

RSPO

Roundtable on
Sustainable Palm Oil

Quarter 1 2022



RSPO ASSURANCE PROGRESS REPORT

Updates on Work Plan: Quarter 1 2022

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

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

Summary of Progress Status

The Gap Analysis of the RSPO Assurance System was published in September 2021. The report's 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 RSPO as well as unsolicited constructive feedback received from stakeholders in recent times. This resulted in a comprehensive work plan which was later incorporated into the RSPO Operational Plan 2021-2025 with the purpose of strategising and implementing the necessary measures in key areas of our Assurance System that require strengthening.

The progress report will be 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">• 12 deliverables with 53 detailed activities• Status of detailed activities; 14 completed, 29 ongoing, 8 scheduled to begin as planned and 2 have not started
Labour & Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 deliverables with 10 detailed activities• Status of detailed activities; 0 completed, 6 ongoing, 2 scheduled to begin as planned and 2 have not started.
Deforestation & Land Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8 deliverables with 20 detailed activities• Status of detailed activities; 5 completed, 11 ongoing and 4 scheduled to begin as planned.

Table 1

Cross-cutting Assurance

The majority of the completed activities are related to the improvement of internal Assurance Division procedures and the strengthening of accreditation processes. Some of the ongoing activities include the development of a standard evaluation framework and the improvement of compliance checklist templates. Other activities that have yet to begin are either due to the Secretariat's lack of resources or because they are scheduled to commence in the next quarter.

Labour & Human Rights

Most of the activities under this workstream require a longer period of time to execute, especially when the activities required the Secretariat to reach out to key parties (i.e. estate workers, local communities and Indigenous Peoples) physically over the past two years of the global pandemic. Current activities that are underway comprise addressing issues from the Sabah Environmental Protection Association (SEPA)'s report, the development of a pool of experts to look into labour issues and also the development of Labour Auditing Guidance. Activities that have not yet begun, such as trade union training and the analysis of Best Management Practices (BMP), are expected to start in the third quarter of 2022.

Deforestation & Land Conflict

The improvement in RaCP submission and review process, integration of ICLUP requirements into NPP structure and development of RSPO Risk Register are some of the activities already completed in this area. There is more work in progress, especially on the implementation of remote concession monitoring and NPP implementation review since NPP2021 just came into effect this year. Activities such as the involvement of IMO in audit activities and improvement of CBS' checklists on HCS & HCV management are expected to start in the fourth quarter of 2022.

This report was created with the aim of providing an update on actions taken by the Secretariat as of March 2022 on the Gap Analysis Work Plan.

Historically, a number of preliminary steps that were taken throughout 2020 led to a mini workshop in October of the same year during which various reports that are related to the RSPO Assurance Systems were consolidated. After identifying the fundamental gaps, the analysis was carried out, and the root causes were presented in the form of a narrative report. The report and its agreed work plan were endorsed in July 2021 following several rounds of discussion and consultation in the Assurance Standing Committee meetings, two Assurance Forums, a workshop, and feedback gathering from a subgroup.

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

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.

This section presents updates on the actions taken by the Secretariat in implementing the Gap Analysis Work Plan up until the end of March 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 31 March 2022 of each activity's implementation.




Status Code Legend	 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	One position has been filled, four 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	Maintained as per previous checklist.	
	Pilot digitisation of CB Audit Checklist	It will be part of digitisation of RSPO audit. Initial discussion was conducted during CB Interpretation Forum in March 2022.	
	Revision of PalmTrace approval review process	The review will focus on synchronisation of data. Weekly meetings are held with the Rainforest Alliance.	


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 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 (https://rspo.org/news-and-events/announcements/rspo-announcement-for-time-bound-plan-revision).	




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 review implemented with two submissions approved in Q1 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	Revision is almost completed and pending approval by the Market Development Standing Committee (MDSC) and the BoG.	
	Revision of SOP: Trader Distributor Approval	New SOP has been implemented with more scrutiny on trader licences.	
	Book & Claim Automation	Pending as the Business Solution team is not ready with resources.	



Work Plan: Secretariat systems and SOPs improvements		Unit Responsible: Risk	
Deliverables	Revision of previously established SOP		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Remodelling of IMU into Risk Unit (gap assessment of previous IMU practices, revamping of SOP and internal guidance, capacity building of staff)	The first draft of the remodelling project is being reviewed. Training sessions will be conducted between May to June 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.	This is an ongoing process. More updates will be provided in the upcoming quarter.	


