







6.6 Factsheet RSPO

This factsheet aims to provide accessible and factual information on the RSPO scheme. This factsheet presents the actual status of the scheme in March 2023. For more detailed information on the system, the reader may visit the website of the certification scheme or contact the scheme owner.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this factsheet is for informational purpose only and cannot be used in replacement of the official RSPO standards and procedures

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Scheme Feature	Description
General	
Name of scheme	Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)
Scheme owner	RSPO is a global, not-for-profit organization with voluntary members. It is managed by a Board of Governors, designated by the General Assembly. In response to the pressing global call for sustainably produced palm oil, the RSPO was formed in 2004 by founding members the World Wildlife Fund, the Malaysian Palm Oil Association (MPOA), Unilever, AAK, and Migros. Since then, they have developed a set of environmental and social criteria that companies must comply with to produce RSPO Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (CSPO). These measures help minimise the negative impact of palm oil production on the local environment, wildlife and communities.
Website	https://rspo.org/
Label provided	<p>There are different sets of RSPO Label packages specifically designed for certified members in accordance with the supply chain models, and one package for the Book and Claim supply chain. 1. Identity Preserved (IP) and Segregated (SG) – “CERTIFIED” RSPO Label package (from a single or different identifiable certified source(s) that is kept separately from ordinary palm oil throughout the supply chain); 2. Mass Balance (MB) – “MIXED” RSPO Label package (from certified sources that is mixed with ordinary palm oil throughout the supply chain); 3.. Book and claim - “CREDITS” RSPO Label package. It is for Manufacturers and retailers that can buy RSPO Credits and RSPO Independent Smallholder Credits from RSPO Certified growers, crushers and independent smallholders</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Identity Preserved (IP) Segregated (SG)</p>  <p>Trademark Licence Number</p>  <p>Identify Preserved (IP) and Segregated (SG) “CERTIFIED” RSPO Label package</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Mass Balance (MB)</p>  <p>Trademark Licence Number</p>  <p>Mass Balance (MB) “MIXED” RSPO Label package</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Credits</p>  <p>Trademark Licence Number</p>  <p>Credits “CREDITS” RSPO Label package</p> </div> </div>
Operational since	RSPO was formally established in 2004, in 2005 P&C pilot was launched
Number of active certificates	RSPO has 3748 certified companies (13.03.2023). Approximately 14% of global palm oil production is certified to the RSPO standard (February 2023)
Standard ownership	RSPO is a private standard
General objective	The objective of RSPO is to promote the growth and use of sustainable palm oil and palm oil products. The vision is to transform markets to make sustainable palm oil the norm, by convening stakeholders from across its different sectors to set and implement the most ambitious standard for sustainability in the industry.
Scope	

