

# Factsheet on RSPO INDEPENDENT SMALLHOLDER STANDARD



Photo: RSPO/Jonathan Perugia

## SCOPE OF THE STANDARD

The RSPO Independent Smallholder (ISH) Standard is a certification system and standard for sustainable palm oil. The RSPO ISH Standard directly addresses the needs and challenges of independent smallholders for inclusion in the RSPO system. The Standard implements simple and straightforward requirements, and cost-effective tools that consider diversity, capacity, and incentives, specific to oil palm producing smallholders.

The development of the overall process of the RSPO ISH Standard has been guided by the need to strike a balance between promoting greater inclusion of smallholders and ensuring that core sustainability requirements are upheld. The Principles, Criteria and Indicators (PCI) of the RSPO ISH Standard are comprised of four principles, 23 criteria and 58 indicators organised along the RSPO Impact areas of People, Planet and Prosperity. The standard is exclusively applicable to and can only be used by those smallholders that qualify as independent smallholders.

Training and support for smallholders and group managers is a fundamental component of the RSPO ISH Standard as the standard assumes that not all smallholders have the capacity and resources to comply with all indicators upon entry (Eligibility phase). As such, the ISH Standard presents a phased approach and includes a substantial training component, presented as indicators that require independent smallholders to receive training.

## Who can use the RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard?

A smallholder or smallholder group can pursue certification if they are not a scheme smallholder and if the total size of their oil palm production area is smaller or equal to 50 hectares(ha) (where applicable and if no threshold is defined in a National Interpretation), or smaller or equal to the maximum size defined in National Interpretations (e.g. In Indonesia, the implied threshold size is 25 ha or below and in Ecuador, it is 75 ha or below).

A smallholder intending to pursue certification under the RSPO ISH Standard should also have the enforceable decision-making power on the operation of the land and production practices. Finally, they must meet any further criteria relative to the applicability of this standard as provided in the National Interpretation in their country. The standard is applicable for sustainable palm oil production, worldwide.

The RSPO ISH standard is applicable for

- all smallholder plots that are existing plots under palm production
- plots that are allocated for replanting or new planting of palm
- plots that are or may potentially be allocated for new planting of oil palm.

The total size of the oil palm production area is defined by accumulating all plots owned by a smallholder; including existing plots with oil palm planting, as well as areas available for replanting, or areas allocated for new oil palm planting that are owned by one single smallholder within or outside the unit of certification.

## How to get certified under the Standard

There are three phases toward full compliance:



The Unit of Certification for the RSPO ISH Standard is the group manager and all individual members. The certificate holder is the group. In order to gain certification, the independent smallholder must be members of an independent smallholder group for certification. They could either form a new group or join an existing group, in which they must sign the Smallholder Declaration committing to meeting full compliance with all requirements of the RSPO ISH Standard. The group can either be legally registered as an individual or as an organisation. Group managers, on the other hand, can be a representative of a mill, an organisation or an individual. The group can have any number of members, including one. As a group, there is no limit to the total number of hectares that form part of the group although there is a limit for *each* individual member. As the ISH standard adopts a phased approach to certification, a group can have members that are at different phases in the certification process (e.g. can have members working towards compliance with Eligibility, Milestone A and Milestone B).

Find out more at [rspo.org](https://rspo.org)