



RSPO NEW PLANTING PROCEDURE (2021)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS	1
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 WHAT IS THE RSPO NEW PLANTING PROCEDURE (NPP)?	1
1.2 WHEN AND HOW DOES THE NPP APPLY?	1
1.3 HOW IS NPP IMPLEMENTED BY SMALLHOLDERS?	3
1.3.1 NPP Submission by Smallholders: LOW RISK	4
1.3.2 NPP Submission by Smallholders: RISK	4
1.4 INTEGRATION OF NPP PROCESSES WITH NATIONAL LEGAL PROCESSES	4
1.5 SANCTIONS	5
2. ASSESSMENTS & MANAGEMENT PLAN REQUIREMENTS	6
2.1 SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SEIA)	7
2.2 HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE (HCV) AND HIGH CARBON STOCK (HCS) ASSESSMENT (HCV/HCSA)	8
2.3 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND FPIC PROCESS	8
2.4 SOIL SUITABILITY & TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY	9
2.5 GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) ASSESSMENT	10
2.6 LAND USE CHANGE ANALYSIS (LUCA)	10
2.7 NPP MANAGEMENT PLAN	11
3. REPORTING & VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS	12
4. NPP SUBMISSIONS: 30-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT	14
4.1 MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION OF NPP COMMENTS RECEIVED	14
ANNEX 1. DEFINITIONS	15
ANNEX 2. RSPO SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS	18
TEMPLATE 1: RSPO NPP NOTIFICATION STATEMENT	19
TEMPLATE 2: RSPO NPP SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENTS	21
TEMPLATE 3: RSPO NPP SUMMARY MANAGEMENT PLAN	23

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CB	Certification Body
CSPO	Certified Sustainable Palm Oil
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HCS	High Carbon Stock
HCSA	High Carbon Stock Approach
HCV	High Conservation Value
LUCA	Land Use Change Analysis
LURI	Land Use Risk Identification
NI	National Interpretation
NPP	New Planting Procedure
P&C	Principles and Criteria
RSPO	Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil
SEIA	Social and Environmental Impact Assessment
ALS	Assessor Licensing Scheme
HCVRN	HCVResource Network
FFB	Fresh Fruit Bunch

1. INTRODUCTION

The New Planting Procedure (NPP) was proposed to the RSPO General Assembly in November 2008 and formalised in May 2009. It was approved by the RSPO Executive Board in September 2009 and came into force for all new oil palm plantings from 1 January 2010. The NPP was introduced with the aim to provide a framework for the responsible development of new lands for oil palm and as an extension to Criteria 7.3 of the 2007 P&C.

The RSPO P&C is updated every five years. The NPP (2009) was then updated based on the newly revised RSPO P&C (2013) in 2015 and approved by the RSPO Board of Governors on 20th November 2015. The RSPO P&C (2018) is effective after adoption by the RSPO 15th General Assembly (GA15) on 15 November 2018. Hence, NPP (2015) is in need of updating based on the new requirements introduced in the RSPO P&C 2018.

This updated NPP aims to (1) consolidate relevant requirements into one comprehensive document; (2) improve clarity of the NPP requirements and processes; (3) ensure consistency with the RSPO P&C 2018 (refer Annex 2) and other supporting documents; as well as (4) provide clarity on its applicability, especially to smallholders.

The NPP 2021 replaces the earlier version which was published in 2015 and it is effective from [redacted] with a 6 (six) months grace period. The NPP 2021 may be amended when required based on revised RSPO Standards, requirements, strategies or decisions produced by RSPO.

All NPPs that were started during or after the grace period must comply with the 2021 NPP. NPPs that were started before grace period must comply with the 2015 NPP and growers are to report the NPP status to the RSPO Secretariat for inclusion in the case register. Documented evidence (e.g., contract with assessor) must be provided with documented start date of the relevant assessment.

1.1 WHAT IS THE RSPO NEW PLANTING PROCEDURE (NPP)?

The RSPO New Planting Procedure (NPP) consists of a set of assessments and verification processes to be conducted by growers and verified by certification bodies (CB) prior to a new oil palm development, in order to help enable responsible planting. The intention is that new oil palm plantings will not negatively impact primary forest, High Conservation Values (HCV), High Carbon Stocks (HCS), peatland, fragile and marginal soils or impact the rights of local people including their rights on the land being developed. A successful implementation of the NPP ensures that applicable and relevant indicators of the RSPO Principles and Criteria (P&C) are being implemented and complied with when the new development starts.

The key output of the NPP is a report that proposes how and where new oil palm plantings should proceed, or not, for a given management area and proposed management plan. The NPP report is verified by CB, vetted by RSPO Secretariat before posting on the RSPO website and noticeboard on site for public comment for a duration of 30 days. Planting and any associated development can only begin once the NPP notification is completed and RSPO approval is granted, as well as all applicable local legal requirements are met.

1.2 WHEN AND HOW DOES THE NPP APPLY?

For new oil palm plantings, from 1 January 2010, including any associated development; the NPP must be implemented before a grower commences land preparation (except independent smallholders pursuing RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard).

NPP applies on all **new oil palm plantings and associated development (hereinafter referred to as proposed new development)**, where:

- RSPO members have a majority shareholding in and/or management control (Refer to Certification System).
- It is a new land acquisition by RSPO members.
- The area falls outside of RSPO certified areas.

The RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard (2019) is only applicable to smallholders that qualify as independent smallholders as defined by the Standard and relevant national interpretation. Independent smallholders pursuing RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard do not need to apply NPP, but to demonstrate compliance with relevant requirements for new plantings /developments as outlined within the standard during certification process.

- It is a new area of scheme/organised smallholder(s) and/or independent growers (growers without a mill, not considered as smallholders), supported by an RSPO member company (either through existing group member(s) or new recruitment into existing group of smallholders)
- It is an area where new members of smallholder(s) or independent grower(s) join an existing scheme/organised smallholders or group of growers.

If land clearing has already been occurring actively at the time of acquisition,

once it is under the company's management control, all operations related to the development must cease completely and the NPP requirements shall follow for any area that has not yet been converted/cleared.

However, evident preventive and/or control measure and management for fire, pests and/or invasive species are allowed.

Note:

RSPO is exploring options and mechanisms to be more inclusive and applicable to independent growers without a mill, who are not defined as smallholders. Until such mechanisms or options are made available, the current NPP requirements are applied.

