RSPO ASSURANCE PROGRESS REPORT

Updates on Work Plan: Quarter 2 2022

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AB	Accreditation Body
ASC	Assurance Standing Committee
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

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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	**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	**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	- 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.

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. This second progress report (Quarter 2, 2022) was created with the aim to provide an update on **actions taken by the Secretariat as of June 2022**. 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	• 12 deliverables with 53 detailed activities • Status of detailed activities; 18 completed, 26 ongoing and 9 scheduled to begin as planned.
Labour & Human Rights	• 5 deliverables with 10 detailed activities • Status of detailed activities; 1 completed, 5 ongoing, 2 scheduled to begin as planned and 2 have not started.
Deforestation & Land Conflict	• 8 deliverables with 20 detailed activities • Status of detailed activities; 6 completed, 10 ongoing and 4 scheduled to begin as planned.

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. There are a number of ongoing activities including the development of a compliance checklist, capacity building for members as well as outreach programmes to growers, workers and local communities. There are no pending activities to commence this quarter and nine activities will commence in the next quarter.

Labour & Human Rights

Among the completed activities is the development of three Best Management Practices (BMP) that are published on the RSPO website. Current activities that are underway include addressing issues from the Sabah Environmental Protection Association (SEPA)'s report which is at the initiation phase with a few programmes already in the pipeline. Another activity that is close to completion is the development of a Labour Auditing Guidance, which will soon be finalised by the SSC before it is tabled to the ASC for approval.

Deforestation & Land Conflict

The involvement of the Intermediary Organisation (IMO) in audits is one of the latest activities that was completed in the second quarter of 2022. Others include the improvement in RaCP submission and review process, and the development of the RSPO Risk Register. There is more work in progress, especially on the implementation of remote concession monitoring and NPP implementation review since 2022 is the first year that NPP 2021 is being fully implemented. The improvement of CBs' checklist on HCS & HCV management as well as strengthening the expert roster across specific functional areas are expected to start in quarter four of 2022.

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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.

Status Code Legend	🟢 Completed
	🟡 On Track / Ongoing
	🔵 Scheduled to begin as planned
	🔴 Delay

Credit: RSPO

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. This will be part of FY 2023 budget.	🟡
	Revision of PalmTrace approval review process	This is a work in progress and subject to the availability of resources from the Secretariat's Business Solutions team as well as the Rainforest Alliance team as the developer. The Certification Unit has also requested additional resources to support the PalmTrace review process.	🟡

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 (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).	🟢

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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 & Moniroring 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 for the Risk Team and Heads of Certification and Integrity was completed in June 2022. The findings and recommendations from the remodel project will be socialised internally within the Secretariat in August 2022. The new SOP and Risk Charter following the recommendations from the report mentioned above are currently being finalised.	🟡

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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 be excluded from next quarter's 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 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	An integrated assurance platform is part of an internal digitalisation drive and review of the role of PalmTrace in relation to Assurance and the Secretariat. Short term focus will be on digitising current and past audit reports. The timeframe for the development of an integrated assurance platform is projected for the next two to three years.	🟡
	Mapping of requirements	This will be done in parallel with the P&C Review 2023.	🔵
	Initiation of comparative study with other certification schemes (ISPO	A brief internal report was completed and submitted to the standards	🟢

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		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 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).	🟢

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	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, 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	A baseline study was compleed 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 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	🔵

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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.	🔵
	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 be excluded from next quarter's 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 be excluded from next quarter's 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.	🔵

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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*	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.	🟡
	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.	🟢

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	🟡

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		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 frameworks and RSPO Standard	New Government Affairs Manager for Malaysia has been recruited and will work together with the Stakeholder Engagement Unit to strengthen the relationship with the Malaysian government.	🟡
	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 the RISS 2019 training module is currently under SDD which deals directly with the training developer. The Secretariat is in the process of recruiting a 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	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 will be uploaded to the RSPO website and the RSPO Interpretation Forum (RIF).	🟡

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)	An outreach programme was conducted in Surat Thani, Thailand to improve the capacity of independent smallholders and improve their submissions for Disclosure and Land Use Change Analysis (LUCA) assessment.	🟡
	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 the community outreach program in Indonesia has officially started in June 2022 and will be running for 30 months. The Secretariat is currently preparing a community outreach program for Nigeria, Honduras and Guatemala.	🟡

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)	The Secretariat received a letter from the community requesting RSPO to conduct community workshops. A service agreement between the Secretariat and BC Initiatives (BCI), a Sabah-based social NGO, was signed in June 2022 for a follow-up program for indigenous communities in Pahang and Perak.	🟡
	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.	🔵

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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.	The Labour Auditing Guidance will be finalised by the SSC in August 2022 before it is tabled to the ASC for approval.	🟡

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 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.	🟢

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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.		🔴

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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 concession boundaries shared in pdf and jpg formats are still being digitised by the vendor and have not yet been uploaded onto the RSPO databases. This is expected to be completed in September 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 i.e. deforestation, fires, and investigation protocols if any incidences are detected. However, some parts still require updates. The revision is expected to be completed in September 2022.	🟡
	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.	🟡

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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.	🔵

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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 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	The frameworks for risk mapping has been developed and the pilot project has been started in Africa with the support of the Secretariat's regional office; The project will be continued this year and will be expanded to another region and targeted for completion by Q2 2023. This project is inline with the Risk Based Audit project which will be initiated by the Risk Unit within FY 2023.	🟡

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*

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Conclusion

Several activities have either been completed or started towards the end of Quarter 2 2022. Out of a total of 83 detailed activities, the Secretariat has increased the completion rate from 23% in the previous quarter to 30% in this quarter. 49% of the activities are currently ongoing, 18% will commence as scheduled and the remaining activities that are yet to begin have been reduced from 5% to 3% to date.

Some of the implemented activities that are worth highlighting are the recent engagements to increase capacity of RSPO auditors and CBs (by the Certification Unit) as well as LUCA and Disclosure training (by the Integrity Unit) for smallholders in Thailand. It is a successful initiative that has received positive feedback from local stakeholders. A total of 180 participants attended the events and many expressed their appreciation and hoped that the RSPO will continue to support growers and smallholders with the ultimate goal to boost the production of CSPO in Thailand.

Despite this positive progress, there are still a number of challenges faced by the Secretariat in carrying out the activities as planned. The formation of subgroups for the ASC, for instance, has yet to materialise due to the underwhelming feedback that was received despite the extension of the deadline calling for participation. To avoid further delays, the Secretariat is planning to move ahead with the first subgroup that received the most nominations; the Standards Quality subgroup, which will look into findings of non-conformities in audits for consideration in RSPO standards or requirements revisions. For activities that require capacity building and engagement with regional stakeholders, a large number of staff across several units in the Secretariat are usually mobilised to ensure the required subject matter experts are present. This creates a challenge as the staff who are involved in such events will normally have to multitask and work extra hours to ensure that their day-to-day tasks are also taken care of despite being away from the office. The Secretariat is looking into more effective and efficient ways to ensure that both external engagements and daily operations can be well-managed simultaneously. This also includes hybrid (online and physical) events and knowledge transfer to regional teams.

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