

## Terms of Reference

### Consultancy Services for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Social Impact Assessment (SIA), and Social and Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA) Studies

#### **Introduction**

Impact assessment, which is the process of identifying the future outcomes of a current or a planned activity, is an essential step before the execution of any development project to ensure the feasibility and sustainability of the activities. Since the 1980s, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been regarded as a critical decision-making tool by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It is used to assess the environmental impacts of a proposed activity and to develop mitigation measures to address, reduce, or offset any potential negative impacts.

EIA puts emphasis on a specific set of effects, mainly environmental effects. The scoping difference regarding the mitigation and management of environmental impacts may also cover other dimensions such as social, ethical, and economic dimensions.

Social Impact Assessment (SIA) was introduced to assess social-related effects such as health risk, state of well-being, service availability to a community, facility accessibility, participation in environmental governance, and quality of life.<sup>1</sup> Its primary purpose is to bring about a more sustainable livelihood between the biophysical system and the human environment. SIA addresses the issue of economic driven development which maximises social benefits while minimising adverse impacts that affect the common way of life in society. By identifying both EIA and SIA impacts in advance: (1) better decisions can be made about which interventions should proceed and how they should proceed; and (2) mitigation measures can be implemented to minimise socio-economic costs and environmental harm from a specific planned activity<sup>2</sup>. EIA and SIA implementation have marginal influences on decisions in favour of balancing both environmental and non-environmental objectives with political factors.<sup>3</sup>

EIA and SIA approaches have evolved over time in tandem with the evolution of respective countries national legislation on environmental management and social policies. Some countries even have sector-specific technical guidance and local stakeholder perspectives which are adapted to the impact assessment framework (e.g. EIA for Nigeria's oil sector)<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, some international conventions have specific processes and requirements for impact assessments, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Considering this gap, there is a need to research on the current implementation of the social and environmental impact assessments in a specific country, and if possible, align with international conventions.

In addition, a more comprehensive impact assessment model was introduced, integrating both EIA and SIA into a holistic methodology known as the Social and Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA), which has been a central requirement of the RSPO Principles and Criteria (P&C). RSPO members are required to comply with Criterion 3.4 of the 2018 RSPO P&C on conducting SEIA assessment before new plantings or plantation operations<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> IISD (2016) Accessed from: <https://www.iisd.org/learning/eia/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/SIA.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> IAIA – Social Impact Assessment definition - <https://www.iaia.org/wiki-details.php?ID=23#:~:text=Definition,processes%20invoked%20by%20those%20interventions.>

<sup>3</sup> Dendena, B., & Corsi, S. (2015). The Environmental and Social Impact Assessment: a further step towards an integrated assessment process. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 108, 965-977.

<sup>4</sup> UN Environment (2018). *Assessing Environmental Impacts - A Global Review of Legislation*, page 6, Nairobi, Kenya.

<sup>5</sup> see the guidance for Criterion 3.4 in 2018 RSPO P&C, pages 91 & 92.



**Objectives**

The objective of this consultancy is as follows:

1. To conduct comprehensive research and analyse the current EIA/ SIA/ SEIA requirements at national and international levels in the identified oil palm producing regions (Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America). The consultant is expected to collect the readily available EIA/ SIA/ SEIA requirements of the countries and international conventions.
2. To analyse the approach of impact assessment in assessing diverse issues (environmental and social) of sustainability tailored to the palm oil industry.
3. To provide recommendations on the requirements and practical procedures in SEIA that meet the RSPO P&C requirements.