NPP is not applicable for:

- Oil palm plantings and associated development took place **before 1 January 2010**
- **Replanting:** replacing oil palm with a subsequent oil palm crop, if the previous oil palm crop has not been abandoned for more than 3 years.
- **Independent smallholders**, who meet the definition of Independent Smallholder as outlined in the RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard and/or applicable National Interpretation, and is pursuing RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard (2019).
- Oil palm plantings and associated development took place on and by **non-RSPO member**.
- Proposed new development on land area, newly acquired, with **completed and approved NPP**.
- *New oil palm planting and/or associated development within an **RSPO certified management unit**.
- *Oil palm plantings and associated development planned on **Re-Land Clearing** as defined in Annex 1 of this document.

Note:

For scenario marked with * above, although NPP is not applicable for the above listed scenario, compliance with RSPO P&C (2018) requirements, such as FPIC, SEIA, HCV and HCS assessments are mandatory during the certification process.

Box 1. Scenario where NPP is not applicable

The NPP is implemented through a process of identifying and understanding the environmental and social values present in the proposed new development area, and how to protect, monitor and manage those values based on RSPO standards in a responsible and sustainable manner. This is done through synthesizing a set of relevant technical assessments conducted by competent assessor and stakeholder engagement (including an FPIC process, where needed) to produce applicable development and management plans at a given area.

NPP report(s) and plan(s) are to be verified by an accredited CB and posted on the RSPO website for a 30-day public comment period. On satisfactory completion of the 30-day public comment period with resolution of all comments, the RSPO Secretariat will approve the proposed new plantings. New planting and any associated development can then commence subject to applicable legal requirements being met.

Table 1. NPP implementation requirements, guided by different new development scenarios

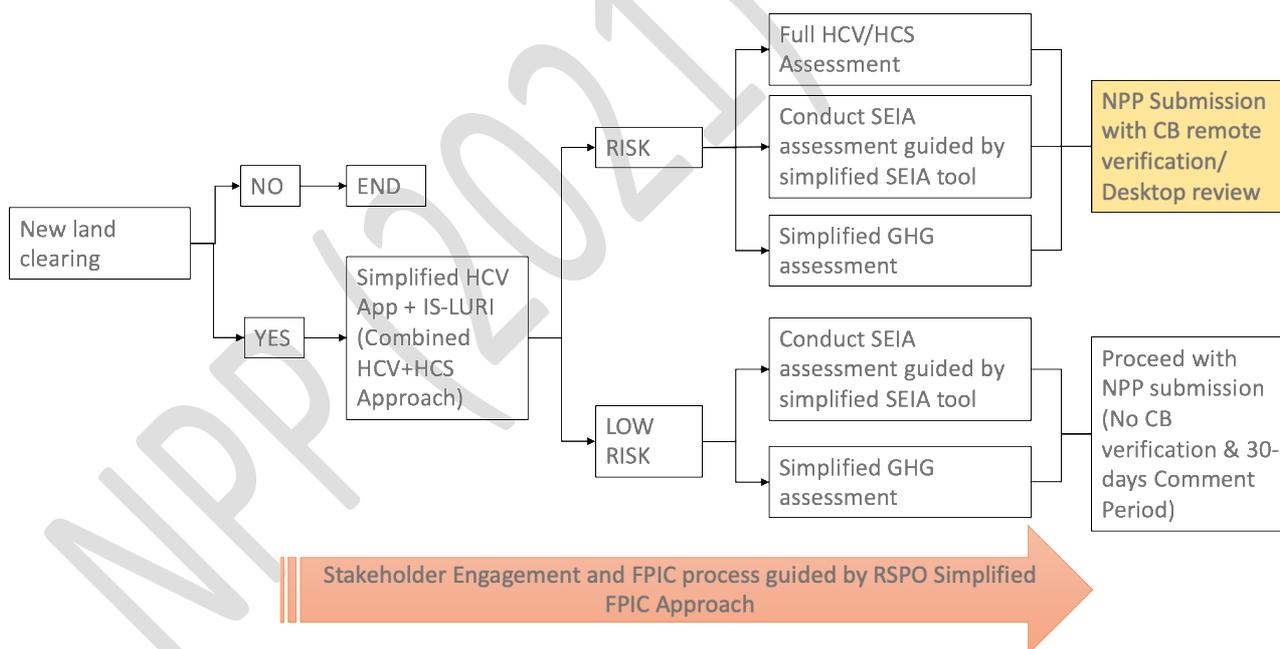
Proposed new development taking place on the following: Land use land cover scenarios at the time of NPP submission	Certification Body (CB) Verification Needed?	30-day Public Comment Period Needed?
Native Vegetation and Natural Ecosystems	Yes	Yes
Abandoned Re-Land Clearing (unmanaged for more than 3 years)	Yes	Yes

1.3 HOW IS NPP IMPLEMENTED BY SMALLHOLDERS?

The NPP is applicable to any proposed new development by smallholders (not pursuing RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard). If a company leads the certification process for groups of smallholders, then the company is responsible for ensuring the NPP is complied with. In the case of Group Certification¹, the Group Manager is responsible for ensuring the NPP is complied with – this includes coordination of assessments, verification by the CB and communication with RSPO Secretariat.

RSPO recognises the need to provide simple and straightforward guidance, as well as cost-effective mechanisms and tools to facilitate compliance of smallholders to NPP. Hence, smallholders are to apply Risk-Based Approach (refer flowchart below) guided by applicable simplified toolkits for relevant assessments demonstrating compliance to NPP regardless of Land use and land cover scenarios at the time of NPP submission.

Chart 1. NPP applicability on new land clearing by smallholders



¹ Refer to the RSPO system which allows growers to certify their Fresh Fruit Bunches (FFB) through group certification against the RSPO P&C together under a single certificate. Details as outlined in RSPO Management System Requirements for Group Certification of FFB Production.

1.3.1 NPP SUBMISSION BY SMALLHOLDERS: LOW RISK

The IS-LURI enables smallholder to proceed with relevant NPP submission to RSPO Secretariat in areas identified as 'Low Risk' with no CB verification and no 30-day comment period needed. Final submission shall contain the following:

- NPP notification statement (Template 1 of this document)
- Shapefiles of legal boundary, NPP area and (if presence) HCS, HCV, peatlands, riparian buffer, steep terrain, marginal and fragile soil
- Full assessment reports (SEIA, HCV+IS-LURI, soil suitability & topographic, GHG) guided by relevant simplified toolkits
- Relevant legal document verifying legal use rights
- Relevant document relating to stakeholder engagement and FPIC processes
- Full management plan

Such submission will be direct to RSPO Secretariat @nppsubmission@rspo.org by growers. RSPO Secretariat shall: (i) checked to ensure completeness of the NPP submission (complete set of reports required and complete information and data provided as per required) and (ii) conducted desktop verification to ensure all NPP requirements (assessments and processes) are met. Any gaps identified by RSPO Secretariat are to be communicated directly to grower.

