

NEW PLANTING PROCEDURE 2021 VERIFICATION

CHECKLIST FOR AUDITORS

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This checklist was developed to aid Certification Bodies (CBs), primarily the Lead Auditors in conducting verification activity in accordance with RSPO New Planting Procedure (NPP) 2021. This checklist is complementary and aims to provide consistency for verification of NPP by CBs. The sections for verification in this document were also cross-referenced with the relevant RSPO Principles and Criteria (P&C) indicators to ensure alignment and compliance when auditing in the future.

1.0 Overview of the RSPO New Planting Procedure



The NPP consists of a set of processes that involve assessments to be conducted by growers followed by a verification by CBs prior to any new oil palm development. The intention is that new oil palm plantings will not negatively impact High Conservation Values (HCV) areas, High Carbon Stocks (HCS) areas, peatland, fragile and marginal soils or impact the rights of local peoples, including their rights on the land being developed. A successful implementation of the NPP ensures that applicable and relevant indicators of the RSPO P&C are being implemented and complied with when the new development starts.

The key output of the NPP is a report that proposes the potentiality of new oil palm plantings for a given management area and proposed integrated management plan. The NPP report is verified by CBs, vetted by the RSPO Secretariat before a 30-day posting period on the RSPO website and on-site notice boards for public comment. Planting and any associated development can only begin once the NPP notification is completed and RSPO approval is granted, as well as all applicable local legal requirements are met.



2.0 General Requirements




This section entails the general requirements that the NPP needs to meet. This section can be verified by obtaining information from relevant documents which acts as evidence that must be made available for record purposes.

2.1 NPP Scenario

NPP must be implemented before a grower commences land preparation, including any associated development for new oil palm plantings from 1 January 2010 (except Independent Smallholders pursuing RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard). Please tick below on the scenario that applies to the NPP you are verifying.

<input type="checkbox"/>	The RSPO member has a majority shareholding in and/or management control.
<input type="checkbox"/>	It is a new acquisition of land which is not already RSPO certified or eligible for certification.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The area falls outside of RSPO certified areas.
<input type="checkbox"/>	It is a new area of smallholder(s) and/or independent growers (growers without a mill), supported by an RSPO member company (either through existing group member(s) or new recruitment into existing group).
<input type="checkbox"/>	It is an area where new members of smallholder(s) or independent grower(s) join an existing scheme/organised smallholders or group of growers certified through group certification, managed by an appointed Group Manager (not company).

 **Lead Auditor's Comments:**

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2.2 Preliminary Assessment



The following comprehensive and participatory assessments and management plan are required for inclusion in the NPP submission to ensure that the proposed new development is done through a process of identifying and understanding the environmental and social values present and the protection, monitoring and management of those values based on RSPO standards. Please tick the boxes if the grower has completed the following before verification of the NPP:

Legal Requirements

- Title deed(s) or development permit that is issued by the local authority
- Izin Usaha Perkebunan, IUP and/or Izin Pelepasan Kawasan Hutan (IPHK) (for Indonesia)
- EIA/SEIA [following host country requirement or AMDAL (for Indonesia)]
- Other relevant legal requirements such as an Environmental Permit

Required Assessments

- Social and Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA)
- High Conservation Value (HCV) and High Carbon Stock Approach (HCSA) Assessment
- Stakeholder Engagement and FPIC Process
- Soil Suitability and Topographic Survey
- Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Assessment
- Land Use Change Analysis (LUCA)

Management Plan

- NPP Integrated Management Plan

Lead Auditor's Comments:

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2.3 Calculation of NPP Area



- ❖ The area to which the NPP applies must be calculated based on the development permit or land deed (i.e., total area considered for oil palm and associated development).
- ❖ The area (ha) of a permit or land deed cannot be separated into different NPP reports.
- ❖ CBs shall ensure that the NPP area declared is within the completed or verified HCV/HCS assessments.

