



Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)
VS
Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO)

A comparison based on WWF's Certification Assessment
Tool (CAT)

Acknowledgements

Images

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Author:

Benjamin Loh

With contributions from:

Denise Westerhout

Shajaratuldur Hashim

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For further information, please email my.sustainability@wwf.org.my

Illustrator:

Tahirah Mohamed

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Foreword

From MSPO to RSPO

As a national certification scheme, WWF-Malaysia recognises that there is a need to strengthen, improve, and enhance the Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO) standard and move towards greater robustness and accountability within its application. As such, WWF-Malaysia does not currently endorse the MSPO certification scheme.

WWF-Malaysia does, however, recognise MSPO as a potential starting point to achieve basic sustainability in the Malaysian Palm Oil Industry. Once MSPO certified, producers should aim towards a time-bound goal and commitment towards continues improvement and eventually towards Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) certification and RSPO NEXT certification.

WWF-Malaysia will continue to advocate for transparent and effective multi-stakeholder consultative process to strengthen the MSPO standards. Currently WWF-Malaysia is participating in two multi-stakeholder committees including the National Steering Committee and Technical Working Committee (for standards).

RSPO and Beyond

WWF-Malaysia recognises that RSPO is currently the only credible, independent, international, and multi stakeholder standard and certification scheme with the capacity to continue the supply of certified sustainable palm oil to the global market. However, WWF-Malaysia also recognises that RSPO should constantly strive to improve its governance. Continuous efforts are also needed to improve the standards, such as through reviews of RSPO Principles, Criteria and Indicators, as well as the systems and controls to ensure that RSPO members apply the standards and improve their operations.

For stakeholders that are unable to comply with RSPO certification requirements, WWF-Malaysia will promote other forms of sustainable practices such as Best Management Practices (BMP) and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). This can be a stepping-stone for greater progress, and all stakeholders of the RSPO are encouraged to strive towards greater improvement of sustainability with an eventual time-bound goal and commitment towards achieving RSPO NEXT certification. Furthermore, stakeholders that have achieved RSPO Certification are encouraged to commit to a time-bound plan towards a fully “segregated” and eventually, “identity preserved” supply chain.

WWF-Malaysia will continue to support and empower the continued improvement of the RSPO. Stakeholders are also encouraged to adopt the principles of RSPO NEXT as a continuous improvement effort towards long term sustainability goals, and this requires particular attention at a time when landscape and jurisdictional approaches to certified sustainable production are being developed.

Introduction to Certification Assessment Tool (CAT)

What is a Certification Assessment Tool(CAT)?

The CAT is a formalised methodology to evaluate and compare standards and certification schemes. It assesses standard requirements and a scheme's governance, rules and procedures. The outcome is a better understanding of a certification scheme's strengths and weaknesses. The CAT was developed by WWF to assess which certification schemes are best equipped to achieve conservation goals and objectives: i.e. which certification schemes are likely to deliver the best social and environmental impacts at scale. The list of criteria included in CAT is a list based on WWF requirements and ambitions.

The CAT is solely based on the study of documents, thus it cannot directly assess implementation of better production practices and the resulting reduction of negative social and environmental impacts in practice. However, the indicators to assess a standard's system strengths can be seen as proxies for likelihood of field level implementation of a scheme's requirements.

Who conducts the CAT?

The CAT is applied on standards by independent assessors that are not affiliated with WWF nor the organisation(s) that own/are members of the standard that is being assessed.

Why apply the CAT on RSPO and MSPO?

Numerous certification schemes with different intentions, credibility and focus areas create confusion and make it difficult to assess which scheme to choose to achieve a specific goal. At WWF, we measure certification schemes by their ability to accomplish positive social and environmental impacts measurably on the ground and with surrounding communities. For WWF, "impact" means impact at scale: create change at a level ambitious enough to make a real and lasting difference for the better, achievable by most of the industry. Niche certification schemes that recognise the very best practices are important, but cannot provide a pathway for the bulk of production to set a new "normal" – a widely adopted, less destructive and less wasteful way of growing and harvesting commodities.

As such, the CAT is applied on the RSPO and MSPO standards in an effort to assess its strengths in fostering positive social and environmental impact on the ground en masse by most of the industry, if it is successfully implemented. The CAT results also provide scheme owners with critical feedback that may aid in further improvement/development of the standard, particularly in environmental and social aspects.

