

# Terms of Reference

## Biodiversity & High Conservation Values

### Working Group (BHCVWG)

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# 1 Introduction

The Biodiversity and High Conservation Value Working Group (BHCVWG) has been formed to provide strategic and technical support to the Round Table for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). RSPO members require support in applying the RSPO Principals & Criteria (P&C), particularly those related to the commitment to conserve biodiversity (Criteria 5.1, 5.2), preserve essential ecosystem services (Criteria 4.3, 4.4) and respect cultural landmarks or community access to natural resources (Criteria 6.1). This can best be achieved by minimizing or mitigating the negative impacts of plantations on the environment, while enhancing the positive impacts that palm oil bring to communities (Criteria 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6). These commitments are particularly important at the time of plantation establishment, which led the RSPO to adopt the High Conservation Value (HCV) methodology as a tool for these critically important periods in the palm oil production cycle (Criteria 7.1, 7.3), as well as provide explicit guidelines regarding the need to maintain ecosystem services and protect cultural landmarks or traditional uses enjoyed by communities (Criteria 7.2, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6).

The BHCV WG succeeds the Biodiversity Technical Committee (BTC), which was approved in 2006 by the third General Assembly (GA) of the RSPO with the specific goal of supporting RSPO members in issues related to biodiversity and the application of the HCV methodology for biodiversity related concerns. At the same time, or subsequent to that determination, other working groups and task forces have been established to address other aspects of the HCV methodology and its practical application on palm oil plantations. The BTC became operational in April 2009.

In November 2010, the Board of Governors (BoG) (Formerly known as Executive Board) of the RSPO recognized that improved coordination was required among the many overlapping efforts related to environmental and social issues. The BoG charged the BTC to assume this role, but requested that it re-evaluate its mission, strategic outlook and internal composition so that it could effectively assume this role and, in the process, provide more effective support to RSPO members. The BHCV WG is the product of that evaluation.

BHCV WG established two task forces i.e. Compensation Task Force to develop a Compensation Guidance and Indonesia HCV Task Force to explore means of effectively securing HCV areas in palm oil development areas in Indonesia.

## 2 Mission, Mandate & Scope

### 2.1 Working Group

#### 2.1.1 Vision

The RSPO's vision statement seeks to *"transform the market for sustainable palm oil"* and the BHCV WG supports that goal by assisting the palm oil sector in their efforts to *conserve biodiversity, maintain key ecosystem services and respect significant cultural landmarks*.

### 2.1.2 Mission

The BHCV WG will support the RSPO in the production, procurement and use of sustainable palm oil products through the identification, application and dissemination of recognised biodiversity science and standards, HCV methodologies and other best practices related to environmental and social issues. The BHCV WG will advise the RSPO Secretariat to develop monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and knowledge management systems (KMS) so that lessons learned from the application of the HCV methodology can inform the implementation and improvement of RSPO standards and guidelines.

### 2.1.3 Objectives

The BHCV WG will oversee efforts to reach the following overarching objectives or strategically important tasks:

- Identify biodiversity and ecosystem services, including related social and cultural values impacted by the production, processing, procurement and use of sustainable palm oil products.
- Support the development of new or revised “practical sustainability standards” that address biodiversity, ecosystem services and social and cultural values on plantation landscapes.
- Provide technical input for the elaboration of pragmatic guidelines to support the application of the above “practical sustainability standards,” particularly at critical stages in the development of new plantations.
- Support the RSPO in the application of the HCV framework by screening, reviewing and improving the assessment process.
- Provide technical advice to the RSPO Secretariat upon request.

## 3 Structure

### 3.1 Criteria for Membership and Composition

The BHCV WG will rely on the experience of the technical staff of RSPO members; other institutions or experts may be invited to participate if they bring specific expertise in practical aspects of conservation, environmental management, regulatory frameworks, or certification services.

The BHCV WG composition will represent broadly the sectorial and geographical composition and balance of RSPO, and the specialized technical nature of this group. One member will represent each of retailers, consumer products manufactures and financial institutions, and processors/traders. Two members will represent social organisations. Growers and environmental organisations will each be represented by an equal number of members. One independent member will be appointed to represent HCV assessors and one independent member to represent the HCV resource network. Other independent members may be appointed at the discretion of the BHCV. The membership of the BHCVWG will designate two co-chairs from the nominated members: one selected to represent the interest of the growers and the other the pooled interests of the social and environmental organisations.

All members should have technical skills in one of the following disciplines: biodiversity, ecosystem ecology, plantation management, community and smallholder development or corporate social

responsibility. Nominations will be reported to the Secretariat and the Board of Governors. Candidates must be nominated by an RSPO member and agreed by the BHCVWG members through consensus. Membership in the BHCV WG is “institutional” rather than personal; change in employment status should be reflected in the composition of the committee. Participation is voluntary and non remunerative, but reimbursement (Annex 1 & 2) for travel expenses will be allowed to facilitate participation of all stakeholder groups.