Please indicate the size (ha) for the following areas:

Item	Size (ha)
Proposed NPP Area	
Title Deed/Concession Permit/ Legal Boundary	
Izin Usaha Perkebunan, IUP (for Indonesia)	
Hak Guna Usaha, HGU (if available, for Indonesia)	

 **Lead Auditor's Comments:**

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3.0 NPP Verification



The NPP verification process must be led by an RSPO P&C qualified Lead Auditor that is assigned by an accredited RSPO CB appointed by a grower. The RSPO CB shall undertake a desktop assessment and field verification, if required, based on findings of risk assessment. Field verification is mandatory if the area is near protected areas, HCVs are present, there are local people with claims to land and resources, greenfield developments, or if any inconsistency in conclusions of assessments are found. Field verification should preferably be done by the Lead Auditor, but it can also be conducted by a local expert appointed by the CB. However, the responsibility of verification and its recommendation lies with the Lead Auditor. The findings by the CB shall be documented and reported to the RSPO member who will then ensure that all NPP requirements have been met.

3.1 General Information



Please complete the following information to begin the verification exercise.

Item	Size (ha)
Name of Lead Auditor	
Name of Certification Body	
Country	
RSPO Membership Number	
Name of Subsidiary	
Name(s) of Estate(s) under this management plan	
Location of NPP Area (Country, State, District)	
GPS Coordinate (decimal)	
Address of NPP Area	

3.2 Social And Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA)



RSPO P&C (2018) Criteria 3.4 calls for a comprehensive Social and Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA) to be undertaken prior to new plantings or operations, and a social and environmental management and monitoring plan to be implemented and regularly updated in ongoing operations.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it state the names of the assessor and the assessment team?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the assessor meet the required competencies (as per table 2 in NPP document)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	If the proposed area is >500 ha, is the SEIA conducted independently and undertaken through a participatory methodology involving the affected stakeholders?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it state a date or period of when the assessment was conducted?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the information in the assessment still valid? Do the findings need to be updated to reflect changes on the ground? (> 3 years)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the SEIA follow the national regulatory requirements?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Were there significant environmentally or socially sensitive areas or issues identified? If yes, was an independent assessment conducted?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it explain the assessment methodology and sampling points for both environment and social issues?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it include potential positive and negative impacts on environmental issues (land/peat clearing, plantation on slope/fragile/marginal soils, plantation near water sources, waste management, use of pesticides, development of infrastructure)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it include potential positive and negative impacts on social issues (status of workers, wages, child labour, living conditions, HSE, land issues)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a list of affected communities for the new development or new operation?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there evidence of communication with stakeholders?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there any management plan in place to identify and address all risks?



Lead Auditor's Comments:

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3.3 Integrated HCV-HCS Assessment or ALS HCV & Standalone HCS Assessment



RSPO P&C (2018) Indicator 7.12.2 states any new land clearing after 15 November 2018 must be preceded by an HCV-HCSA assessment, for the purpose of identification of HCVs, HCS forests and other conservation areas. The output of HCV and HCSA assessments details the identification and locations of areas with both environmental and social values (e.g., HCVs, HCS forests, peat, local people's lands). The assessment(s) serve as the foundation for growers, communities and other stakeholders to proceed with development while conserving these areas identified as having significant values.

Without Integrated HCV-HCS Assessment

NPP verification should start by checking one of the applicable situations below:

A) The company has conducted a non-ALS HCV Assessment.

Has the assessment undergone the RSPO HCV review?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes. What was the result of the Land Use Risk Identification?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Low Risk areas - this HCV assessment can be accepted.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Risk areas - the company must conduct a standalone HCS Assessment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	No. The company must conduct an integrated HCV-HCS Assessment.

B) The company has not conducted a HCV Assessment.

<input type="checkbox"/>	The company must conduct an integrated HCV-HCS Assessment.
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C) The company has conducted an ALS HCV Assessment.

Has the assessment undergone the RSPO HCV review?


<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes. What was the result of the Land Use Risk Identification?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Low Risk areas - this HCV assessment can be accepted.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Risk areas - the company must conduct a standalone HCS Assessment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	No. The company must conduct an integrated HCV-HCS Assessment.

