

**Abstract of Paper for Session II at the 5<sup>th</sup> Roundtable Meeting on Sustainable Palm Oil (RT5)**

<p><b>Title of paper:</b></p> <p>Malaysian National Interpretation of RSPO P&amp;C – Process &amp; Experience</p>
<p><b>Organisation:</b></p> <p>Malaysian Palm Oil Association (MPOA)</p>
<p><b>Authors:</b></p> <p>Chew Jit Seng &amp; Dato' Mamat Salleh</p>
<p><b>Abstract of Paper:</b></p> <p><u>Introduction</u>          Since the generic RSPO P&amp;C, indicators and guidance were developed for international application, specific and detailed indicators and guidance for each country where oil palm is grown are needed to reflect the differences in legal, geographical, socio-economic factors in each country to be relevant to the national aspirations of its stakeholders. MPOA as a member of the RSPO EB, was tasked to lead the national interpretation process for Malaysia.</p> <p><u>Establishment of the working group</u>          The MYNIWG comprised representatives from all the RSPO interest categories including smallholders, NGOs, research organisations and relevant government agencies. Terms of Reference (TOR) and Code of Conduct (CoC) were also drawn up to formalise the MYNIWG.</p> <p><u>Working group process</u>          The MYNIWG was led by MPOA Chief Executive, Dato' Mamat Salleh supported by Mr Chew Jit Seng, Head, Research &amp; Development and Dr Chan Kook Weng (Senior Research Fellow, Malaysian Palm Oil Board). Dr Simon Lord (RSPO EB member), Mr MR Chandran (RSPO EB Advisor) and Ms Toh Su Mei (Wild Asia) provided technical advice.</p> <p>Three working groups were set up to lead discussions on the various aspects of the RSPO P&amp;C i.e.          Group 1 : Legal, Labour, License and Social Issues          Group 2 : Agronomy and Mill Practices, economics          Group 3 : Environment and Natural Resources</p> <p>Group leaders were appointed based on their respective background and relevant experience. These include En Mohd Nor Kailany (FELDA) and Mr Anthony Nogeh Gumbek (SALCRA) for Group 1, Mr Ong Kim Pin (Kulim) for Group 2 and Dr Vengeta Rao (Boh Plantations) / Darrel Webber (WWF-Malaysia) for Group 3. En Abdul Aziz Long, Puan Radziah and Puan Sabarinah of SIRIM QAS acted as facilitators for the working groups. MPOA staff and Ms Intan Shafinaz provided secretarial services.</p> <p>In order for the MYNIWG to meet the requirements of the RSPO in terms of participation, consultation and decision making, the MYNIWG followed as closely as possible the guidelines drawn up by Proforest. Decision making was by consensus, in line with the RSPO practice, i.e. in the absence of sustained objections. Attempts were made to arrive at consensus decisions when conflicts or disagreements arose during the meetings.</p>

### MYNIWG Working Groups meetings

A total of 5 physical meetings were organised for the MYNIWG from March 2007 to September 2007. Three draft documents were produced during the MYNIWG process.

Active debate on the generic P&C and suggestions for improvements were conducted during the break-out groups ably led by the respective Group Leaders. Plenary sessions were held at the end of each day to summarise and adopt the proposed changes. Translations of the draft MYNIWG documents were completed by MPOA. Copies were circulated to all MYNIWG members via email for further comments. Both the English and Bahasa Malaysia versions were put up for public consultations.

Advertisements were taken in the major Malaysian English, Bahasa Malaysia and Chinese language newspapers to announce the event and the availability of the documents at the RSPO website for public consultation. A template was provided to record comments made and justification for proposed changes as suggested. Public comments received were discussed at the following physical meeting.

A public forum and road-shows on the MYNIWG draft and sharing of experiences by major participating companies were also organised in Kuala Lumpur, Kuching and Sandakan in Sept 2007 to promote awareness and to obtain further feedback.