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 start in FY 2023.	
	Comparison between RSPO adoption of ISO 9000 series with benchmarking results for process improvements	To start 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	Input received from consultant in August 2021 and framework for Assurance Aggregator is being developed. However, pure data clean-up needs to be done first.	
	Mapping of requirements	This will be done in parallel with P&C Review 2023.	
	Initiation of comparative study with other certification schemes (ISPO & MSPO)	A brief internal report has been done 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).	




Work Plan: Consideration of P&C complexity and impact, linkage to MEL and 2023 review		Unit Responsible: Risk	
Deliverables	P&C Review 2023		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Sharing identified gaps from the review of cases in Risk Registry with Standards Development Division (SDD)	The input has been conveyed to the SDD during the Secretariat's internal kick-off meeting for the standard review process	



Work Plan: Mechanisms to actively engage with AB and monitor its performance		Unit Responsible: Compliance	
Deliverables	Design and implement reviews to strengthen accreditation processes		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	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.	



Work Plan: Enhanced mechanisms for monitoring CBs performance		Unit Responsible: Compliance	
Deliverables	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.		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Development of peer reviewer database and frequent capacity building programme	Next phase of peer review is being discussed with ASI.	
	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, guidance document to be developed.	

Work Plan: Piloting assessor independence options		Unit Responsible: Compliance, Impacts & MEL	
Deliverables	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		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	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.	

Work Plan: Certification assessment methodology improvements		Unit Responsible: Compliance	
Deliverables	Bringing new innovations in RSPO Certification Process		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Comparative studies using technology to support remote audit	Initial baseline was made in parallel with Contingency Audit Procedure Version 2	
	Digital platform development to support remote audit	Initial consultation with the CBs was made in parallel with digitisation of audits, project has been planned for FY2023	
	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	Preparing two reports for the P&C 2023 review - from Impacts perspective (GRI, SDGs, benchmarking with other palm oil standards, etc).	
	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	Part of the MEL redesign workstream is expected to kick off in May 2022. Target for the Knowledge Management framework is Q2 2022.	
	Improve the implementation and operation of integrated data in providing clear impact while learning from the implementation of the Assurance System.	Impacts Indicators in development as part of the MEL Redesign workstream; to be partially captured in Impact Report 2022 and fully captured in Impact Report 2023. Learnings from the implementation and operations of P&C 2018 will be captured in a report representing the Assurance experience for the P&C 2023 review.	



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	CBs will be invited into the Technical Committee to bring clarity on the auditability of the indicators proposed.	
	Lead in pilot testing and provide feedback to the P&C Task Force	Tentatively planned for September 2023.	


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
	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* <i>*Additional suggestion from ASC Meeting on 19 May 2022.</i>	The Secretariat is working on the formation of ASC subgroups as agreed in the ASC meetings.	
	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.	


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


	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.	
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Work Plan: Sector-wide engagement to build enabling conditions		Unit Responsible: SDD	
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
	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.	

Work Plan: Sector-wide engagement to build enabling conditions		Unit Responsible: Integrity, Global Community Outreach & Engagement	
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
	Development of a Pool of Experts to look at Assurance issues in collaboration with the IMO.	Preliminary framework was presented to IMO in January 2022 and is currently being revised.	
	Focus on mobilising experts for investigation and audit observation	This will be tabled to the ASC by Q4 2022.	



Work Plan: Sector-wide engagement to build enabling conditions		Unit Responsible: Stakeholder Engagement	
Deliverables	Engagement strategy with prioritised State Actors. Stronger engagement programmes with Government and Investment/Financial Sector.		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Development of stronger Government engagement programmes including support to identify alignment between regulatory	New director for Stakeholder Engagement has been appointed. Priorities will be to develop government relations strategy and	

	frameworks and RSPO Standard	collaborate with regional teams and all divisions to focus on activities involving relevant stakeholders.	
	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.	

Work Plan: Enhance integrated data support		Unit Responsible: Impacts & MEL & Assurance	
Deliverables	System improvement and data integration		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	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.	