Members are expected to participate actively to the proceedings or to ensure they are represented by a designated alternate if they are unable to do so.

### 3.1.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The BHCV WG supports the RSPO Secretariat and will report its findings to the RSPO BoG and the General Assembly via the Standards & Certification Standing Committee (S&CSC), which is coordinated by the Technical Director (TD) of the RSPO Secretariat. The BHCV WG will be assisted by the Biodiversity & Conservation Manager who will report to the TD.

The BHCV WG will be the central advisory body for biodiversity and HCV issues. It is not the intent of the BoG that the BHCV WG replace other ongoing efforts addressing HCV issues; much to the contrary, the goal is to capture the outputs from those groups and channel that information to the Standards & Certification Standing Committee. In order to be effective, the members of the BHCV WG must understand and incorporate the lessons of many other groups that have been leading similar and parallel efforts over the last several years. The ultimate goal is to ensure that the RSPO P&C -- and all associated supporting documents -- are pragmatic and effective. To ensure effective coordination, the TD will be the principal conduit of communication among these groups and key individuals of these other bodies (typically the Chair) will be invited to attend BHCV WG meetings when appropriate.

### 3.2 Retirement Criteria/Reselection of inactive Working Group Member

The BHCV WG can exercise the right to retire the membership of a WG member. However the decision must be made by consensus of the WG (excluding the affected party).

The reasons (not exhaustive) for the WG to consider retirement of a WG members are:

1. Absence from WG meetings for three consecutive meetings without arranging for an alternate to attend these meetings.
2. Persistent refusal to furnish information requested by the WG. Information requested, if deemed beneficial to the objectives of the WG, shall not be unreasonably withheld except for those which are commercially sensitive and/or prohibited by law for dissemination.

Retirement of membership will be informed in writing by the Co-Chairs of the BHCV WG, copied in to the Secretary General and the Board of Governors of the RSPO.

The Co-Chairs of the BHCV WG will invite the constituents of the affected sectorial and/or geographical stakeholder group to nominate a new representative to the WG.

### 3.3 Management

Decisions will be reached by consensus by nominated members and must be made when a quorum, which is defined as 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the nominated members, attending a meeting.

#### 3.3.1 Communication

It is desirable that the Working Group to organize face to face meeting 4 times a year and organize teleconference as and when necessary. The co-chairs and the RSPO Biodiversity & Conservation Manager will have a frequent communication update.

#### 3.3.2 Planning

In order to fulfil these tasks and meet RSPO objectives, it will be necessary to establish a yearly work program including a series of targets or deliverables.

#### 3.3.3 Projects

Projects that are currently on-going and/or receiving funding from the RSPO will be placed under the purview of the BHCV WG.

- i. The BHCV WG can formulate projects or may accept project of third parties. Project implementation can be outsourced to the RSPO Secretariat or to external parties. In both cases, the Working Group will be responsible for the overall steer of the projects subject to they are agreed by the BoG and the S&CSC.
- ii. In case a project receives funding from the RSPO, then the Secretariat is responsible for the details of the project management (narrative and financial). In the situation that the BHCV WG and the RSPO Secretariat hold different opinions regarding the approval or continuation of a project, the matter will be brought to the S&CSC and/or BoG for a final decision.
- iii. The BHCV WG could request project implementer(s) to update on the progress and performance during the BHCV WG's meetings, i.e. to discuss issues and to come up with decision.

### 3.4 Role of the Secretariat

The RSPO Secretariat will provide the financial, human and logistical support that the BHCV WG requires to meet, conduct business and achieve its objectives: The Biodiversity & Conservation Manager will be the primary source of assistance and support to the BHCV WG. The Biodiversity & Conservation Manager will provide the BHCV WG members with technical reports from in-house and outsourced studies, terms of reference for consultancies, and other information that is required by the BHCV WG to fulfil its objectives. When the Technical Director (TD) may need technical assistance from the committee, this will be channelled through the Biodiversity & Conservation Manager who would be the primary contact person of the committee in the secretariat.