General Verification

Once the above has been identified, verification on the following aspects can be continued.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it state the names of the assessor and the assessment team?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it state the ALS Number of the lead assessor? (except for Non-ALS HCV Assessment)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it state the date the Integrated HCV-HCSA Assessment or the ALS HCV Assessment obtained a 'Satisfactory' result in the HCVN ALS Quality Review?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it provide a link/reference to the full report?
<input type="checkbox"/>	For Standalone HCSA assessment, does it state the HCSA Peer Review completion date?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it provide a link to the HCSA summary report (HCSA website)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it state the date of the assessment?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it explain the assessment/s methodology?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Was the assessment performed in consultation with stakeholders?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there evidence of stakeholder consultation and negotiated agreement, in accordance with FPIC principles, with local communities to optimally safeguard HCVs and rights of local communities?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it provide the maps of identified HCVs and HCS?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have new plantings been planned and managed to best ensure the HCVs identified are maintained and/or enhanced (see Criterion 5.2)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Where land has been cleared since November 2005, and without a prior and adequate HCV assessment, is there evidence that HCV compensation plan for the affected area has been developed and accepted by the RSPO?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has the company developed an action plan that describes operational actions consequent to the findings of the HCV assessment?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the demarcation on the ground consistent with delineation of HCVAs & HCVMA's?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it provide carbon stock estimation and forest inventory results?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have ICLUP requirements been developed, implemented and validated in the Integrated HCV-HCSA Assessment?

 **Lead Auditor's Comments:**

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3.4 Stakeholder Engagement & Free, Prior, Informed & Consent (FPIC)

The NPP is meant to be participatory, with meaningful involvement of the directly affected stakeholders. Local peoples holding legal, customary or user rights to the area, have the right to grant or withhold consent (say 'no') to operations planned on their land. The NPP report submitted by the grower to RSPO should reflect an observance to the FPIC process based on the RSPO FPIC Guide 2022 and ensure that it is established and the plan has been accepted by the affected right holders.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it state a date or period to when the FPIC process began?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it provide evidence of a social survey to identify local communities that live in or near the concessions?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the management representative in charge of sustainability aware of the result of this report?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it provide evidence that the company has accepted representatives chosen by the communities?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it provide evidence that the self-chosen representatives have agreed to a process for FPIC-based negotiation and the local people understand their right to disagree at all stages of the FPIC process?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does it provide participatory maps showing the extent of any customary lands and contested lands?
<input type="checkbox"/>	If it is a high risk area, has the field verification been conducted?

- Does it include minutes and reports of meetings with the local communities?
- Does it provide evidence that the communities have meaningfully participated in the elaboration of the SEIA and the HCV-HCSA Assessment?
- Has the HCV Assessment clearly recommended which areas need to be managed to maintain and enhance the full range of HCVs, including HCVs 4, 5, and 6, only where these HCVs have been assessed to exist and relate to the relevant communities involved in the FPIC process?
- Has the result of all the relevant assessments been shared with the affected stakeholders?
- Are there mutually agreed plans between the grower and the communities on FPIC-based negotiations (e.g. Letter of Intent, Memorandum of Understanding, etc.)?
- Does the grower have a Grievance Mechanism having consulted with the communities?
- Does the grower have a Conflict Resolution Mechanism?

 **Lead Auditor's Comments:**

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3.5 Soil Suitability & Topographic Survey

Soil suitability and topographic information are used for site planning and the results are incorporated into plans and operations. The soil suitability and topographic survey should identify areas of marginal and fragile soils, riparian buffers, steep terrain and peatlands.

- Does it state the date of assessment and period of survey?
- Does it state the name, designation and company of the assessor?
- Has identification of soil been made?
- Does it describe the sampling points?
- Does it describe the methodology used?
- Does it explain the soil suitability survey results?
- Does it provide the soil suitability maps (quality, adequate info, scale of map, etc)?
- Does it identify any steep terrain (as per the relevant National Interpretation)?
- Does it identify any peatland or riparian buffers?
- Does it identify any fragile and marginal soils?
- Does it identify areas prone to erosion, degradation, subsidence, and flooding?
- Does it guide the planning of drainage and irrigation systems, roads and other infrastructure?

 **Lead Auditor's Comments:**

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3.6 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Assessment

The GHG assessment shall identify and estimate carbon stocks and major potential sources of emissions in the proposed development area and include a plan to minimise net GHG emissions as a result of the planned development using the RSPO GHG Assessment Procedure for New Development.