1.3.2 NPP SUBMISSION BY SMALLHOLDERS: RISK

'Risk' area identified through IS-LURI will required full HCV/HCSA assessment (refer to Section 2.2 of this document) and NPP submission is to be verified by CB (remotely and/or through desktop review). No 30-day comment period is needed for these NPP submissions

Upon CB verification that all NPP requirements have been met, the CB shall submit the final NPP report together with the CB's verification statement to the RSPO Secretariat. The final NPP report shall contain:

- NPP notification statement (Template 1 of this document)
- Summary of assessment reports (Template 2 of this document)
- Summary of management plans (Template 3 of this document)
- Shapefiles of legal boundary, NPP area and (if presence) HCS, HCV, peatlands, riparian buffer, steep terrain, marginal and fragile soil

Upon verification that all NPP requirements have been complied with, the CB shall submit the final NPP reports to RSPO Secretariat @nppsubmission@rspo.org. RSPO Secretariat shall check to ensure the completeness of the NPP submission (complete set of reports required and complete information and data provided as per template). Any submission gaps identified by RSPO Secretariat are to be communicated to the appointed CB.

1.4 INTEGRATION OF NPP PROCESSES WITH NATIONAL LEGAL PROCESSES

RSPO National Interpretations (NI) will give guidance on how the required assessments can be combined and carried out, taking into account national laws, regulations and procedures. Relevant RSPO NI working groups or taskforces are to be informed and may regroup for discussion on whether the current regulations in the NI are adequate to address NPP matters. Recommendations to the Secretariat on the proposed action if inadequacy is found.

The NPP process can be initiated while any applicable national legal requirements (e.g., AMDAL in Indonesia) are underway. However, NPP submission to RSPO must be based on finalised assessments.

Completion of the NPP does not necessarily mean that land development can commence. All relevant legal requirements must be met before land clearing activities take place. In cases where assessments are legal requirements (e.g., AMDAL in Indonesia), the assessments must have been approved by the relevant authority.

Note:

In the case of Indonesia, the NPP can only be submitted when Ijin Usaha Perkebunan (IUP) and Izin Pelepasan Kawasan Hutan (IPHK) have been obtained.

1.5 SANCTIONS

Any new oil palm plantings and associated development took place (including land preparation commenced, new oil palm plantings in progress) after 1 January 2010 and after the join-date as an RSPO member, without an approved NPP, sanctions will be applied accordingly. Sanctioned growers will not be able to trade FFB produced as Certified FFB for the first 3 years of certification. Sanction areas are defined as areas of production that have been excluded from certified production, which ONLY applied to areas developed without an approved NPP submission.

At the time of P&C audit, responsible CB shall ensure NPP is implemented accordingly. Any noncompliance to NPP shall be reported in the relevant Certification Assessment Public Summary Report stating the areas sanctioned and year(s) sanction applied; and ensure that the production is excluded from the certified volume claimed. NPP sanction applied on top of (if any) noncompliance to RSPO P&C certification requirements.

Npp (2021) DRAFT

2. ASSESSMENTS & MANAGEMENT PLAN REQUIREMENTS

In ensuring proposed new development is done through a process of identifying and understanding the environmental and social values present and how to protect, monitor and manage those values based on RSPO standards in a responsible and sustainable manner, it requires the followings comprehensive and participatory assessments and a management plan for inclusion in the NPP submission:

- Social and Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA);
- High Conservation Value (HCV) and High Carbon Stock (HCS) assessment (hereinafter refer to as HCV/HCSA assessment);
- Stakeholder Engagement and FPIC process;
- Soil suitability and topographic survey;
- Greenhouse Gas (GHG) assessment; and
- Land use change analysis (Mapping Land Cover Land Use)
- NPP Management plan*

Assessments that need to be done should at minimum cover the areas of proposed new development (NPP areas only). However, if there is a specific requirement to fulfil the assessment based on applicable laws, regulations, methodology or approach (i.e. assessment based on wider landscape approach; refer to respective assessment requirements outlined in this section) it shall be followed accordingly.

The requirement for these assessments and management plan applies to all proposed developments, regardless of size; and it also applies to smallholders.

The following subsections provide detailed guidance and information on the assessments and management plan requirements. It is the responsibility of the grower to select and appoint competent assessors (refer Table 2) as per the requirements outlined below (refer Table 3), except of NPP management plan, *There are no specific requirements on assessor, validity, and it should be developed internally.

Table 2. Guidance for assessments requirements (assessors competency & assessment validity)

	Assessor Competency	Assessment Validity
Social and Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA)	SEIA lead assessor in compliant with national requirements In countries where there is no clear national requirements; a SEIA lead assessors (internal or independent) should have: Conducted at least 3 assessments (either SEIA, HCV or HCS) Expertise with remote sensing and mapping Knowledge on applicable relevant laws and regulations	Assessment can be older than three years at the time of NPP submission, as long as the findings are still valid. Assessment is to be guided following Additional Guidance (Annex 2) for Criteria 3.4 of applicable National Interpretation of RSPO P&C (2018) and/or generic RSPO P&C (2018) for countries without a NI.
HCV/HCSA Assessment	Led by HCVRN ALS Licensed Assessor Standalone HCSA assessment: HCSA registered practitioners affiliated with HCSA registered organisations	HCV/HCSA assessment obtained a 'satisfactory' status by a HCVRN Quality Panel remains valid regardless of the year of the assessment, as long as LUCA doesn't show a difference in land cover. The newest assessment findings overrides the previous report and will be used. Guided by Annex 5 of P&C 2018
FPIC	FPIC is a process. Refer subsection 2.3 for more detailed requirements.	
Soil Suitability & Topographic Survey	The surveyor shall be able to identify all areas of marginal and fragile soils, as well as areas too steep	The survey report can be older than three years at the time of the NPP.

	Assessor Competency	Assessment Validity
	to plant and areas requiring precautionary practices in order to be planted.	
GHG Assessment	The assessment team should consist of assessors with: Knowledge of carbon emission accounting methodologies for above and below ground carbon stocks including peat Experience in verifying land cover maps and/or conducting carbon stock assessment in agriculture and/or forestry sectors Experience and expertise in using remote sensing technology to estimate carbon stocks.	Assessment older than three years at the time of NPP submission should be reviewed and updated to reflect changes on the ground. Assessment is to be conducted in accordance with RSPO GHG Assessment Procedure for New Development, Version 4.
Land cover land use	The assessor must have expertise in interpreting remote sensing imagery.	The assessment must be current at the time of the NPP submission (less than one year old).