Work Plan: Holistic approach to training and capacity building		Unit Responsible: Assurance & Technical	
Deliverables	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.		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	New governance and improved training design for auditors	Development of RSPO ISH Standard training will be spearheaded by the Learning Committee Task Force. Preparation of syllables/modules to be done by the Training Team but with input from respective content owners.	
	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	Social Auditing Training for auditors concluded in Dec 2021. Collaboration with Nottingham University is ongoing to provide a	

	targeted training and outreach to certificate holders to support understanding and compliance	series of external training to growers and CBs.	
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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)	No progress so far for the outreach level management. No detailed discussion has been made on this topic.	
	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).	A community outreach programme in partnership with IMO is currently running in Colombia. Another ongoing programme is for Independent Smallholder Outreach with FORTASBI playing a role as IMO. The second phase of community outreach program in Indonesia is targeted to start by May/June 2022, service agreement is in final draft.	



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.	No progress so far for the outreach level management. No detailed discussion has been made on this topic.	
	Addressing issues from the SEPA's report (specific to Malaysia)	A follow-up programme for the indigenous community in Pahang & Perak is currently being prepared. The Secretariat received a letter from the community requesting RSPO to conduct workshops and SEPA has submitted a programme proposal to the Secretariat.	
	Development of Pool of Experts to look at labour issues (collaboration with IMO)	Preliminary framework was presented to IMO in January 2022 and is currently being revised.	

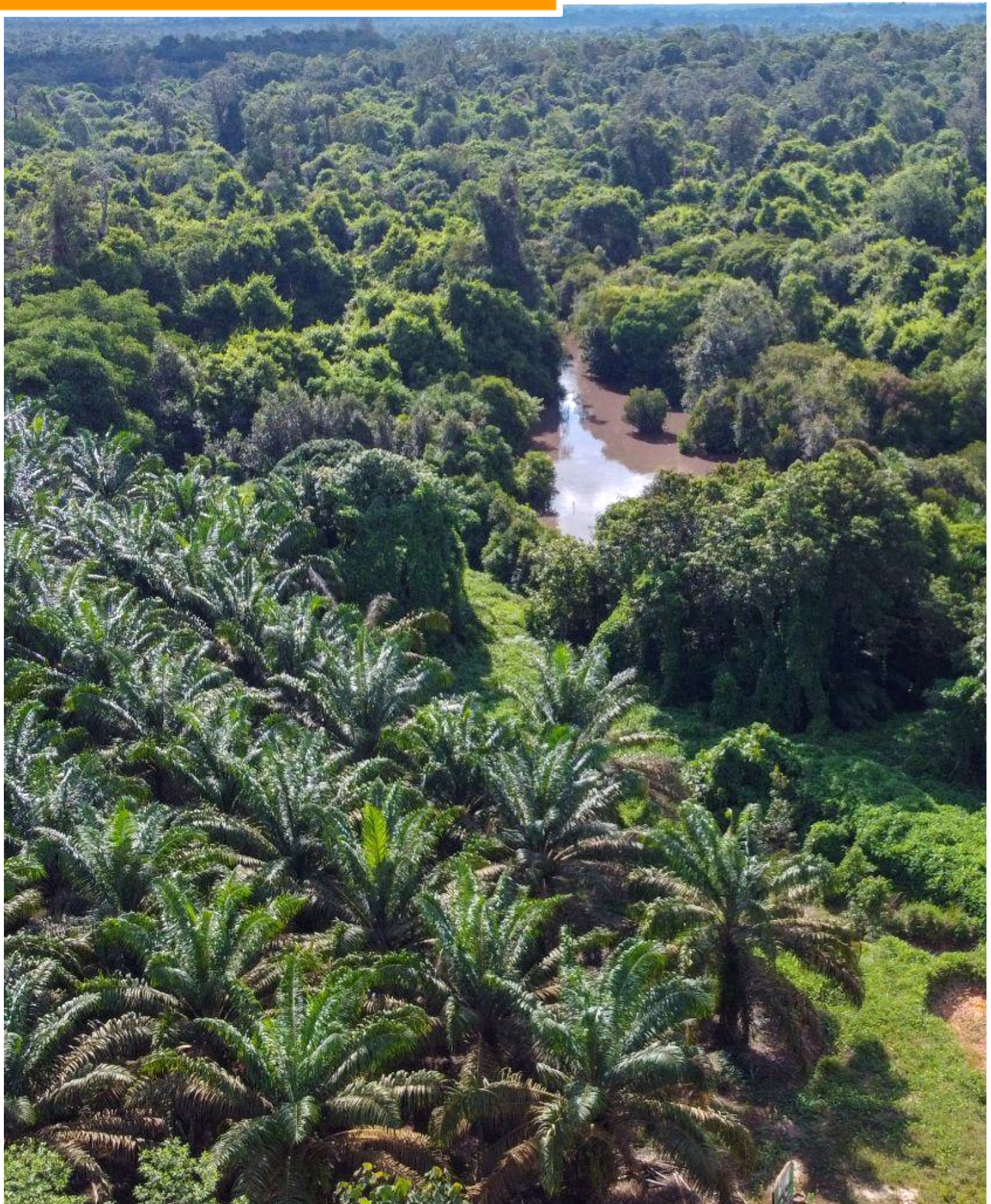
Work Plan: Build capacity of estate management and trades unions		Unit Responsible: Assurance, Technical, Global Community Outreach & Engagement	
Deliverables	Collaboration with Technical Division and IMO		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	Trade union trainings (JAPBUSI) on awareness of RSPO	To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