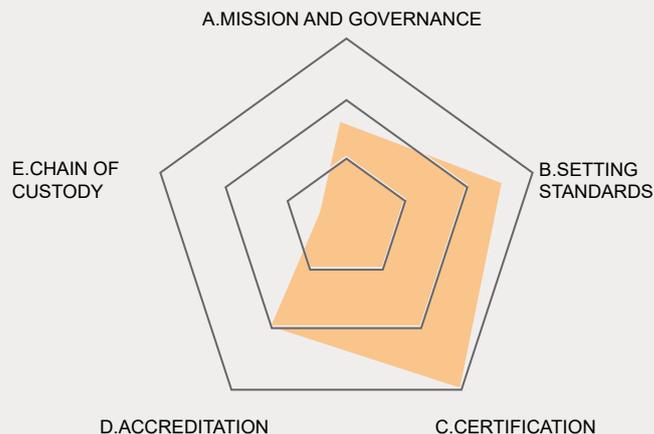
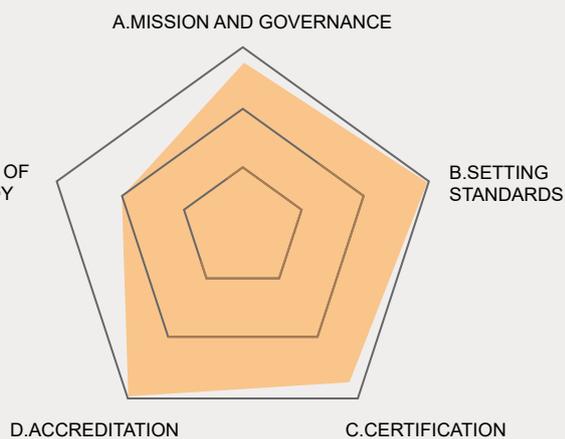


Overview of Results

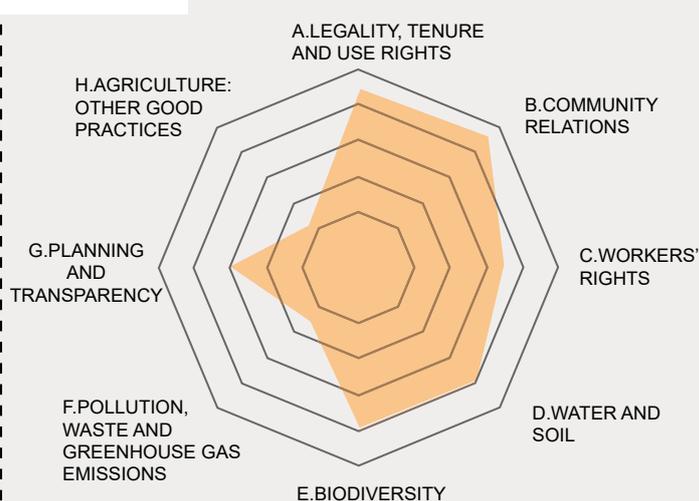
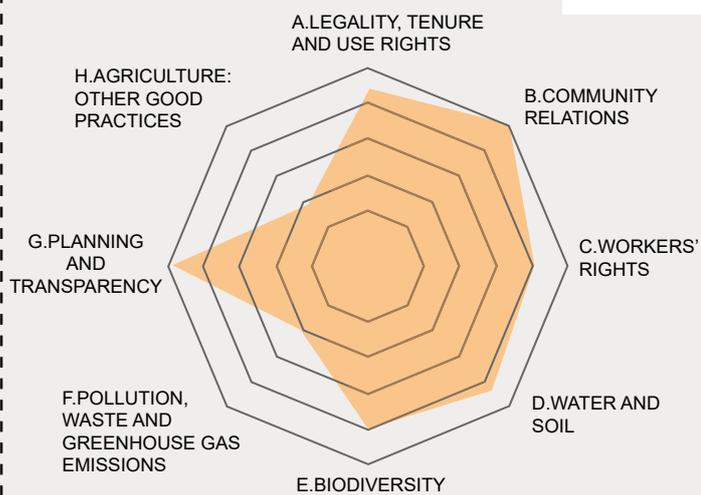
RSPO