Table 3 Guidance for assessments (internal or independent)

	SEIA	HCV/HCSA	FPIC	Soil & Topographic	GHG	Land cover land use
Proposed new development areas (<500ha)	Internal Assessment is allowed. Assessor must meet the competency stated in Table 2 above.					
Proposed new development areas (>500ha)	Independent assessment	Independent assessment	Internal Assessment is allowed. Assessor must meet the competency stated in Table 2 above.			

Note:

Where internal assessments identify significant environmental and/or socially risks, an independent assessment must be undertaken.

2.1 SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SEIA)

RSPO P&C (2018) Criteria 3.4 calls for a comprehensive Social and Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA) to be undertaken prior to new plantings or operations, a social and environmental management and monitoring plan is implemented and regularly updated in ongoing operations.

In most cases, SEIA is governed through national regulations (in certain countries, there may be regulation covering EIA and SIA separately); hence SEIA shall be comprehensive, participatory² and led by an independent consultant compliant with the national requirements contracted directly by the grower. In countries where there is no clear national requirement on SEIA lead assessors, a competent independent lead assessor should have conducted at least 3 relevant assessments, have expertise with remote sensing and mapping and have knowledge of applicable relevant laws and regulations.

An exception is made where the proposed new development takes place on actively managed agricultural land and/or developed areas (Artificial), at the time of NPP submission. Where internal assessments identify significant environmentally or socially sensitive areas or issues, an independent assessment must be undertaken.

Assessments older than three years at the time of NPP submission, must be reviewed and if needed the findings updated to reflect any changes on the ground. Assessment is to be guided following Additional Guidance (Annex 2) for Criteria

² Where it has been identified that there are local communities or groups of people who may be affected/potentially affected by the development, where necessary, these groups of people ought to be included in the SEIA assessments.

3.4 of applicable National Interpretation of RSPO P&C (2018) and/or generic RSPO P&C (2018) for countries without a NI.

2.2 HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE (HCV) AND HIGH CARBON STOCK (HCS) ASSESSMENT (HCV/HCSA)

RSPO P&C (2018) Indicator 7.12.2 states any new land clearing after 15 November 2018 must be preceded by an HCV-HCSA assessment, for the purpose of identification of HCVs, HCS forests and other conservation areas. The output of HCV and HCSA assessments details the identification and locations of areas with both environmental and social values (e.g., HCVs, HCS forests, peat, local people's lands). The assessment(s) serve as the foundation for growers, communities and other stakeholders to proceed with development while conserving these areas identified as having significant values.

When conducting NPP, a grower must complete either of the following:

- Integrated HCV-HCSA assessment
- Standalone ALS HCV and HCSA assessment (refer to RSPO 'Interpretation of Indicator 7.12.2 and Annex 5 document for eligible scenarios)

All assessments must be conducted by licenced assessors (refer Table 2) and shall undergo and/or pass their respective quality review processes, refer the following:

- Integrated HCV-HCSA assessments and standalone HCV assessments shall undergo and obtain a result of 'Satisfactory' in the HCVRN ALS Quality Review. Status of HCV-HCSA assessment can be found on the HCVRN ALS website, <https://hcvnetwork.org/find-a-report/>.
- Standalone HCSA assessments must undergo the HCSA Quality Assurance Process, and the final version of the HCSA assessment public summary (incorporating recommendations for Peer Reviewers) shall be available on the HCSA website, <http://highcarbonstock.org/hcs-approach-quality-review-process/>.

Integrated HCV-HCSA, Standalone HCV and Standalone HCSA include considerations and activities related to FPIC through 'social gates', which require initiation of FPIC activities as a pre-requirement prior to conducting these assessments (refer to HCSA toolkit V2.0 & HCVRN Integrated HCV-HCSA manual for details). It is important for companies to take note of these pre-requirements and ensure they are met prior to initiation of the above assessment(s).

Note:

For Standalone HCSA assessment - The RSPO and HCSA are developing a pass/fail mechanism for standalone HCSA assessments conducted for the purpose of NPP. Until the mechanism has been completed and endorsed by both organisations, the above applies.

The No Deforestation Task Force (NDTF) is developing a document which shall specify how HCV-HCSA assessments are integrated with existing RSPO processes. Until this document is completed and endorsed, the requirements specified within the HCSA toolkit v2.0 and HCVN Integrated HCV-HCSA manual apply.

2.3 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND FPIC PROCESS³

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) has been a central requirement of the RSPO Principles and Criteria since it was adopted in 2005. Respect for the right to FPIC is designed to ensure that RSPO certified sustainable palm oil comes from areas without land conflicts or 'land grabs' and do not involve human rights violations. The general requirement of FPIC is that Members engage in a process that involves discussions, consultations, mapping and consent with communities, prior to any development in the palm oil plantation. RSPO P&C Principle 4, Criterion 4.5, requires that 'No new plantings are established on local peoples' land where it can be demonstrated that there are legal, customary or user rights, without their FPIC. This is dealt with through a documented system that enables these and other stakeholders to express their views through their representative institutions'⁴. The NPP is meant to be participatory, with meaningful involvement of the directly affected stakeholders. This is the beginning of the FPIC process whereby local peoples who have legal, customary or user rights to the area, have the right to grant or withhold consent (say 'no') to operations planned on their land.

³ For a detailed guidance please refer to RSPO Free, Prior, Informed Guide for RSPO Members (2021) Revised

⁴ See Tool 1 Flowchart of the FPIC Journey in RSPO Free, Prior, Informed Guide for RSPO Members (2021) Revised

The community engagement and FPIC process should continue during all steps of the NPP process, and local people should have free access to the results of the various assessments, studies and mapping exercises, which will inform their ultimate decision to grant or withhold consent for the planned development. The NPP submission needs to demonstrate the following:

- Documents showing identification and assessment of demonstrable legal, customary and user rights are available;
- FPIC is obtained for oil palm development through a comprehensive process, including, in particular, full respect for their legal and customary rights to the territories, lands and resources via local communities' own representative institutions, with all the relevant information and documents made available, with an option of resourced access to independent advice through a documented, long-term and two-way process of consultation and negotiation;
- Evidence that directly affected local peoples understand their right to say 'no' to operations planned on their lands or to conserve their land as a HCV-HCS area before and during initial discussions, during the stage of information gathering and associated consultations, during negotiations, and up until an agreement with the grower is signed and ratified by these local peoples. Negotiated agreements are non-coercive and entered into voluntarily and carried out prior to new operations;
- To ensure local food and water security, as part of the FPIC process, participatory SEIA and participatory land-use planning with local peoples, the full range of food and water provisioning options are considered. There is transparency of the land allocation process;
- Evidence is available that the grower has communicated to the affected communities and rights holders have had the option to access information and advice that is independent of the grower, concerning the legal, economic, environmental and social implications of the proposed operations on their lands;
- Evidence that the communities (or their representatives) gave consent to the initial planning phases of the operations prior to the issuance of a new concession or land title to the operator;
- New lands will not be acquired for plantations and mills after 15 November 2018 as a result of recent (2005 or later) expropriations in the national interest without consent (eminent domain), except in cases of smallholders benefitting from agrarian reform or anti-drug programmes. (This is applicable for countries that have these issues);
- New lands are not acquired in areas inhabited by communities in voluntary isolation.