The “final” draft MYNIWG document was submitted as requested by the RSPO Secretariat, in time for the RSPO EB meeting on 4 October 2007. However, the EB decided that approval of the national interpretations will only take place after the P&C review held at Bogor, Indonesia from 8 to 10 October 2007. After the Bogor meeting, substantial changes were made to the generic P&C and the EB subsequently decided that national interpretation working groups need to reconvene to take cognizance of the changes before the final drafts are resubmitted for approval after RT5.

### Lessons learned

There was considerable interest and active debate in all MYNIWG meetings and public forum/road-shows. Each MYNIWG meeting was attended by about 60 members. More than a 300 attended the road-shows in total, indicating the interest in the RSPO; especially amongst the major plantation companies.

The most important lesson learnt was the need for balanced participation to maintain process credibility. In this regard, WWF-Malaysia played a key role, supported by Tenaganita and Global Environment Centre.

Discussions were conducted in an open and transparent manner where stakeholders were able to share their views and concerns. In the final analysis, good sense prevailed and compromise solutions were found where serious disagreements were met.

Testing of the RSPO P&C and MYNIWG draft were carried out by participating companies. Feedback from these self-assessments, gap analyses and test audits were considered at the MYNIWG meetings to ensure it reflects the field testing experiences and addressed the concerns on practicality.

Conflicting criteria and inconsistencies within the P&C were streamlined where possible and practical indicators and guidance adopted by consensus decision. Concerns on compliance by smallholders were also taken into consideration in setting the indicators and guidance for the MYNIWG.

### Results and conclusion

The MYNIWG document provides specific interpretation for all RSPO P&C, indicators and guidance relating to practical application at the national and state level, with specific criteria and

guidance applicable for Sabah and Sarawak where necessary. Applicable national and state laws and regulations were identified and included in the MYNIWG document for reference by users including certification bodies.

The MYNIWG process was developed in accordance with the requirements of the RSPO as spelt out in the guidelines drawn up by Proforest. These include the requirements for participation, multi-stakeholder working group, field testing and public consultation period. In addition, the MYNIWG document exceeds the minimum percentage (45%) of major or compulsory indicators in the 32 criteria identified by the RSPO's Verification Working Group (VWG) in the RSPO Certification document.

Although the MYNIWG document is not a perfect document, it nevertheless defines a set of practical indicators and guidance which are applicable to those wanting to obtain RSPO certification for sustainable palm oil in Malaysian plantations, mills and smallholdings. The most important being that it was developed through a robust and transparent process with active participation from the Malaysian stakeholders.

**Profile of Organisation :**

MPOA was formed in August 1999, the result of a rationalisation merger amongst the United Planting Association of Malaysian (UPAM), the Rubber Growers Association (RGA) and the Malaysian Oil Palm Growers Council (MOPGC). MPOA currently represents 136 producer members of the Malaysian plantation industry which together owns about 1.8 million ha or 42 % of the land bank planted with oil palms in Malaysia. Members of MPOA comprise large, medium and small plantation companies and FELDA. MPOA acts as the main organisation lobbying for the interests of the oil palm growers in Malaysia.

As a founder member of the RSPO, MPOA plays a key role in the activities of the RSPO. Besides being a member of the RSPO EB, MPOA is also actively involved in all the RSPO activities and working groups such as the Criteria Working Group (CWG), Verification Working Group (VWG) and trial implementation.

MPOA is leading the RSPO processes in Malaysia and activities include conducting meetings, public forums, road-shows and briefings to companies and the smallholder organisations in creating awareness and promoting the understanding of the RSPO P&C and national interpretation in Malaysia.

**Profile of the Speaker/Discussion Leader:**

Chew Jit Seng started his career with KLK in late 1976. He has wide ranging experience in oil palm, rubber and cocoa including R&D, advisory, training and plantation management. Mr Chew was trained under the Executive and Senior management development programmes while with Sime Darby. He holds a diploma in Management from MIM, MSc in Plantation Management from UPM and post-graduate diploma in Strategic Management from UTM. In his current position as Head, R&D at MPOA, his main interests are in sustainability issues involving the oil palm industry, particularly the RSPO.