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Biomass feedstock coverage	RSPO focuses on oil palm, thus on specific type of feedstock
Sector/Product group coverage	RSPO certified oil palm products can be used in food, feed and fuel or oleochemical products
Supply chain coverage	Coverage of supply chain operators: oil palm growers, palm oil processors, consumer goods manufacturers and repacking and labelling, it does not cover distribution.
Geographic focus of the standard	The RSPO standard has a global focus
Governance, Standard Development and Certification Requirements	
Scheme governance	The RSPO is managed by a Board of Governors (BoG) comprised of 16 members, designated by the General Assembly for 2 years. BoG provides strategic direction to Secretariat and oversees delivery. Secretariat is in charge of the day-to-day running. BoG delegates specific functions to Standing Committees and receives reports. Standing Committees establish and oversee Working Groups and Task Forces where members feed into the decision-making process.
Standard documents	Via RSPO's website a set of standard documents is available e.g., RSPO Certification systems, RSPO Principles and Criteria, RSPO Supply Chain Certification Standard, RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard, RSPO communication and claims
Transparency and accessibility of standard documents	Transparency and accessibility is covered through freely accessible RSPO documents and information about certificate holders, all documents are available in different languages
Multi-stakeholder participation in standard development	RSPO is an independent multi-stakeholder initiative that has been developed and is being continuously improved with the involvement of its stakeholders. It has over 5200 members spread across all regions of the world
Compliance with ISEAL's Standards-Setting, Impacts and Assurance Codes of Good Practice	RSPO is ISEAL Code compliant, ISEAL Code Compliant designates members who have successfully undergone independent evaluations against the ISEAL Codes of Good Practice in Standards-Setting, Assurance and Impacts
Compliance with regional, national, international laws	RSPO requires compliance with local and international laws and regulations. Principle 2. Criterion 2.1 There is compliance with all applicable local, national, and ratified international laws and regulations
Reference to standards and policies	The Principles and Criteria for the production of sustainable Palm oil Annex 3 give an overview of the key international laws and conventions applicable to the production of palm oil, next to this RSPO supports global efforts to tackle deforestation and forest degradation, including those by the EU to ensure that products entering the EU market are not linked to these practices. On 6 December 2022, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU reached a provisional agreement on the proposed Regulation on Deforestation-free products, which will now include a.o. palm oil. New requirements were included in RSPO to ensure the effective contribution of RSPO to halting deforestation
Obligation for certification	Oil palm growers, palm oil processors, consumer goods manufacturers require certification. Traders and distributors themselves do not require certification.
Certification process	The certification process knows 5 Steps: STEP 1: Choose your role in the supply chain: oil palm growers, palm oil processors or traders or consumer goods manufacturers. STEP 2: Become an RSPO Member. STEP 3: Choose your supply chain models. STEP 4: Get certified under the relevant RSPO Standard: RSPO Principles and Criteria (P&C), RSPO Supply Chain Certification (SCC) Standard, RSPO Independent Smallholder (ISH) Standard. STEP 5: Ensure having a valid RSPO PalmTrace license to start trading!
Traceability and Chain of custody	RSPO allows mills, crushers, traders, refiners, manufacturers, and retailers to sell and buy RSPO under one of the four supply chain models: Identity Preserved, Segregated, Mass Balance, Book and Claim. For the purpose of certification, the first three (anyone or a combination) of the models shall be used. RSPO installed a supply chain traceability working group. The objective of this working group is to provide guidance to the Secretariat on optimising the supply chain for uptake of RSPO and traceability requirements.
Verification of compliance	Accredited third party Certification Bodies (CBs) conduct audits to evaluate members' compliance against the RSPO Standards. To ensure that members are competent to undertake credible, consistent audits, the RSPO Certification System requires that only accredited CBs are allowed to provide the RSPO certification services.
Accreditation of Certification Bodies	CBs that offer RSPO certification services are accredited by Assurance Services International (ASI). This is an established accreditation body that has demonstrable expertise in monitoring the performance of CBs globally, through a well-developed accreditation process. The CBs' performance is evaluated and closely monitored by the accreditation body. View the full list of RSPO accredited CBs. Accreditors ensure that CBs are operating in a manner consistent with the intent and requirements of the ISO/IEC 17021-1 with the specific RSPO requirements detailed in the certification standards.