## 4 Expected Outputs

The BHCV WG will support the Secretariat to undertake the following tasks and activities working with others where appropriate:

- Develop an annual workplan and budget.
- Facilitate the development of information resources and toolkits for HCV assessors, managers and auditors.
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system that measures the impact of certification on the conservation of biodiversity, ecosystem services and the social and cultural values of the HCV framework.
- Commission and review studies which evaluate the efficacy of the HCV methodology, its application on plantation landscapes and its ability to resolve, alleviate, mitigate or otherwise manage environmental and social challenges related to the palm oil sector.
- Acquire, organize and share knowledge related to biodiversity, ecosystem services and the social and cultural values of the HCV framework via a “knowledge management system” (KMS).
- Review M&E reports and other information gleaned from the KMS, in order to make recommendations for improving the P&Cs related to HCV and biodiversity.
- Organize and synthesize information in order to improve guidance for the application of the HCV framework methodology.
- Adjudicate conflicts related to the application of the HCV framework on plantation landscapes.
- Disseminate information on biodiversity and HCV in appropriate formats and media outlets so that it is accessible to all RSPO stakeholders, and other important constituencies, such as governments and multilateral organisations.

# Appendix I

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## *Policy for claims for Working Groups*

Date of document: 24 August 2011

### **Guidelines for reimbursements of expenses related to RSPO Working Group meetings**

These guidelines take effect on 1 September 2011.

RSPO is a non-profit organisation and we are accountable to our members for all the money we spend. We are expected to keep expenses to a minimum so that we could do more with our limited funds.

RSPO expects the participant's employer or organisation to arrange and sponsor the expenses of the participants in attending RSPO Working Group and meetings as part of the members' commitment to the RSPO and its work. For clarity we do not expect volunteers for the Executive Board and Standing Committees to seek reimbursement of expenses. However, the RSPO does recognize that not all member organisation are equally able to meet those costs. For participants who wish to seek reimbursement, the RSPO Secretariat has developed the following guidelines for claimable expenses.

#### **Accommodation**

Where a meeting is held at a hotel it is expected that participants put up at the same hotel where RSPO would have arranged preferential rates. Please enquire from the WG coordinator/Secretariat and participants are expected to make their own reservations for accommodation well in advance, especially during high periods. Participants are also expected to pay for the room first and claim from RSPO later, if eligible to. Do ask for the RSPO special rate.

Where a meeting is not held at a hotel (e.g. business centers) RSPO would usually have 'preferred' hotels. Likewise please enquire from the WG coordinator/Secretariat and participants are expected to make their own reservations well in advance, especially during high periods. Participants are also expected to pay for the room first and claim from RSPO later, if eligible to. Do ask for the RSPO special rate.

(It is normal for hotels to ask for security deposits which are refundable upon checkout)

Participants using other hotels will be reimbursed only up the rate of the RSPO preferred hotel. (e.g in Kuala Lumpur RSPO has a prevailing agreed rate of RM300 nett per night with a local hotel and in Jakarta there is a hotel that we use regularly with the rate of IDR650,000 nett per night maximum).

Depending on flight arrangements participants are encouraged to check out on the final day of the meeting. If a meeting is held in the city of a participant's residence or where day travel is possible, RSPO will not provide accommodation.

**Allowances**

RSPO will not cover per diem or allowances. As most meals are included in the hotel accommodation and/or are provided during the meetings RSPO expects minimal other meal claims. Participants should generally avoid dining at extravagant restaurants.

**Travels**

Air travel should always be on a low cost carrier as a first option and where not possible on economy class. This applies to short-haul flights within the region (e.g. within Asean). For long-haul flights RSPO would allow up to up to economy class on a full-service carrier. Participants are expected to make their own travel bookings well in advance. Please note that early reservations could translate to significant cost savings for RSPO. Airport transfers should be on the most economical mode and should generally avoid premier class taxis.

**General**

Duly completed Claim Forms (blank template attached) will be verified and processed by the RSPO Secretariat.

Bank charges imposed for reprocessing of payments due to erroneous information provided shall be for the account of the participants.

Any deviation from these guidelines should be preapproved by the Chair of the WG who is accountable for the budget of the WG. Expenses are to be supported by actual receipts or other acceptable documents.

Claims should be submitted within 30 days. This is to facilitate better control of the budget and reporting.

(REF: RSPO24082011)



# Appendix II

## Working Group Travel Expense Claim Form



### Roundtable On Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) Travel Expense Claim Form

Participants Name:  
 Participants Phone Number and Email Address:  
 Project/Working group:  
 Meeting Period:  
 Participant's signature:

Date	Description <i>(All claims must be supported with receipts)</i>	Original Currency & Amount	Exchange Rate used/applied	Final Amount **
	<u>Airfare(inclusive airport tax)</u>			
	<u>Hotel</u>			
	<u>Transportation/ Travelling</u>			
	<u>Others</u>			
	<b>Total:</b>	-		-

\*\*Preferred currency that you wish to be reimbursed

**Participant Bank**

**Details:**

Name as per Bank

Account:

Bank Account Number:

Currency of the Bank Account (e.g USD/EUR):

Bank Name and

Address/Branch:

Bank Swift Code/IBAN:

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**For Office Use (RSPO  
Secretariat):**

Verify By:

Approved

By:

Date:

Date:

Ref:  
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