**Scope**

The scope of this research study will cover the EIA, SIA and SEIA requirements including international conventions in the oil palm producing countries within the three identified regions, namely Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America, covering the following:

Region	Countries (including but not limited to)
Africa	Cameron, Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Sierra Leone
Asia-Pacific	Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand
Latin America	Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Peru

**Tasks and Deliverables**

This task is a desktop review work whereby the information required can be obtained from the Internet and the work is expected to be completed within four (4) months. The tasks are as follow:

1. Revise and populate an EIA/ SIA/ SEIA Mapping Analysis Template with the following information:
  - 1.1 Detailed information on specific EIA, SIA and SEIA requirements and processes of the identified oil palm growing countries in the three regions.
  - 1.2 Detailed information on the specific EIA, SIA and SEIA requirements and processes of international conventions.
  - 1.3 Map the EIA, SIA and/or SEIA requirements of the identified countries with the relevant international conventions.
  - 1.4 Map the EIA, SIA and SEIA requirements of the identified countries and international conventions against the suggested SEIA elements (refer to the guidance 3.4 of the 2018 RSPO P&C)

*Note: Upon the commencement of the project, the RSPO Secretariat will provide an Excel sheet template for the mapping analysis. The consultant is expected to revise the template as needed to meet the objectives of the review.*

2. Produce an EIA/ SIA/ SEIA Analysis Report with the following information:
  - 2.1 Compare the commonalities and differences of EIA, SIA and SEIA requirements of the countries where the growers are members of RSPO and international conventions that have specific EIA, SIA and SEIA requirements and processes, against the suggested SEIA elements (refer to the guidance 3.4 of the 2018 RSPO P&C)
  - 2.2 Recommendations for setting the minimum requirements for SEIA aligning with the 2018 RSPO P&C.
  - 2.3 Recommendations for SEIA minimum requirements for RSPO grower countries that do not yet have national guidelines.
  - 2.4 Recommended SEIA reporting framework and checklist suited to address different sustainability impacts and aligned with the suggested SEIA elements (refer to the guidance 3.4 of the 2018 RSPO P&C)
3. Develop a Presentation Pack, with a summary of key findings and outcomes from item (1) and (2)

**Timeline**

The expected timeline for delivery is as below:

No.	Activity	Timeline (2023)
1	Deadline for expression of interest	16 February
2	Selection of researcher/consultant	20 February
3	Kick Off Meeting	24 February
4	Finalisation of Workplan	1 March
5	First progress update on Mapping Analysis	15 March
6	Second progress update on Mapping Analysis	5 April
7	Consultant to submit completed Mapping Analysis	26 April
8	Consultant to submit draft EIA/ SIA/ SEIA Analysis Report (Draft 1)	17 May
9	RSPO Secretariat to provide feedback on Draft 1 Report	24 May
10	Consultant to submit draft EIA/ SIA/ SEIA Analysis Report (Draft 2)	31 May
11	RSPO Secretariat to provide feedback on Draft 2 Report	7 June
12	Consultant to submit final EIA/ SIA/ SEIA Analysis Report and Presentation Pack	20 June

**Budget**

The Consultant is expected to provide an outline of the work plan together with a breakdown of costs in their proposal.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The consultant will provide updates to the Standard Development team, RSPO Secretariat on the progress of the project (as per the agreed work plan) and communicate the status of research when requested. The consultant must ensure that all conduct of research and reporting adheres to research ethics, such as no plagiarism. The consultant must ensure that the relevant procurement process within the RSPO Secretariat has been complied with, including submission of relevant documents for processing, during the tender process.

## **Consultant Requirements**

- Good level of understanding of the EIA/ SIA/ SEIA framework.
- High level of written and analytical skills.
- Skilled in meta-analysis and literature review of global context.
- Knowledge in environmental policies is a plus.
- Familiar with Excel spreadsheet and other data analysis software for reporting.
- Detail-orientated in work ethic, with a discipline to ensure the research method is of high quality.

## **Expression of interest**

Interested applicants may submit their expression of interest to [standard.development@rspo.org](mailto:standard.development@rspo.org) by 6:00 PM MYT (GMT+8) on 16 February 2023. All documents submitted must be written in English. For any queries, kindly contact the Standard Development team, RSPO Secretariat at [standard.development@rspo.org](mailto:standard.development@rspo.org).