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Training of auditors and staff and qualification and evaluation of competencies	The CB shall identify annual training needs and shall provide access to specific training to ensure its auditors (including freelance) and other personnel involved in certification activities are competent for the functions they perform (from RSPO certification systems document)
Audit process	RSPO certificates are issued following a successful audit during which the Certification Body verifies the System User's compliance with all applicable RSPO requirements.
Frequency of audit	RSPO recertification audit shall be undertaken once in every five years. The CB shall undertake annual surveillance audits during the certificate's validity, and a full recertification audit of compliance shall take place before the end of the five-year period.
Internal audit	RSPO standard requires to perform of each participating site and outsourced companies an internal audit at least annually to determine whether the organisation conforms to the requirements in RSPO standards and effectively implements and maintains the standard requirements within its organisation. The results of the internal audit and all actions taken to correct non-conformities shall be subject to management review at least annually.
Certification claims and labels	Certified RSPO members may use the RSPO logo and claims for relevant communications and documentation following a written application to RSPO for an RSPO Trademark licensee on MyRSPO. The requirements for all RSPO members when making any communication about RSPO certified products is provided in the RSPO Rules on Market Communications and Claims document
Sanctions, non-conformities and suspension	In the RSPO standard sanctions and deadlines for non-conformities exist: All major non-compliances shall be addressed to the satisfaction of the CB before certification is granted. Major non-compliances raised during surveillance and recertification audits shall be closed successfully within 90 days after the Main Assessment and 30 days after the annual surveillance audits, or the certificate shall be suspended, and subsequently withdrawn if the major non-compliances are not addressed within an agreed timeframe as set between CB and RSPO member, not longer than six (6) months from the last day of audit
Complaint and appeal mechanisms	The RSPO standard has a complaint and appeal procedure in place to handle and address complaints against RSPO Members in a fair, transparent and impartial process. The complaint and appeal procedure is not intended as a replacement for legal requirements and mechanisms in force. Additionally, CBs shall make available procedures for handling of complaints and grievances on its website. This shall include complaints against the certified organisation, the certification decision or the CB itself.
Guarantee smallholder inclusiveness of the standard	Under RSPO Certification, smallholders can grow oil palm independently, as part of an Independent Smallholder Group or as part of a Smallholder Scheme. To include more smallholders and to reflect their unique circumstances and needs, RSPO Independent Smallholder (ISH) Standard was developed exclusively for independent smallholders, this standard strikes a balance between promoting greater smallholder inclusion and protecting the core sustainability requirements. Additionally, Principle 5 concerns smallholder inclusion.
Promote continuous improvement	The RSPO standards has a: a. five year review process b. differentiates between major and minor criteria and immediate compliance and compliance within one year c. continuous improvement is part of impact area prosperity and included as a major point in Criteria 3.2
Assurance of quality	RSPO makes reference to ISO 9001 QMS (Management documents are documented information and evidence to interact with the RSPO P&C. It shall be in the form of manual, working procedures, report and records that subject to be audited and reviewed periodically), There is also a strong focus on record keeping
Impact assessment	RSPO has a mission to monitor and evaluate the economic, environmental and social impacts of the uptake of certified sustainable palm oil in the market. RSPO continuously monitors the impact of their work and reports in impact reports. RSPO's impact report 2022 is published and publicly available. It includes impact on human rights, smallholders, protection and restoring nature, preventing fire, limiting climate change, advancing certification, transforming markets
Risk management	In the RSPO certification system risk assessments are part of the standards, especially in relation to health and safety. The RSPO Risk Unit is responsible for managing, monitoring and assessing risks identified by the RSPO Secretariat in relation to RSPO Members.
Cost of certification	An up-to-date overview of the fee structure can be obtained from https://rspo.org/as-an-organisation/marketplace/fees/ . Additional costs occur for the audit, charged by the CB.
Sustainability Principles and Criteria	
Reference Document	The central sustainability requirements for RSPO are described in the document "RSPO Principle and Criteria" and "RSPO supply chain certification standards". Next to these standards there are various specific standards and interpretations available including an extensive standard for smallholder certification.