MSPO

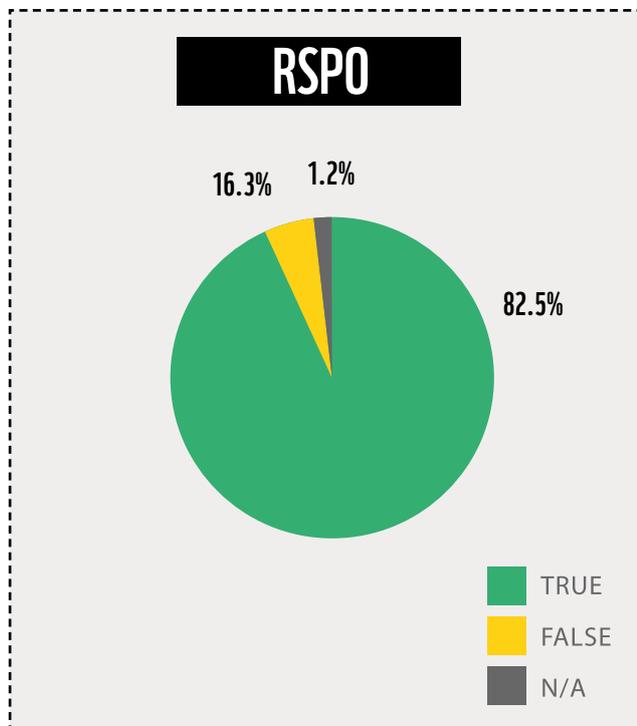
Section 1: Scheme



Section 2: Standard

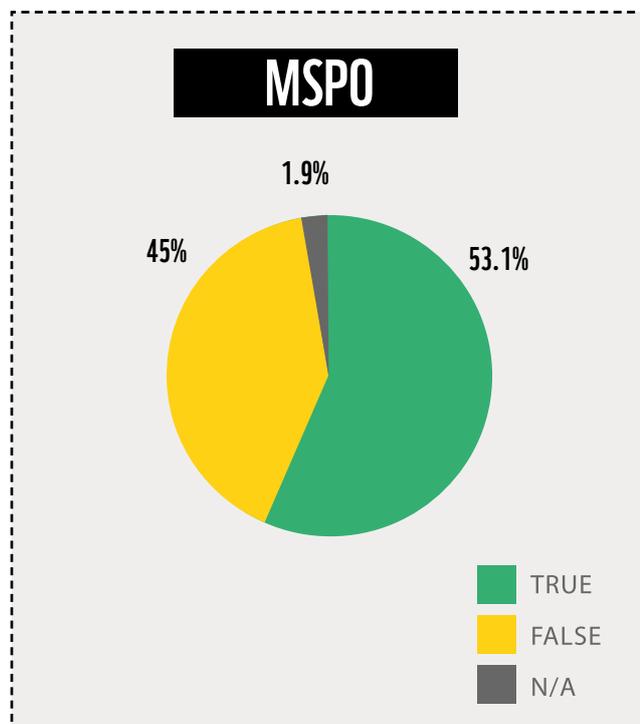


Performance on All Questions



All data on RSPO are taken as of November 2016

All data on MSPO are taken as of May 2017



Scoring Overview for Section 1 & 2

	RSPO	MSPO
Total Number of Questions	160*	160*
True	132	85
False	26	72
N/A	2	3
OVERALL SCORE	%TRUE	
Total Score	84%	54%
System Strength and Governance Subsection	89%	41%
Environmental and Social Strength Subsection	78%	68%

Section 1: Scheme

SECTION 1 BREAKDOWN	%TRUE	
SCHEME : TOTAL	89%	41%
A. Mission and Governance	90%	30%
B. Setting Standards	100%	50%
C. Certification	95%	60%
D. Accreditation	100%	40%
E. Chain of Custody	40%	10%

Section 2: Standard

SECTION II BREAKDOWN	%TRUE	
Standard: Total	78%	68%
A. Legality, Tenure and Use Rights	90%	90%
B. Community Relations	100%	90%
C. Workers' Rights	80%	70%
D. Water and Soil	90%	80%
E. Biodiversity	80%	80%
F. Pollution, Waste and Greenhouse Gas Emissions	40%	33%
G. Planning and Transparency	100%	60%
H. Agriculture: Other Good practice	38%	25%

*CAT does not include questions answered N/A.

RSPO vs MSPO (based on Section 1: Scheme)

*SUPERSCRIPTED NUMBERS INDICATE THE QUESTION NUMBERS IN CAT

Mission and Governance

Under ‘Mission and Governance’, we compare and find that RSPO is a full member of ISEAL while MSPO is not a member of ISEAL. Hence, the compliance of the MSPO to any section of the ISEAL Impact Code is completely voluntary and not bound by any commitment* to ISEAL. ^(3,27,38,61)

While it is recommended that MSPO pursues full membership in the long run, the RSPO standard, which is fully compliant to the ISEAL Impact Code, already exists. Approximately 40% of Malaysian palm oil producers are smallholders. Full-compliance to the six High Conservation Values (HCVs) of ISEAL may be over-ambitious for such a make-up of producers, but is completely viable for large plantations and organised smallholders. As such, it would be beneficial if parts 1, 3, and 4 of the 4-part MSPO standard could be amended to include such compliance to HCVs, leaving part 2 (for independent smallholders) aside for long-term improvements toward full-compliance.