It is neither realistic nor desirable that, at the early stage of plantation planning, the FPIC process is deemed to be completed. However, when a grower submits the NPP report to RSPO, it must be established that the minimum building blocks for FPIC should be properly established and the plans should be accepted by the affected stakeholders.

Minimum building blocks for an adequate FPIC process are but not limited to the following:

- There is evidence that growers have been informed by the communities of the composition of their self-selected designated representatives and or representative institutions where land acquisition is planned.
- There is evidence that communities have meaningfully participated⁵ in the elaboration of the SEIA and the HCV-HCSA Assessment.
- The HCV Assessment has clearly recommended which areas need to be managed to maintain and enhance the full range of HCVs, including HCVs 4, 5, and 6.
- There are plans, mutually agreed by the grower and the communities, as represented through their chosen representatives, or directly in broad community meetings, on how land tenure assessments, participatory community mapping, and negotiations over land will be carried out.

2.4 SOIL SUITABILITY & TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY

The soil suitability and topographic information are used for site planning and the results are incorporated into plans and operations. Should the soil suitability and topographic survey identified areas of:

- Marginal and fragile soils, extensive planting⁶ should be avoided, or, if necessary, done in accordance with the soil management plan for best practices.

⁵ Meaningfully participated is where the approach local people assist in formulate the project concept, implement and participate in each step as a decision maker.

⁶ This is situational condition, please refer to National Interpretation but in generic situation, Extensive planting on steep terrain – any individual contiguous planted area on steep terrain (25 degrees) greater than 25 ha within the new

- Riparian buffers are not to be planted.
- Steep terrains (>25 degrees) are not to be planted. Slope limits can decrease or increase justified depending on soil structure and management.
- Peatlands (in regardless of depth) are not to be planted

The definition of peat is provided within the respective country's National Interpretation of RSPO P&C (2018). The generic RSPO definition of peat is to be used for countries with no NI, as follows:

“Histosols (organic soils) are soils with cumulative organic layer(s) comprising more than half of the upper 80cm or 100cm of the soil surface containing 35% or more of organic matter (35% or more Loss on Ignition) or 18% or more organic carbon”

The survey can be conducted by competent assessor (internal or independent) and can be carried out as part of the SEIA, HCV/HCS or separately. The survey report can be older than three years at the time of the NPP, so long as the findings are still valid.

2.5 GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) ASSESSMENT

RSPO P&C (2018) Criteria 7.10 calls for “starting 2014, the carbon stock of the proposed development area and major potential sources of emissions that may result directly from the development are estimated and a plan to minimise them prepared and implemented (following the RSPO GHG Assessment Procedure for New Development). The greenhouse gas (GHG) assessment shall

- identify and estimate carbon stocks and major potential sources of emissions in the proposed development area (also called the carbon stock assessment) and
- include a plan to minimise net GHG emissions as a result of the planned development using the RSPO GHG Assessment Procedure for New Development

The identification of carbon stocks can be combined with the vegetation survey carried out as part of the HCV/HCS assessment.

The GHG assessment can be conducted by the grower internally as long as the assessment team is equipped with relevant competency (refer Table 2). The GHG assessment must be current at the time of the NPP submission, e.g., less than three years old.

2.6 LAND USE CHANGE ANALYSIS (LUCA)

A land use change (LUC) analysis should use historical remote sensing imagery (of land cover) to demonstrate there has been no conversion of primary forest or any area required to maintain or enhance HCVs since November 2005 and HCS from November 2018. This should be carried out in coordination with the HCVHCSA assessment. LUCA can be conducted by the grower or by an independent consultant regardless of size. It is recommended that the LUCA builds on the conclusions of the other environmental studies, in particular the HCV-HCSA assessment.

The dates for LUC analysis should follow the proxy dates as follows:

- Nov 2005 – Nov 2007
- Dec 2007 – Dec 2009
- 1 Jan 2010 – 9 May 2014
- 9 May 2014 – 15 Nov 2018
- 15 Nov 2018 – Current (not more than one year from the date of NPP submission)

In cases where there is too much cloud cover in the satellite image, the grower can choose the next best date that depicts clearer imaging in between the proxy dates above. LUCA can be done by both internal or external parties regardless of size of the development area. The CB would need to verify that those analysis are accurate following those proxy dates.

development area and the total area of planting on steep terrain shall be no more than 1% of a new development area. Extensive planting on fragile soils – total area of planting on fragile soil within a new development should not be greater than 100 ha. Recognising that small growers have fewer options, for the development of 500 ha or less, no more than 20% of the total area should be on fragile soil (excluding peat).

2.7 NPP MANAGEMENT PLAN

It is important that the management plan is comprehensively developed covering the whole proposed new development areas. Findings from the various assessments and the FPIC processes shall be incorporated into the development and operations planning of the proposed new development; and management recommendations from the various assessments and FPIC processes shall be integrated.

The management plan should take consideration of at a minimum but not limited to the following:

- Impact of the development on any established legal and/or customary rights of local peoples which have been identified through the assessments and related FPIC processes.
- Exclude all areas identified through the HCV-HCSA assessment.
- Exclude planting on peatlands and riparian buffers..
- Provide the maintenance and/or enhancement of all identified HCVs, HCS areas, riparian buffers and peatlands that have been agreed through the FPIC process.
- Avoid extensive planting³ on steep terrain and/or marginal and fragile soils and provide for appropriate management of these soils to protect them from adverse impacts.
- Minimise net GHG emissions from the development in ways which take into account the avoidance of land areas with high carbon stocks and/or maximise sequestration options.

