

Terms of Reference

Development of Additional Components for the RSPO Simplified Combined HCV-HCS Approach for ISH

1. Introduction

The RSPO Independent Smallholder (ISH) Standard includes a requirement for independent smallholders to maintain and/or enhance High Conservation Value (HCV) areas and High Carbon Stock (HCS) forests. RSPO has previously developed a simplified HCV approach for identifying, protecting, and managing HCVs that provides guidance for both existing and new plantings (Guidance available [here](#)). As of now, a **simplified combined HCV-HCS approach** for ISHs to identify HCS forests within smallholder plots does not exist. An [interim measure](#) is in place to identify low risk areas in which new plantings will be allowed in for ISHs.

As such, the **Independent Smallholder No Deforestation Task Force (IS-NDTF)** has been established to oversee the development of a **simplified combined HCV-HCS approach** to support ISHs in meeting the requirements related to maintain and/or enhance High Conservation Value (HCV) areas and High Carbon Stock (HCS) forests.

RSPO is currently developing the Simplified Combined HCV-HCS Approach, which aims to ensure that ISHs comply with the requirement of Criteria 4.3 - ISH group members to ensure new plantings, since November 2019, do not replace any HCV areas and HCS forests as defined by the simplified combined HCV-HCS approach.

As further development of specific components within the approach is required, RSPO is looking to develop a simple and practical set of indicators and its accompanying methodology for ISHs who are either working on their own, or with research or extension workers, to identify conservation set-asides in the process of planning for new oil palm plantings.

This term of reference lays out the scope of work, activities and expected deliverables that would be required for the additional components for the **simplified combined HCV-HCS approach** for ISH.

2. Objective

The main objective of the consultant is to:

- A. Develop a simplified methodology for the identification of **Young Regenerating Forest (YRF)**.

3. Scope of roles and responsibilities

RSPO is looking for an independent consultant to carry out the following:

- On starting the consultancy:
 - a. Ensure understanding of the concept and process of the **simplified combined HCV-HCS approach**
 - b. Gather all necessary documentation required.
- At the development phase:
 - a. Ensure that interpretation/results of this consultancy are consistent with requirements of the RSPO ISH Standard 2019
- Further development of the identified components within the **simplified combined HCV-HCS approach (work in progress)**. These components include:
 - a. A simple and practical set of indicators and its accompanying methodology for farmers (ISH) working on their own, or with research or extension workers to identify conservation set asides in the process of planning for new oil palm plantings. This includes:
 - i. Identification of **Young Regenerating Forests (YRF)** within **Medium Risk Probability HCV 1-3 areas**.
 - ii. Identification of **Young Regenerating Forests (YRF)** within **High Risk Probability HCV 1-3 areas**.
 - iii. Development of a threshold to distinguish smallholder rubber planting scenarios that can be cleared for oil palm plantings, from smallholder rubber agro-forest that may have HCV and/or HCS for conservation set aside¹

4. Consultant Qualifications

The person(s) conducting the further development of the identified components within the **simplified combined HCV-HCS approach** is expected to have:

- a. A background in Forestry
- b. Technical expertise on identifying and assessing HCV areas and HCS forests
- c. Familiarity with the smallholder context, particularly about the challenges faced by smallholders in identifying and maintaining the HCV and HCS areas
- d. Technical expertise on forestry related topics
- e. Knowledge of the RSPO HCV app and probability maps would be an advantage

¹ An example of rubber-agroforest would be the *sisipan* system in Indonesia where rubber seedlings are planted inside mature rubber gardens and/or in forest gaps, to replace dead, dying, unproductive or unwanted trees. The rubber-agroforest forest areas have been categorised as medium risk probability HCV1-3 areas based on spatial land cover observation.

5. Deliverables

The final deliverables expected are:

A simple and practical set of indicators, accompanying methodology and procedures for the identification of conservation set asides in the process of planning for new oil palm plantings which includes:

- a. Identification of **Young Regenerating Forest (YRF)** within the **Medium Risk Probability HCV 1-3 areas**.
- b. Identification of **Young Regenerating Forest (YRF)** within the **High Risk Probability HCV 1-3 areas**.

6. Timeline and Budget

The development of the components within the **simplified combined HCV-HCS approach** for smallholders is expected to be completed by 10th May 2021. The consultant is expected to provide an outline of the work plan together with a breakdown of costs in their proposal.