We also find that RSPO’s code of conduct requires that not all members of RSPO are economic, which is also not a requirement of MSPO⁷. Unlike RSPO, the highest governance decision-making forum of MSPO does not require the participation of economic, social and environmental representatives¹⁵. Further, changes to core normative document does not require voting by the scheme members or participants of the MSPO standard, but is required by the RSPO standard¹⁶. MSPO does not state that its executive (Secretariat) functions are overseen by a Board of Directors/ Trustees composed of individuals mandated by voting among scheme members; a requirement fulfilled by RSPO¹⁷.

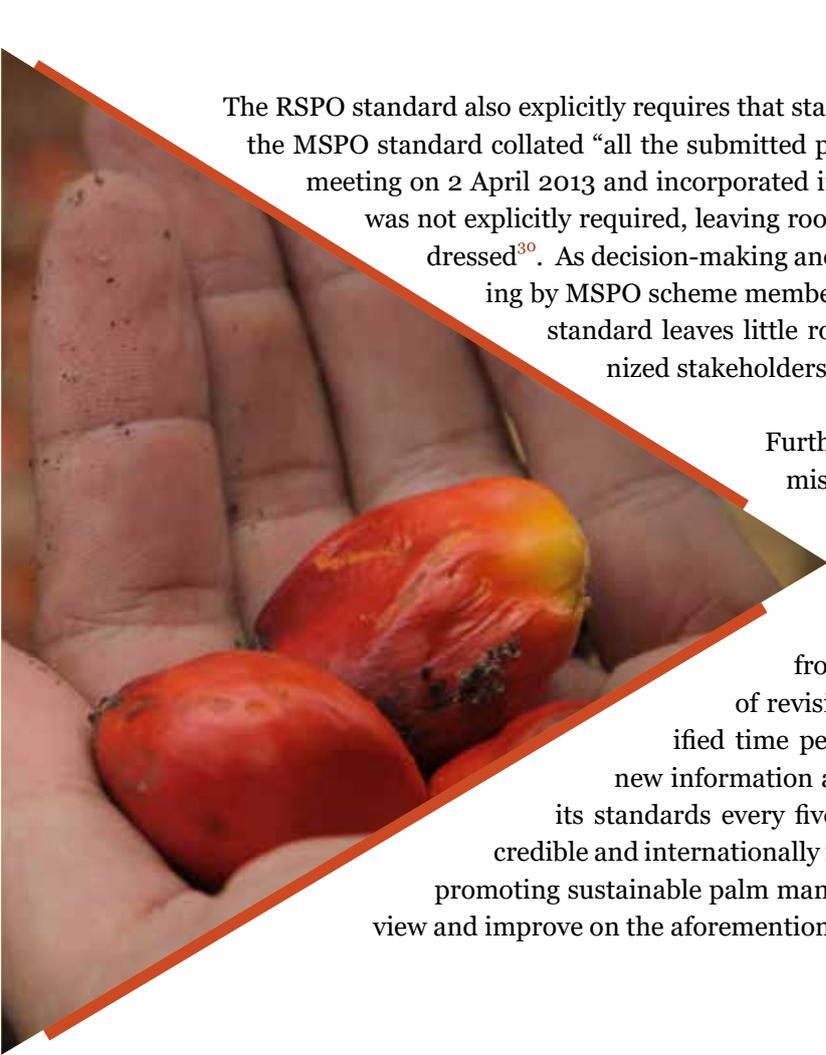


The RSPO standard provides that its Complaints Panel has 10 working days from the time of briefing about a complaint when a breach against members occur for it to decide on its legitimacy and next course of actions. MSPO has clear time bound procedures in place to handle complaints against certification bodies, but not none were provided for MPOB or MPOCC¹⁹. To summarise, the power balance in the MSPO accreditation system seems too skewed to the accreditation board (ie. MPOCC & MPOB), which remains largely autonomous and unaffected by the input or complaints of other stakeholders. If the MSPO standard is to remain focused on its promotion of sustainable practices in palm oil production, balancing out power distribution to each stakeholder would be indispensable, as valuable critical inputs from experts of each sector contributes to the improvement of the overall industry and stakeholders, instead of the interests of a select few.