For NPP submission, a summary management plan shall indicate at a minimum but not limited to the following:

- Key findings of the various assessments (e.g., potential minor environment and/or social risk requiring mitigation actions; total conservation areas;).
- Key mitigation and monitoring regime.
- Key (agreements with local communities)
- An action plan describing operational actions consequent to the findings of the various assessments, referencing the grower's relevant operational procedures.
- Designation of the management team and responsible person for the implementation.

The management plan should be reviewed and updated if there are significant changes on the development plan and deemed necessary by growers.

3. REPORTING & VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

No land preparation shall commence at this stage.

The grower is responsible to obtain verification from an accredited RSPO CB that the NPP process and the content of the assessments and plan(s) is comprehensive, of professional quality and in compliance with relevant RSPO P&C and with the NPP. The verification process must be led by an RSPO P&C qualified lead auditor assigned by a grower appointed accredited RSPO CB. The requirement of a Lead Auditor is as per stated in the currently effective RSPO Certification System for P&C and RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard (2020).

When carrying out the NPP assessments, the CB must demonstrate that there is no conflict of interest with their client for RSPO certification in keeping with the RSPO certification system requirements - i.e., the SEIA or HCV assessors that developed the implementation plans for NPP cannot conduct verification of the same assessments and plans.

Full assessment reports (SEIA, HCV/HCSA, soil suitability & topographic, GHG) and shapefiles of land cover land use, as well as the summaries of NPP reports and files stated above must be submitted to the selected accredited RSPO CB. The RSPO CB shall undertake a desktop assessment and determine if field verification is needed based on findings of risk assessment. However, for areas nearby the protected areas, HCVs present, HCS forest areas, local people with claims to land and resources, the CB should conduct an on-site verification.

Field verification should preferably be done by the Lead Auditor, but it can also be conducted by a local expert appointed by the CB. However, the responsibility of verification and its recommendation lies with the Lead Auditor. The site verification by the CB would need to ensure compliance with the RSPO P&C. The findings by the CB shall be documented and reported to the RSPO member who will then ensure that all NPP requirements have been met.

The verification process shall include (but is not limited to) the following:

- The accuracy of the proposed development boundaries as per the maps submitted, and that relevant shapefiles are provided;
- The land cover land use at the time of verification reflected the full NPP requirements and are verified complied and process followed (i.e. assessment requirements);
- HCV/HCSA assessment conducted by an ALS licensed assessor and that the report obtain a 'satisfactory' status by the HCV ALS Quality panel review (for applicable NPP)
- The legal ownership or lease of the land tenure;
- The comprehensiveness and quality of all studies carried out through internal assessment;
- SEIA was carried out following national requirements including requirements as per relevant NIs or RSPO P&C;
- Adequate stakeholder engagement and FPIC processes taken place;
- Completeness of information and data as per NPP reporting templates (NPP notification statement, summary assessment reports; summary of management plans)
- Management plan addresses all the identified risks with appropriate management measures minimising negative impacts;
- Comprehensive shapefiles as required;
- Verify any field reports from local experts (if Lead Auditor did not conduct field visits);

Upon verification that all NPP requirements have been met, the CB shall submit the final NPP report together with the CB's verification statement to the RSPO Secretariat. The final NPP report shall contain:

- NPP notification statement (Template 1 of this document)
- Summary of assessment reports (Template 2 of this document)
- Summary of management plans (Template 3 of this document)
- Shapefiles of legal boundary, NPP area and (if presence) HCS, HCV, peatlands, riparian buffer, steep terrain, marginal and fragile soil

Upon verification that all NPP requirements have been complied with, the CB shall submit the final NPP reports to RSPO Secretariat @ nppsubmission@rspo.org. RSPO Secretariat shall check to ensure the completeness of the NPP submission (complete set of reports required and complete information and data provided as per template). Any submission gaps identified by RSPO Secretariat are to be communicated to the appointed CB.

NPP submission must be in English (the official working language of RSPO). Complete NPP submission will proceed to the next step of posting for either 30-day public comment or 30-day notification (refer Section 5 below). RSPO

encourages NPP reports to be prepared in applicable languages to facilitate engagement and collaborations. RSPO shall publish the English version, alongside with all other language versions on the RSPO website.

Note:

Full shapefiles are required, which include files like shp. shx. dbf. prj. The shapefiles must be in the WGS84 coordinate system.

In cases where there is a limitation of capability in GIS software, the grower can request assistance from the RSPO GIS Unit on how to develop such file types. The information will be used as RSPO internal monitoring only and not for public consumption.

At the time of this document is being developed, the Malaysian⁷ and Indonesian⁸ governments have confirmed that there are no legal constraints preventing RSPO from publishing its members' concession maps.

NPP (2021) DRAFT

⁷<https://www.rspo.org/news-and-events/news/rspo-gets-green-light-to-publish-all-oil-palm-members-concession-maps>

⁸ <https://www.rspo.org/news-and-events/announcements/rspo-update-on-legality-of-emaps-publication-in-indonesia>

4. NPP SUBMISSIONS: 30-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT

Complete NPP submissions (verified by CBs) will be posted on the RSPO website for a 30-day public comment period. A confirmation email from RSPO Secretariat will inform the start- and end- date of either commenting or notification period of a NPP submission. Growers are encouraged to inform interested stakeholders (including those consulted during the assessments) in a timely manner when the NPP is up for comment.

The grower shall not commence any land preparation, any new planting or infrastructure development, before the end of the 30-day period and official approval to proceed by the RSPO.

Growers are required to post the NPP notification (both for commenting or notification period) at local notice boards for a period of 30-days. Examples of local notice boards include community hall, district office, local websites, mills, local media (newspapers), etc. Any local notices must ensure it stated clearly the commenting periods (specific start- and end-dates); details of CB and respective auditors; commenters shall make declaration whether protection of identity is required or otherwise, along with justification and comments shall

be sent to nppcomments@rspo.org within the specified periods.

Any comment(s) and/or dispute(s) over the contents of the NPP (the results, processes or procedures of assessment(s) and/or plan(s)) and/or verification statement by the CB, may be received from any party via official letter or electronically through nppcomments@rspo.org. Commenter(s) shall make a declaration whether protection of identity is required or otherwise with justification. Comment(s) and dispute(s) can be sent in respective languages understood by affected stakeholders. All comments and/or dispute(s) shall reach the RSPO Secretariat within the specified 30 days period as announced. No Comment(s) and/or dispute(s) received after the specified 30 days period will be accepted.

