

Terms of Reference

RSPO Guidance on Riparian Conservation and Restoration

Background

The need to protect the environment and specifically biodiversity within oil palm estates in order to demonstrate a commitment to sustainability is becoming increasingly important. Those organisations in the oil palm sector seeking to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability in the public domain generally do so through the RSPO certification process. This process requires compliance with a set of principles and criteria a number of which are related to protecting the environment and specifically biodiversity.

One method of meeting the relevant principles and criteria is through the setting aside of land within or on an estate boundary. These areas may be riparian or include steep slopes that are not safe to develop but contain areas of habitat suitable for retention and possible enhancement that may be used to maintain and improve ecosystem services.

Gaining commitment among senior management, estate managers and workers of the need for this presents an ongoing challenge. All three groups currently lack an understanding of why this is necessary and how this may be achieved in a practical and cost effective manner.

RSPO's P&C (2007) criterion 4.4 stated on requirement to maintain quality and availability of surface and ground water. Indicators highlight on needs to maintain and restore appropriate riparian and other buffer zones.

Besides that, riparian can also be defined as HCV 4 and HCV 5. Criterion 5.2 and 7.3 specified on identification of HCVs, maintenance and/or enhancement of these areas.

Both criterion are strengthened in the revised P&C (2013). The P&C Review Task Force requested RSPO to develop guidance on riparian conservation and restoration.

The aim of this project is to enhance the understanding of, and compliance with the RSPO principles and criteria through developing information and guidance that may be used by these groups to justify the need for providing set asides, identifying land that is appropriate for conservation and providing practical guidance at the estate level as to how this may be achieved.

Relevant requirements on riparian conservation such as P2.1, P4, P5 and P7 can be found in the revised P&C document. Literature review on set-aside management was conducted in 2009 and summary of review report can be made available for this project.

Objective of the work:

Develop guidance on riparian management and conservation for RSPO.

This guidance shall justify the need for set asides, identify and effective management of riparian at the estate level, it should also include information on restoration and long terms monitoring of riparian habitat.

Target audiences for this guidance are senior managers involved in the management of oil palm companies, estate managers and workers on site.

Output:

The guidance shall include the following information:

- a) Ecosystem of riparian habitat
- b) Need to conserve riparian habitat
- c) Best management practices
- d) Restoration of degraded riparian habitat
- e) Monitoring and reporting on conservation outcomes

It should address the following questions:-

- a) What are the functions and management objectives of riparian conservation?
- b) How to determine appropriate size of riparian zone?
- c) How to manage riparian zone within oil palm operation?
- d) What are the key indicators for riparian conservation and water management?
- e) How to restore or rehabilitate riparian zone?
- f) How to implement adaptive management and monitor conservation outcomes?

Consultant is requested to prepare draft guidance, consult with relevant experts, RSPO's working group and grower members before finalization of the guidance.

Timeline:

The guidance shall be FINALIZED by 30th November 2013 (this timeline is tentative).

Interested consultants are encouraged to submit proposal with quotation, work plan, qualification/ related experience, CV of the person-in charge to the RSPO secretariat (soochin.oi@rspo.org) by 15th of September 2013.