

Terms of Reference

RSPO Peatland Working Group (2)

1. Introduction

The first RSPO Peatland Working Group (PLWG) was established in 2010 and operated till late 2012. The objectives of the PLWG were to:

- i. Identify the environmental and social impacts related to oil palm plantations on peatlands.
- ii. Identify best practices for managing oil palm plantations on peat soils in order to minimize GHG emissions and enhance sustainability.
- iii. Identify practical methodologies for assessing and monitoring carbon stocks and key GHG emissions from oil palm plantations established on peat soils; and
- iv. Evaluate options and constraints for the rehabilitation of degraded peatlands.

The PLWG produced a number of specific outputs in 2011 and 2012 including:

- a. A review identifying the main environmental and social impacts related to oil palm plantations on peatlands.
- b. RSPO Manual on Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Existing Oil Palm Cultivation on Peat.
- c. RSPO Manual on Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Management and rehabilitation of Natural Vegetation associated with Oil Palm Cultivation on Peat.
- d. Report on practical methodologies that can be to assess and monitor key GHG emissions that originate from oil palm plantations established on peat soils.

It is now five years after the completion of the work of the RSPO Peatland Working group and much further work has been done on peatlands. It is considered that there is a need to re-establish the PLWG to review and update earlier guidance and contribute on other issues.

Development and management of Oil palm plantations on peatlands remains one of the most significant contributors of GHG emissions from the oil palm sector. It also leads to long term impacts related to land subsidence and flooding and contributes to increased risk of fires and associated smoke haze.

2. Main Purpose

To Update guidance produced by the PLWG (2010-2012) and provide additional guidance in relation to RSPO P&C 2013.

3. Scope of Work

- Monitor trends in oil palm cultivation on peatlands
- Propose refinement related to peatlands in RSPO tools, standards and guidance (PalmGHG, GHG assessment procedure, P&C 2013, NPP, RSPO Next, auditing etc.)
- Review and analyse the experience in implementing RSPO BMPs on peatlands
- Review and update the guidance in the RSPO Manual on Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Existing Oil Palm Cultivation on Peat
- Review and update the guidance in the RSPO Manual on Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Management and rehabilitation of Natural Vegetation

- Oversee development of Guidance on drainability assessments for peatlands
- Develop additional guidance and explore incentive options on rewetting and rehabilitation/conservation in peatlands
- Provide guidance for smallholder cultivation on peat.
- Guidance on regionally appropriate definition and practices
- Develop or guide appropriate outreach and capacity building programmes related to the BMP manuals.

4. Expected Outputs

- i. A review assessing trends in Oil palm cultivation on peat and use of BMPs.
- ii. Updated version of the RSPO Manual on Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Existing Oil Palm Cultivation on Peat.
- iii. Updated version of the RSPO Manual on Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Management and rehabilitation of Natural Vegetation associated with Oil Palm Cultivation on Peat.
- iv. New guidance on drainability assessments for peatlands.
- v. New guidance for smallholder cultivation on peat.
- vi. Outreach and capacity development materials.
- vii. Inputs to other RSPO processes

5. Meeting Frequency

Members of this working group expected to meet once every four to six months.

6. Composition

It is proposed that the group comprises approximately 12 members, comprising mainly specialists in plantation and peatland management proposed primarily from Growers (Indonesia, Malaysia and Rest of the World) and Environmental and Social NGOs. In addition, (as with the first PLWG) some independent peatland experts may be invited to join/ provide inputs.

There will be two Co-Chairs, one each selected from growers and environmental NGOs.

All members should have technical skills in one or more of the following disciplines, peatland assessment and management, peatland restoration, peatland water management, oil palm cultivation on peatland, soil science, agronomics or corporate social responsibility. The working group will rely mainly on the experience of the technical staff of RSPO members. However other research institutions or technical experts may be invited to participate, at the recommendation of the working group members if they bring specific expertise in the disciplines mentioned above.

7. Role of secretariat

Secretariat should support the working group and facilitate interactions with the members and stakeholders. The secretariat will also oversee the preparation of commissioned studies and other work.

8. Active Period

It is proposed that the working group undertakes its work in the period January 2017 to December 2019