

Request for Proposals

Terms of Reference

Study on Artisanal Mills in West and Central Africa

1. Background

Oil palm is indigenous to West and Central Africa and is produced across more than 22 countries on the continent. Effectively, Crude Palm Oil (CPO) is a major ingredient in various cuisines across the region, and also used locally for the manufacturing of soap and other cosmetic products. The region is a net-importer of palm oil, with local production unable to meet demand¹. CPO production is dominated by small-scale processing mills, referred to as artisanal mills. While these mills vary in terms of level of mechanisation and processing capacity among others, they are, generally, a key part of the palm oil value chain in Africa. As such, they contribute to food security and employment in rural communities,² with a significant volume of fresh fruit bunches (FFB) from oil palm smallholder farmers ending up in artisanal mills for processing. On the other hand, there are a number of environmental³ and social concerns related to their operations and particularly their integration into sustainable supply chains.

2. Objectives and scope of the study

RSPO has, in recent years, received requests from stakeholders for the certification of artisanal mills. While the RSPO's current Supply Chain Certification Standard (SCCS) does not explicitly exclude these mills, the environmental and social issues that are associated with this category of mills raises major concerns, specifically in relation to certification. Thus, this study is intended to:

¹[chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.ofimagazine.com/content-images/news/Sub-Saharan-Africa_2022-06-28-134655_aaaz.pdf](https://www.ofimagazine.com/content-images/news/Sub-Saharan-Africa_2022-06-28-134655_aaaz.pdf)

²<https://www.future-agricultures.org/blog/artisanal-palm-oil-processing-in-an-industrial-enclave-in-ghana-resilience-resistance-and-elision/>

³ <https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/83151>

- identify the different types of artisanal mills and develop a system of categorisation based on level of mechanisation, operational capacity, and other identified markers of categorisation
- estimate the contribution of artisanal mills to the value chain based on: number of mills within the oil palm growing zones, tonnes of FFB processed, CPO volumes produced, volume of palm kernels produced
- identify the general position and influence of artisanal mills in relation to the palm supply chain network (which may differ by country) in collecting and aggregating FFB from plantations or smallholder farmers
- map out how production from artisanal mills (palm oil, palm kernels) connects to the wider market and consumers
- identify the environmental and social risks associated with the operation of these artisanal mills, and how prevalent/widespread these issues are
- identify existing national environmental and labour laws, regulations and/or policies applicable to artisanal mills, and the level of enforcement of these regulations
- map out the potential benefits of the inclusion of artisanal mills in RSPO-certified supply chains, and the associated impacts on smallholder farmers
- identify potential risks to the credibility/reputation of the RSPO scheme as a result of the inclusion of artisanal mills in the RSPO-certified supply chain
- define possible pathways for the inclusion of artisanal mills in the RSPO-certified supply chain.

3. Scope of Work

The study shall be conducted in five countries listed below, selected based on interest in certification of artisanal mills, as well as potential interest in line with upcoming RSPO certification:

- Cameroon
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Ghana
- Nigeria
- Sierra Leone

4. Methodology

In their proposal, the consultant(s) shall present a detailed methodology for carrying out the study. It is expected that a mixed research methodology will be adopted, including literature review, on-site visits to the artisanal mills and interviews with key stakeholders across the five countries covered within the scope of the study.

5. Consultant Qualifications

The selected consultant(s) shall have demonstrated experience conducting studies within the agricultural value chain in West and Central Africa, with a strong understanding of the palm oil industry. The consultant(s) shall have demonstrable knowledge of the RSPO Standards, while knowledge of other certification schemes shall be considered an advantage. Consultant(s) should also have excellent verbal and written skills in English.

6. Timeframe and Deliverables

The study is expected to run for a period of five months from the appointment of the selected consultant(s). The consultant(s) is expected to deliver a preliminary report detailing the methodology, analysis, findings and recommendations in relation to the objectives and scope of the study. Upon review and discussion with the RSPO team, the following shall be delivered:

- a comprehensive final report in English, which will incorporate input and comments from the relevant stakeholders
- a powerpoint presentation highlighting key findings and recommendations
- an excel document summarising the key findings, based on key thematic areas identified

7. Proposal Submission Guideline

The proposal should take into consideration the following elements:

- Technical proposal shall not exceed 10 pages in length.
- Proposed budget (in US dollars) for the research, broken down by deliverables and timeline, shall not exceed two pages. The prices quoted should be inclusive of all taxes

and delivery costs, and shall remain valid for 120 days from the closing date of the tender. Where appropriate, any costs for travel and subsistence must be clearly shown in the proposal.

- Detailed curriculum vitae of the consultant(s) and each member of the team.

8. General Instructions

Proposals should be submitted as PDF documents, strictly via email to tender@rspo.org.

Deadline for submission of the proposal is 6:00 PM MYT (GMT + 8) on **Friday, 9 February 2024**.

Any enquiries in connection with this ToR shall be submitted to Edem Asimadu at edem.asimadu@rspo.org.