- Does it state the date of assessment?
- Does it state the name of the assessor and assessment team?
- Does it describe the methodology used?
- Does it provide a land cover map and location of peat soil?
- Does it provide a carbon stock map?
- Does it include a table presenting carbon stock estimated per ha (tC/ha) per land cover class?
- Does it state the estimated carbon stock per ha for peat soil?
- Does it include a table summarising the total development areas (ha) and carbon stock estimated per land cover class?
- Does it provide maps indicating areas to be avoided and potential areas for new development?
- Does it include a table and chart summarising GHG emissions associated with development scenarios created?
- Does it provide an explanation for the selection of the optimal scenario?
- Does it include a development map and GHG emissions projection chart?
- Does it include a plan for monitoring the implementation of the selected scenario for new development including measures for enhancing carbon stock and minimising GHG emissions?

Lead Auditor's Comments:

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3.7 Land Use Change Analysis (LUCA)

A Land Use Change Analysis (LUCA) should use historical remote sensing imagery (of land cover) to demonstrate there has been no conversion of primary forest or any area required to maintain or enhance HCVs since November 2005 and HCS from November 2018. This should be carried out in coordination with the HCV-HCSA assessment.

- Does it state the date of the assessment?
- Does it state the name, designation and company of the assessor?
- Was the assessment done internally or externally?
- Does the assessor have expertise in interpreting remote sensing imagery?
- Is there a map for the range of Nov 2005 – Nov 2007?
- Is there a map for the range of Dec 2007 – Dec 2009?
- Is there a map for the range of 1 Jan 2010 – 9 May 2014?
- Is there a map for the range of 9 May 2014 – 15 Nov 2018?
- Is there a map for the range of 15 Nov 2018 – Current (not more than two years)?
- Does it describe the methodology used and include image processing information (geometric and radiometric correction) and image classification type (supervised, unsupervised, object-based)?
- Is the proposed area classified within the National Protected Area map as per the applicable national regulations? – Local government agency (Forestry Department)
- Does resolution of all maps meet the minimum requirement of 300 dpi?
- Does the proposed area overlap with HCV-HCS areas or other risk areas identified? (to be verified against the shapefiles)
- Is there a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) related to land development and monitoring or any equivalent procedures in place?

 **Lead Auditor's Comments:**

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3.8 Conclusion & Confirmation of Report



All findings from the assessments must be summarised and included in a management plan. In addition, any significant issues that are identified must be acknowledged and prioritised for action by the management team. The grower must indicate their acceptance of all findings and take ownership of the responsibility for the development process that is within their control.

- Does it mention how the findings from above are translated into management plans?
- Does the company acknowledge the issues?
- Does the company mention prioritising the issues to be addressed?
- Does it mention that all findings were accepted by the grower?
- Does it state the date of completion of the NPP verification?
- Does it include the name, position and signature of the responsible personnel?

 **Lead Auditor's Comments:**

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3.9 Integrated Management Plan (IMP)

The management plan shall be comprehensively developed covering the whole proposed new development areas. Findings from the various assessments and the FPIC processes shall be incorporated into the development and operations planning of the proposed new development; and management recommendations from the various assessments and FPIC processes shall be integrated into the NPP Integrated Management Plan.

- Does the summary of IMP make reference to the full version of the management plan?
- Does it include a management and monitoring plan for EIA which consist of impact, mitigation & monitoring regime and timeline?
- Does it include a management and monitoring plan for SIA which consist of impact, mitigation & monitoring regime and timeline?
- Does it include HCV and HCS management and monitoring plan which consist of threat assessment, management & monitoring regime and timeline?
- Does it include stakeholder and local people engagement of the FPIC process which consists of issue, activity, result, timeline and person in charge?
- Does it provide evidence of FPIC and key agreements with local communities?
- Does it include soil and topography assessment which consists of objectives, actions, timelines, person(s) in charge and monitoring measures?
- Does it include carbon stock, GHG management and mitigation plan which consists of actions, timelines, person(s) in charge and monitoring measures?
- Does it have a signature of the responsible personnel and date of signing?

 **Lead Auditor's Comments:**

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RSPO is an international non-profit organization 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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