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Major Must and Minor Must	The RSPO standard differentiates between critical (C) indicators and other indicators. Indicators marked with (C) indicate Critical and any non-compliance against this indicator (i.e. indicator marked as (C)) shall be graded as Major non-compliance. Non-compliance against indicators without marking with (C) shall be graded as Minor non-compliance.
Environmental	
Reduce GHG emissions	Minimising GHG emissions is covered by critical indicators: 1. GHG emissions are identified and assessed for the unit of certification. Plans to reduce or minimize them are implemented, monitored through the Palm GHG calculator and publicly reported. 2. 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 minimize them prepared and implemented (following the RSPO GHG Assessment Procedure for New Development). Principle 7, Indicator 7.10.1 and 7.10.2
Protection of land with high carbon stock	Preservation of high carbon stock is covered by critical indicators: Land clearing does not cause deforestation or damage any area required to protect or enhance High Conservation Values (HCVs) or High Carbon Stock (HCS) forest. HCVs and HCS forests in the managed area are identified and protected or enhanced Principle 7, Criteria 7.12, Indicators 7.12.1, 7.12.2 and 7.12.4
Protection of peatland	Preservation of peatland is covered by critical indicators: No new planting on peat, regardless of depth after 15 November 2018 and all peatlands are managed responsibly. Principle 7, Criteria 7.7
Promote sustainable forest management	n/a
Protection of land with a high biodiversity value	Preservation of high biodiversity values is covered by critical indicators: Land clearing does not cause deforestation or damage any area required to protect or enhance High Conservation Values (HCVs) or High Carbon Stock (HCS) forest. HCVs and HCS forests in the managed area are identified and protected or enhanced Principle 7, Criteria 7.12, Indicators 7.12.1, 7.12.2 and 7.12.4
Restoration, preservation and strengthening of biodiversity	Measures to enhance biodiversity covered within the critical criteria: An integrated management plan to protect and/or enhance HCVs, HCS forests, peatland and other conservation areas is developed, implemented and adapted where necessary, and contains monitoring requirements. Principle 7, Criteria 7.12.4
Sustainable use of water	Requirement of a water management plan. Water criteria covered with principle: Practices maintain the quality and availability of surface and groundwater. Criteria 7.8. The criteria contained are mostly non-critical
Maintaining and enhancing water quality	Requirement of a water management plan. Water criteria covered with principle: Practices maintain the quality and availability of surface and groundwater. Criteria 7.8. The criteria contained are mostly non-critical
Maintaining and enhancing soil quality and productivity	Soil quality related criteria: 7.4 soil fertility, 7.5 soil erosion, 7.6 soil surveys. The criteria contained are mostly non-critical. Soil suitability maps or soil surveys should be done by independent experts.
Soil quality consideration for use of residual flows	n/a
Prohibition on the use of hazardous/toxic chemicals	Covered by Criteria 7.2, Indicator 7.2.5 Pesticides that are categorised as World Health Organisation Class 1A or 1B, or that are listed by the Stockholm or Rotterdam Conventions, and paraquat, are not used, unless in exceptional circumstances, as validated by a due diligence process, or when authorised by government authorities for pest outbreaks.
Implement best practices for the use of (agro)chemicals	Covered by Criteria 7.1 Pests, diseases, weeds and invasive introduced species are effectively managed using appropriate Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques 7.2 Pesticides are used in ways that do not endanger health of workers, families, communities or the environment
Restrict air pollution, promote good air quality	Various requirements included: Criteria 3.4 Part of SEIA assessment of activities with impact on air quality; Indicator 7.10.3 Other (non-GHG) significant pollutants are identified and plans to reduce or minimise them implemented and monitored; Indicator 7.11.1 Land for new plantings or replanting is not prepared by burning
Limit the risk of Indirect Land Use Change (ILUC)	In SEIA definition indirect effects are mentioned, no explicit criteria exist on this. "This process incorporates relevant environmental and social data, as well as stakeholder consultations, in order to identify potential impacts (both direct and indirect) and to determine whether these impacts can be satisfactorily addressed, in which case the proponent also defines specific actions to minimise and mitigate potential negative impacts"
Circularity	
Promote waste reduction and responsible waste management	These aspects are included in the standard via the request for: a waste management plan, proper disposal of waste material, the prohibition of open fire for waste disposal. Criteria 7.3
Raw material efficiency	Part of the waste management plan is improving the efficiency of resource utilisation and recycling potential wastes as nutrients or converting them into value-added products. Criteria 7.3