Work Plan: Specific labour assessment guidelines for CBs		Unit Responsible: Compliance	
Deliverables	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		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	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.	Pilots in Malaysia and Indonesia completed and consultation was done with CBs and HRWG (with members from the Labour Subgroup). Currently consolidating all input before the draft is sent to the SSC for approval of contents. Final endorsement to be done by the ASC by June 2022.	

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



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.	NPP2021 came into effect in January 2022. Baseline data for 2022 is currently being gathered.	
	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 Q3 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 concessions that shared the boundary in pdf and jpg are still being digitised by the vendor and have not yet been uploaded into the RSPO databases. It is expected to be completed in June 2022.	
	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/deforestation and fires, and investigation protocols if any incidences are detected. However, some parts still require updates. The revision is expected to be completed in July 2022.	
	HCV Monitoring programme with HCVN	Communication with the HCV will be initiated in May 2022, while the joint HCV monitoring programme is expected to be done at the end of year 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	Preliminary framework was presented to IMO in January 2022 and is currently being revised.	
	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.	

Work Plan: Increase outreach and involvement of key parties		Unit Responsible: Global Community Outreach & Engagement	
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
	Development of Pool of Experts to look at deforestation issues and land conflict (collaboration with IMO)	Preliminary framework was presented to IMO in January 2022 and is currently being revised.	

Work Plan: Identify land rights & dispute risks in SEA, Latin America, Africa (mapping)		Unit Responsible: Risk	
Deliverables	Development of RSPO Risk Register.		
	Detailed Activities	Progress	Status
	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 have been identified.	
	Case study (following the samples in 3 regions) by referring to the frameworks	The project will be continued for the next financial year (FY 2023) with different detailed activities. Awaiting advice from the Assurance Director.	

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.

Overall, the work plan resulting from the Gap Analysis of the RSPO Assurance System 2021 is on track and advancing well. Out of a total of 83 detailed activities, the Secretariat has currently achieved 23% completion, with 55% currently ongoing, 17% to commence as scheduled and 5% of the remaining activities still to begin.

Nonetheless, closing the gaps identified does come with a few challenges. One such obstacle is the formation of subgroups for the ASC. With the objectives of gathering expert input for in-depth deliberation on issues concerning the implementation of RSPO certification systems requirements, findings of non-conformities in audits and elements of grievances in the public domain, a call for participation was posted on the RSPO website in December 2021. However, there was a lack of response and the Secretariat has been working with the ASC to resolve this. Among the efforts made were extending the deadline for participation, seeking the ASC members' participation in the subgroups and acquiring nominations from the ASC members' respective organisations or networks. Due to this setback, the Secretariat has been unable to move forward with some of the activities in the work plan that were initially planned to be carried out at the subgroups level.

Notwithstanding these, all critical and significant activities are underway and expected to be completed within the stipulated timeline. Some of the implemented activities that are worth highlighting are pilot tests for the Labour Auditing Guidance, Social Auditing Training for CBs, and the CB Interpretation Forum. It is expected that several activities will continue into 2023, particularly in light of the upcoming P&C 2023 Review which may change parts of the work plan and detailed activities.

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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