On satisfactory completion of the 30-day public comment period with resolution of any comments deemed acceptable by the CB, the RSPO Secretariat will approve the proposed new plantings. The RSPO Secretariat shall notify the CB of the satisfactory completion of NPP with a notice of NPP completion posted on the RSPO website. The New planting and any associated development can then commence subject to applicable legal requirements being met.

4.1 MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION OF NPP COMMENTS RECEIVED

All comments received by the RSPO Secretariat shall be forwarded to the respective CB based within five (5) working days upon receipt. RSPO Secretariat will connect the commenters to the respective CB or growers to engage commenters in resolving the comment(s) and/or dispute raised.

Where commenter requests for anonymity, such request shall be respected provided a relevant justification is provided to the RSPO Secretariat. For comments received from commenters requested for protection of identity, RSPO Secretariat would act as intermediary to resolve the comment(s) and/or dispute raised.

In the event there is a need to waive anonymity, the commenter will be consulted and consent sought before any action is taken to reveal the commenter's identity. Either party (the commenter and/or CB or grower) may request for an independent mediator to stand-into the dispute resolution process, at any stage (cost to be borne by both parties).

RSPO is committed to the safeguarding of individual identities and confidential information shared by the parties. RSPO will respect a party's explicit request for confidentiality and, to the fullest extent of the law, protect the party's right to confidentiality for as long as they choose to engage in this RSPO process and after it has been closed.

It is CB responsibility to ensure comments received are adequately addressed by growers and documented (if any) follow-up actions needed from growers; and/or the mutually agreeable way-forward between the grower and commenter. Once all comments are deemed adequately resolved, the CB shall put forward the decision made to approved the relevant NPP to the RSPO Secretariat. The RSPO Secretariat shall approved the NPP based on CB decision through email confirmation. New planting and any associated development can then commence subject to applicable legal requirements being met.

ANNEX 1. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition	Source
Smallholders	<p>Independent smallholder</p> <p>All smallholder farmers that are not considered to be Scheme Smallholders [see definition for Scheme Smallholders below] are considered Independent Smallholder farmers.</p>	RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard (2019)
	<p>Scheme smallholder</p> <p>Smallholder farmers, landowners or their delegates that do not have the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enforceable decision making power on the operation of the land and production practices; and/or freedom to choose how they utilise their lands, type of crops to plant, and how they manage them (how they organise, manage and finance the land). 	RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard (2019)
Actively managed	<p>Any activities within three (3) years in areas that have diversified farming and forestry practices. The area has created accessibility, vegetation structure, and/or functional activities, such as grazing, mining, timber harvest, fire protection, crop production, conservation, and social functions. This includes to support horticulture, improve habitat for important plant and animal resources, and procure wood resources. The areas can be either managed or owned by RSPO members or non-RSPO members. This includes the areas owned by local communities.</p>	RSPO NPP Revision Subgroup
Developed areas (Artificial)	<p>Areas that have an artificial cover as a result of human activities such as construction (cities, towns, transportation, golf course, warehouse), extraction (open mines and quarries) or waste disposal.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial developments Housing Golf courses Mining Sporting fields Oil and gas onshore areas Warehouse Stores 	RSPO NPP Revision Subgroup
Agricultural land	<p>All ecosystems modified or created by man specifically to grow or raise biological products for human consumption or use. This includes cropland, pasture, orchards, groves, vineyards, nurseries, ornamental horticultural areas, and confined feeding areas.</p>	(https://www.hq.nasa.gov/iwgsdi/Agricultural_Land.html)

Plantation forest	<p>a) Plantation forest is defined as an intensively managed planted forest, with regular spacing, a thinning regime and that at maturity is clear felled.</p> <p>b) Forest that is planted for ecosystem restoration or protection and forest that resembles natural forest at stand maturity are not defined as plantation forest.</p>	Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2020.
Land clearing	Conversion of land from one land use to another. Clearing actively managed oil palm plantations to replant oil palm is not considered land clearing. Within existing certified units, clearing of less than 10 ha is not considered new land clearing.	RSPO P&C (2018)
New planting	New planting planned or proposed planting on land not previously cultivated with oil palm.	RSPO P&C (2018)
Associated development	Development includes establishing mills, kernel crushers, nurseries, housing/camps and offices, roads/tracks, drainage, effluent treatment plants, fruit collection centres, terracing, earthworks, scheme smallholdings/outgrower plots and any other development relevant to the operations of the new oil palm development.	RSPO NPP (2015)
Group manager	Person, group of people or organisation responsible for running the internal control system and managing the group. This can be a mill, an organisation or an individual.	RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard (2019)
Fragile soil	A soil that is susceptible to degradation (reduction in fertility) when disturbed. A soil is particularly fragile if the degradation rapidly leads to an unacceptably low level of fertility or if it is irreversible using economically feasible management inputs. (See also definition for ‘marginal soil’).	RSPO P&C (2018)
Marginal soil	A soil that is unlikely to produce acceptable economic returns for the proposed crop at reasonable projections of crop value and costs of amelioration. Degraded soils are not marginal soils if their amelioration and resulting productivity is cost effective. (See also definition for ‘fragile soil’.)	RSPO P&C (2018)
Natural vegetation	Any non-agricultural, native, or naturalised plant species (including exotic invasive species) that grows at a site in response to planting or from existing seeds or other propagules. Areas that have flora that grow naturally without human aid and have been left undisturbed by humans for a long time. The area has not actively intervened to intervene with its natural accumulation of biomass and species success.	National Geographic
Land Use Risk Identification (LURI)	This is an activity conducted by RSPO members to identify “low risk” and “risk areas”, in conjunction with the “Interpretation of the 2018 RSPO Principles and Criteria: Indicator 7.12.2 and Annex 5” document (approved by the RSPO BOG on 12 June 2019).	RSPO No Deforestation Task Force
Low-risk areas	Areas identified as bare land, pasture, infrastructure, agriculture, and monocrop tree plantations that have not been abandoned for more than three (3) years through the Land Use Risk Identification	RSPO No Deforestation Task Force

Risk areas	Areas that are not identified as 'low risk' areas through the Land Use Risk Identification (LURI) as per 7.12.2 and Annex 5 interpretation document.	RSPO No Deforestation Task Force
Local people	Local people here are indigenous peoples, local communities, and other land users - This must be guided by legal framework.	RSPO FPIC Guidance 2015

What is a 'community' and who are 'indigenous peoples'?