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Efficient use of energy	This aspect is covered in the RSPO standard. A plan for improving efficiency of the use of fossil fuels and to optimise renewable energy has to be in place, monitored and reported. Criteria 7.9
Promote use of renewable sources	This aspect is covered in the RSPO standard. A plan for improving efficiency of the use of fossil fuels and to optimise renewable energy has to be in place, monitored and reported. Criteria 7.9
Promote material circularity	n/a
Social	
Compliance with labour rights	RSPO requires compliance to all labour rights aspects as covered by Principle 6 Protect workers' rights and ensure safe and decent working conditions. a) no forced labour Criteria 2.2, 6.6. b) no child labor Criteria 6.4 c) freedom for association and collective bargaining Criteria 6.3, d) fair salary Criteria 6.2, e) equal opportunities, no form of discrimination Criteria 6.1, and f) grievance mechanism in place Criteria 6.5
Respect wellbeing of workers	RSPO Principle 6 specifically covers wellbeing of the workers. a) occupational health and safety Criteria 3.6 and 6.7, b) no harassment Criteria 6.5, c) training Criteria 3.7, d) employment contracts Criteria 2.2, 6.2 e) working times Criteria 6.2
Respect property and usage rights	Respect of land use rights is covered fully in RSPO Criteria 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8
Respect wellbeing of the local population	Promotion of the wellbeing of the local community is guaranteed through Criteria 4.3 local sustainable development which covers access to health, quality education, clean water and sanitation; Criteria 4.2 system for complaints and grievances; Criteria 7.2 consideration of health of communities; Criteria 7.12 development should be proportional to the needs of the local community
Food security	RSPO includes this requirement by a) An assessment that should be made including the impact on all dimensions of food and water security including the right to adequate food, and monitoring food and water security for affected communities Criteria 3.4; b) The unit of certification should support the implementation of existing national strategies with regard to food and water security, and not contradict them by any of its business activities. Criteria 4.5; c) Support/enhance/secure food and water security as part of Criteria 4.3.
Economic	
Financial and economic viability	RSPO covers this by the request that top management should be able to demonstrate attention to economic and financial viability through long-term management planning Criteria 3.1 and reviews of the economic performance Criteria 3.2.
Fair business practices, Integrity	RSPO covers this by the requirement for fair conduct of business and a prohibition of all forms of corruption, bribery and fraudulent use of funds and resources Criteria 1.2
Promote local development, Inclusive economic growth	RSPO covers this through Criteria 4.3 as the certification should contribute to local sustainable development which covers: Reduction of poverty and Where candidates for employment are of equal merit, giving preference to members of local communities.
Use of knowledge and technology	This aspect is not explicitly covered in the RSPO documents. However, can be implicitly covered in the requirement of a plan (monitored and reported) for improving efficiency of the use of fossil fuels and to optimise renewable energy is in place. Criteria 7.9
Fair trade and market practices	Covered by RSPO by the requirement that the unit of certification commits to ethical conduct in all business operations and transactions Principle 1.2 and with requirement for collaboration with smallholders in fair pricing and transparent contracts Criteria 5.1.
Risk assessment and management	RSPO requires an implemented management plan for the unit of certification that aims to achieve long-term economic and financial viability. Criteria 3.2. Risk assessment is not explicitly written.

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Sources:

- RSPO website <https://rspo.org> (last visited: 22 March 2023)
- RSPO P&C Metrics Template https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Frspo.org%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2FRSPO_PC_Metrics_Template_version_2.1_.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK
- <https://rspo.org/resources/?category=2019-rspo-independent-smallholder-ish-standard>
- [RSPO Certification Systems Document - November 2020-ENG-1.pdf](#)

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- <https://rspo.org/wp-content/uploads/rspo-principles-criteria-for-production-of-sustainable-palm-oil-2018revised-01-february-2020-with-updated-supply-chain-requirements-for-mills.pdf>
- <https://rspo.org/wp-content/uploads/RSPO-Impact-Report-2022.pdf>