was disbanded as the task was completed and the result will be presented in this meeting. Current active CTF2 subgroups are social, smallholder, Africa/Latam/RoW, and GIS. A Peat Task Force (PTF) reporting to BHCVWG was in the process of creation to discuss specifically on peat remediation. Additional subgroups may be formed in the future if needed. A ToR for the CTF2 subgroups and PTF was 	

	<p>created and members joining the subgroups will need to sign the Code of Conduct (CoC).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There are also invited experts to the CTF2 subgroups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HCSA Secretariat - social, smallholder and GIS ○ SEARRP - smallholder ○ HCVN - Africa/LATAM/RoW and GIS ● The RaCP v2 document might include a placeholder for some of the unfinished discussion from the subgroup, which will then be added as addendum to the RaCP v2. ● An urgency was raised on the delayed progress of addressing social aspects of the RaCP, which needs to be brought up to the Board of Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unfulfilled social liabilities that were disclosed; ○ Some companies admitted having social liability but not taking action to perform any remedy; ○ For the community that lost their livelihood, cultural site, ecosystem service at the time of the plantation, their interest has not been addressed. ● There was an inquiry on the follow up actions of the recommendations brought up by the review of RaCP version 1 carried out in 2020. It was clarified that at that time, the Secretariat has been working on the action point and the subsequent subgroups on this have focused on the high priority items. Co-chairs highlighted RSPO Secretariat to review current progress against the items. 	<p>Secretariat to review if there is any missed action especially from the high priority items so that it would be incorporated in the revision of RaCP v2</p>
5	<p><u>RSPO BioD unit priorities for 2024 with Impacts team</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cheryl presented the current Impact team’s works, which were up for discussion. The topics were RSPO-Monash Joint Symposium, RaCP Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) projects, and HCV-HCSA M&M. Following that, a general discussion was held. <p><i>a. RSPO-Monash Joint Symposium</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Symposiums, which will be held in Monash University Malaysia on 25-27 September 2023, aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide a platform for researchers and industry practitioners from around the globe to share and explore current research findings as well as to discuss future directions for the advancement of a sustainable palm oil industry; ○ Promote RSPO and to raise awareness and interest among students and young researchers, as well as to support their engagement in the field of palm oil sustainability. ● The event will feature discussions on various topics ranging from social and environmental sustainability to oil palm smallholders, consumer and market demands, palm oil in food and health, as well new technologies in palm oil processing and waste. ● Several clarifications were made: 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The symposium is open to all (i.e. international and local) scientists and industry practitioners. ○ Depending on the topic, the session can be interactive or traditional. ● There was a suggestion to have a facilitated networking session between researchers and industry practitioners. Perhaps a group session or speed-dating type session. The Impacts team will discuss internally and work on it accordingly. ● There was a suggestion to have a session on formulating priorities in key areas for research interest going forward. It was clarified that the Impact team will draft a priority document (based on the revised Theory of Change) and engage scientists during a workshop on the last day of the symposium to discuss with the researchers on the following to help inform the work at RSPO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The possibility and limitation of conducting the research; ○ Further refine the research question; ○ Come out with other priorities/questions. ● The Impacts team has requested the support and participation of BHCVWG members to be a panel speaker and/ or moderator for the panel session, or to be a judge for the poster presentation. Once the topic has been finalised, the Impact teams will reach out to the respective members for their consideration. The BHCVWG members agreed to this request. <p><i>b. RaCP Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) projects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Previously, there was a gap identified in the RaCP in terms of monitoring of the approved RaCP project, determining the outcomes and impacts of RSPO RaCP, and ways for RSPO to provide inputs and assistance to members who are implementing the RaCP. ● To bridge this gap, the Impacts team is hiring a contract staff to develop an effective and efficient system to track the implementation progress and outcome/impact of RSPO RaCP. A progress report can be made available to the BHCVWG for update. ● On tracking social remedy in the RaCP project, it was clarified that the consultant’s task includes this aspect, which the Impacts team hope to come up with recommendations on after this project. ● A suggestion was made to have the consultant look at the progress report submitted by growers to the Secretariat via Annex 5, which will provide valuable data. <p><i>c. HCV-HCSA Management and Monitoring (M&M)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Various research indicated RSPO members are struggling to implement HCV M&M, citing challenges such as lack of technical, resource and financial capabilities. ● In 2020, RSPO commissioned a study to determine the contribution of RSPO to biodiversity protection. The study provided insights on how some of RSPO biggest grower members are working on HCV M&M and have gained a better perspective on how members are using different approaches to conduct HCV M&M. However, it was unclear if the benefits achieved were due to participation in RSPO. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A concern was raised on the conclusion of the study (i.e. ‘it was unclear if the benefits achieved were due to participation in RSPO’) that it might not consider other factors such as country’s legislation on monitoring, which may lead to the conclusion being poorly/incompletely drawn and may not be wholistic. This requires further investigation to delineate such differences. ● To tackle this issue, the Impact team has suggested the development of a manual for HCV-HCSA M&M that covers the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Set baseline requirements for members to achieve and provide guidance on ways to demonstrate progressive improvement towards best practice in implementation of M&M over time, while taking into consideration the different resource capabilities of RSPO grower members. ○ Share case studies of successful M&M approaches by peer grower members that can help to provide options of ways for grower members to implement M&M. ○ Recommendation of key measures of success for M&M ● For M&M, it was commented that the following must be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To have clear objectives for monitoring and the questions that they want to answer from the monitoring; ○ To use the result of monitoring for adaptive management; ○ To have a standardised method of monitoring so that data can be analysed effectively and comparable; ○ To this end, it was suggested to have different levels of monitoring based on capacity and resources. The key is for monitoring to be simple and repetitive. ● It was commented to consider a landscape/jurisdictional approach to M&M. This is because oil palm is always developed in a shared landscape, so it is not just growers who are going to be actors in terms of achieving biodiversity outcomes on the ground. It would be the companies, smallholders, communities, indigenous people and local government. There is a need to integrate these actors to achieve effectiveness, particularly the communities and indigenous people in achieving good social and environment outcomes. ● Moving forward, HCVN, HCSA, Impact and BioD to work on an overall program on how to consolidate the M&M research and provide tools and training for all types of growers on how to manage and monitor HCV-HCSA areas. <p><i>d. General discussion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jin Min presented the HCV M&M report that was previously commissioned by BHCVWG in 2015 (Title: A review of field-level barriers to effective HCV management and monitoring in RSPO-certified oil palm plantations). The purpose was to show what was done before, in addition to the works that the Impact team is currently undergoing. ● A question was raised on the cases whereby as the HCV and non-HCV areas become isolated or become the last remaining residence forest, how do growers manage these areas where communities and wildlife are dependent on these areas? Some examples currently faced by members are as follows: 	<p>Secretariat to define and share the ToR with BHCV</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communities use HCV areas but were not identified during the identification of HCV 1,2 and 3 because the communities were not involved during the identification process, leading to conflict in that areas; ○ Encroachment by nearby communities as within the landscape, most areas have already been cleared for development, which left the HCV areas protected by the RSPO member being the nearest forest that the community can access for livelihood; ○ A non-HCV areas became HCV areas as non-RSPO members cleared nearby land, leading to the RTE species moving into the areas. ● It was raised that RSPO requires a system/ mechanism to allow for update into a pre-existing / initial HCV-HCS assessment due to HCV loss or increase in HCV areas in the management unit. The discussions in the meeting decided that the BHCVWG to raise this issue to the Standard Standing Committee (SSC). 	<p>Secretariat to raise this issue to the Integrity Unit/ PIC of ACOP for discussion</p>
6	End of meeting	