

**Terms of Reference**  
**Project Management Team for Pool of Experts**

**1. Background**

The RSPO Principles and Criteria (P&C) are a set of standards for sustainable palm oil production that relies on other parties known as Certification Bodies (CBs) and assessors (henceforth referred to as “CB auditors”) to provide assessment, verification and certification against its standards. Furthermore, Accreditation Services International (ASI) provides RSPO the service of assuring the quality of its CBs through accreditation.

In order to enhance quality and transparency during audits, a motion during the inaugural meeting between the RSPO Assurance Standing Committee (ASC) and the RSPO Complaints Panel (CP) on 3 March 2020 in Kuala Lumpur proposed to form a group of experts known as a Pool of Experts (PoE) to act as an observer in P&C Certification audits. The issue of building a PoE to conduct investigations in a speedy and robust manner was also suggested in the discussion. It seems best to make this into a project, for which a dedicated consultant is hired to help build such a pool, assisted by RSPO members and other parties. Furthermore, it was also identified in the Gap Analysis Report that was published in 2021 stating that there should be observers to participate in audits to identify system failures and consider an allocation of a specific fund to support these activities by relevant parties.

The PoE will act as an observer during the P&C Certification audit process with the aim of improving trust in the RSPO Assurance Systems with the integration between various units in the Secretariat (Compliance, Risk, Grievances and Intermediary Organisations (IMO)). Below are the objectives for the formation of a PoE:

- Delivering top quartile outcome from audits with distinctive expertise
- Foresighting, unlocking opportunities once considered impossible in typical audits conducted
- Enriching the audit experience for continuous improvements (peer-to-peer learnings)
- Rewarding or penalising approach for all stakeholders

In order to materialise and implement the PoE system, a robust study must be conducted

and presented to the ASC for approval. For this reason, it is deemed necessary for an appointment of a third party Project Management Team (PMT) to assist the Secretariat in developing the framework, establishing the database and guidance for future implementation by the Secretariat in strengthening the Assurance System.

## **2. Objective(s)**

The PMT is a group of people from a third-party organisation that will act as a coordinator and assistant to the Secretariat to execute tasks and produce deliverables outlined in the agreed plan and schedule that are related to all activities of the PoE. This aims to increase efficiency and productivity during the preliminary, implementation and post implementation phases of the tasks.

## **3. Tasks and Deliverables**

Below are the expected tasks and key deliverables of the PMT:

- To explore the framework of PoE involvement during the audit process;
- To explore the framework of PoE involvement during non-audit processes such as verification and compliance assessments, and observation.
- To explore the framework and various simulations of payment structures for the PoE.
- To develop and create a database of PoE from various sectors.
- To develop and propose a guidance on the establishment of PoE for preliminary, implementation and mobilisation and post-implementation phases.
- To coordinate and manage the pilot testing and development of a full field report.

## **4. Timelines**

All deliverables shall be delivered within the stipulated timeline as agreed upon in the service agreement signing. Below are the proposed timelines for each of the major tasks:

- The development of all frameworks within 1 (one) month.
- Create a database of PoE within 2 (two) months.
- Development of guidance within 2 (two) months.
- Pilot-testing within 1 (one) month after the approval of the guidance.

## **5. Qualifications and skill requirements**

The PMT shall have the following competencies and/or experiences:

- Team leads must have a Degree in Project Management or other related fields;
- An understanding of the RSPO P&C Audit process with on-site experience is a must
- Familiarity with the palm oil industry and RSPO standards is a must;
- Ability to travel when necessary to complete the required assignments and conduct meetings remotely via tele-conferencing or video conferencing;
- Proficiency in English with good writing and communication skills;
- No affiliation to any organisation that the ASC members are part of.

## **6. Term of contract**

The PMT work will be under contract with RSPO for 6 (six) months and be subjected to a performance evaluation. The contract may be renewed if needed.

## **7. Submitting an expression of interest**

Interested candidates should include the following information in their expression of interest.

- Company profile with CVs of proposed team members.
- A brief personal statement addressing the rationale for application based on criteria and skills set required (maximum two pages).
- The day rate for the time spent or cost for the one year term or fees for each major task described in Section 4.
- Name and contact details of two references. References will not be contacted unless your expression of interest is taken forward.

Expression of interest should be forwarded to [zaidee.tahir@rspo.org](mailto:zaidee.tahir@rspo.org) by 6:00 PM MYT (GMT + 8) on 30 October 2022.