The term 'local communities' can be used to refer to a community in a particular place where local people share common concern around local facilities, services and environment and which may at times depart from traditional or State definitions. Generally, local communities attach particular meaning to land and natural resources as sources of culture, customs, history and identity, and depend on them to sustain their livelihoods, social organisation, culture and traditions, beliefs, environment and ecology. The term 'indigenous peoples', as understood by modern international organisations and legal experts includes priority in time with respect the occupation and use of a specific territory; the voluntary perpetuation of cultural distinctiveness; self-identification, as well as recognition by other groups, or by State authorities, as a distinct collectivity; and an experience of subjugation, exclusion or discrimination, whether or not these conditions persist. Both groups will tend to use and manage land in accordance with customary tenure systems and associated rights, and should therefore be treated as rights-holders over such lands and the natural resources therein, regardless of whether such rights are formal or informal. Note that both groups may also sustain close relationships with incomers and migrants through kinship and inter-marriage, which usually has implications for land use and ownership rights, thus the distinction between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples is best ascertained from the community itself. The RSPO standard refers to both 'indigenous peoples and local communities' and requires the same processes and respect for rights of both groups by members, including notably in relation to respect for the right to give or withhold FPIC. The nature and composition of any particular community is best identified by that community itself through its freely self-chosen representatives. Iterative consultations with communities and carrying out comprehensive and detailed social and tenure surveys are key ways to ascertain what and who a community refers to in any particular context and region.

Sources: RSB 2010; Daes 1996.

Re- land clearing	Land that has been converted/ developed before and under active management	RSPO NPP Revision Subgroup
New Land Clearing	Land that has not been converted/developed previously.	RSPO NPP Revision Subgroup

ANNEX 2. RSPO SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- I. RSPO Certification Systems for P&C and Independent Smallholder Standard (November 2020)
- II. RSPO GHG Assessment Procedure for New Development, Version X
- III. New Development GHG Calculator
- IV. Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Assessment Procedure for New Development (Reference Tool for Smallholder), Version 1 (December 2017)
- V. Interpretation of Indicator 7.12.2 and Annex 5 For the RSPO Principle & Criteria 2018
- VI. Smallholder-Friendly Manual for Social and Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA) Tool , Version 1 (December 2017)
- VII. (Interim Measure) Simplified High Conservation Value (HCV) Approach for Independent Smallholder
- VIII. (Interim Measure) Independent Smallholder - Land Use Risk Identification (IS-LURI)

The latest version of the above take precedence

TEMPLATE 1: RSPO NPP NOTIFICATION STATEMENT

RSPO New Planting Procedure - Notification Statement		
		
RSPO Member Logo		Certification Body Logo
NPP Reference Number: (This should be defined by the submitter)		
RSPO Member's Name: RSPO Membership Number: RSPO Member Joining Date: (Year)		
1	Date of Notification	
2	Name of Subsidiary (if any)	
3	Name of Management Unit (if any)	
4	Location of NPP Area	(Country, State, District, Departments)
5	Address of NPP Area	
6	Business/operation Permit Reference Number and Issuing Authority	
7	Size Information (ha)	New Planting Area
		HCV Area
		HCS Forest Area (not overlapping with HCV)
		Peatland (if any)
		Total Area of Operation as per permit
8	Geospatial Coordinates	Degree Minutes and Seconds
9	Boundary Maps	

Note: Boundary maps that are placed in this section must be at least 300 dpi. Include legends, title, scale normal maps requirements.

10 Areas and Proposed Time for New Planting

Location	Proposed Time Plan for Development		Approx. size of clearing
	Month	Year	

Note: Please add rows if there are more locations planned. This section is an indicative plan by RSPO members on the land clearing that will be conducted. This information is also useful for growers to monitor their own progress and to plan for their Time-bound Plan for certification.

11 Certification Body's Summary of the NPP Verification

12 RSPO Member Acknowledgement
 (Management Unit Name) of (Company Name) acknowledges that this NPP submission had been conducted in accordance with the New Planting Procedure 2019. All assessments had been carried out accordingly and without any prejudice. (Company Name) will ensure all legal requirements are continuously met pre, during and post development of this NPP area. All complaints after this notification period will be dealt as per Section 9 of the NPP 20XX document.

13 Certification Body Confirmation
 The work recorded in this NPP submission by (company name) at this (location) have been verified by (Name of CB Company) and has been carried out in accordance with the requirement of the RSPO New Planting Procedure 20XX for the time being in force and in that respect that this area is considered satisfactory for development of new plantings.

14	Signatures	RSPO Members	Certification Bodies
		Name of Person Responsible	Name of Lead Auditor
		Designation	Designation
		Signature	Signature
		Date	Date

TEMPLATE 2: RSPO NPP SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENTS

RSPO New Planting Procedure - Summary of Assessment				
		RSPO Member Logo	Certification Body Logo	
NPP Reference Number: (This should be defined by the submitter)				
RSPO Member's Name: RSPO Membership Number: RSPO Member Joining Date: (Year)				
1	General Information			
2	Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)			
3	HCV-HCSA Assessment	ALS Satisfactory Date Obtained:		
4	Social and Environment Impact Assessment			
5	GHG for New Development			
6	Soil and Topography Assessment			
7	Land Use Change Analysis (LUCA)			
8	Confirmation by RSPO Member			
9	Date of Completion of Assessment			
	HCV-HCS	SEIA	LUCA	Soil and Topography
				GHG
10	Date of Report			
11	Name of Person Responsible			
12	Designation			
13	Signature			
14	Date			

Npp (2021) DRAFT

TEMPLATE 3: RSPO NPP SUMMARY MANAGEMENT PLAN

RSPO New Planting Procedure - Summary of Management Plans															
	RSPO Member Logo	Certification Body Logo													
NPP Reference Number: (This should be defined by the submitter)															
RSPO Member's Name: RSPO Membership Number: RSPO Member Joining Date: (Year)															
1	FPIC	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 45%;">Objective(s)</th> <th style="width: 30%;">Action(s)</th> <th style="width: 25%;">Timeline</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Objective(s)	Action(s)	Timeline									
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3	SEIA	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 45%;">Objective(s)</th> <th style="width: 30%;">Action(s)</th> <th style="width: 25%;">Timeline</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Objective(s)	Action(s)	Timeline									
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4	Soil and Topography	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Objective(s)</th> <th>Action(s)</th> <th>Timeline</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Objective(s)	Action(s)	Timeline									
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Objective(s)	Action(s)	Timeline														
6	Acceptance of Management Plans Date	Date														
		Name of Person Responsible														
		Designation														
		Signature														

The RSPO is an international non-profit organisation formed in 2004 with the objective to promote the growth and use of sustainable oil palm products through credible global standards and engagement of stakeholders.

www.rspo.org



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RSPO Title of Report/Guidance
Code of the Document

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