Setting Standards

In the setting of standards, it is imperative that the concerns of stakeholders from different sectors are heard and appropriately addressed. Organisations are free to join RSPO as members for a fee. As changes to core normative document requires voting by the scheme’s Ordinary members for the RSPO standard, recognised stakeholders are not held back from meaningful participation. The MSPO standard was developed by “two committees facilitated by the Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB) as the Standards Writing Organisation (SWO). Both committees are made up of representatives from various palm oil interest groups”.

The standards were drafted by the Technical Working Committee, which were submitted to the National Committee for finalisation and approval before being “further vetted by the Technical Committee on Fats and Oils under the authority of the Industry Standards Committee on Food, Food Products and Food Safety”. A final submission was made to SIRIM Berhad to allow for two months of public comments on their website before the MSPO was adopted as a Malaysian Standard by the Department of Standards Malaysia^{25,34}. Comparatively, RSPO required its draft certification standard to go through at least two rounds of public consultation, compared to the one-time requirement² of the MSPO standard²⁹.



The RSPO standard also explicitly requires that standard setting and review activities be documented, while the MSPO standard collated “all the submitted public comments and discussed (them) thoroughly at the meeting on 2 April 2013 and incorporated into the final Draft MSPO, documentation of this process was not explicitly required, leaving room for public comments to potentially slip through unaddressed³⁰. As decision-making and core normative document changes does not require voting by MSPO scheme members, the development and ongoing evolution of the MSPO standard leaves little room for meaningful input and participation from recognized stakeholders and organisations.

Further, the standards in MSPO are less developed and optimised as those in RSPO, and require elaboration for effective auditing. The use of standards with more absolute levels of performance would be helpful for MSPO. Unlike the RSPO standard, the MSPO standard does not clearly distinguish between mandatory requirements from recommendations³³⁻³⁵. As there is no explicit mention of revising the MSPO standards every five years or in any specified time period, it risks becoming an obsolete standard in light of new information and feedback from the field. The RSPO standard reviews its standards every five years. As MPOCC pledges to “establish and operate a credible and internationally recognised national palm oil certification scheme towards promoting sustainable palm management of oil palm in Malaysia”, it would do well to review and improve on the aforementioned – an endeavour that it claims is currently underway.

Certification

The MSPO standard does not require its members to certify all eligible units under their control in accordance with a time-bound plan, unlike the RSPO standard⁴². Further, the RSPO standard has a searchable database with names, sizes and locations of all certified units, including expiry dates⁴³, while this database is publicly available on a scheme website; the MSPO standard fulfils all criteria except the inclusion of expiry dates. The MSPO standard could easily and quickly improve on fulfilling the missing criterion of expiry dates. Working towards a time-bound plan for its members to certify all eligible units is also a crucial process, but may require more consideration when working with independent smallholders. Setting standards that are too difficult for smallholders may have the unintended outcome of independent smallholder members dropping out of the MSPO, which drives producers further from the goal of sustainable management.

Information of upcoming scheduled certification and surveillance audits were not found on MPOB/MPOCC/MPSO websites nor in certification body websites. It was also not explicitly required in MSPO, which is in contrast with the RSPO standard⁴⁴. The RSPO standard does not require unannounced audits, whereas MSPO includes a scheme document by MPOB which requires all certificate holders to agree to unannounced on-site audits by recognised Certification Bodies, granting auditors unrestricted access to its land/premises. However, the document does not explicitly require such audits to be performed, rather, allowing for them when deemed necessary⁵⁰. The MSPO standard does not provide a clear timeline for the handling of complaints in its “Procedures for Handling of Appeals and Complaints” document found in the MPOB; a timeline of 14 days was required of complainees to respond to the Investigating Officer with regards to “giving comments on the complaint and detailing the actions the organisation proposes or has taken to investigate and resolve the matter”.



The RSPO standard requires that complaints be handled within 60 days⁵⁹. The above suggests a systemic lack of accountability from MSPO's part toward its members. To progress towards self-motivated ownership of the scheme by its members, MSPO is recommended to clearly delineate its roles and requirements (including audit), so that members could confidently fulfill the outlined criteria and help to keep the accreditation board accountable to its actions.

Regarding transparency, summary reports of Social Impact Assessments (SIAs) and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are made publicly available for the RSPO standard. While the MSPO standard requires that "(4.2.1.2 Indicator 2) Management documents (shall) be publicly available, except where this is prevented by commercial confidentiality or where disclosure of information would result in negative environmental or social outcomes" (Part 3, MSPO), reports were only publicly available for operators certified by BSI Services Sdn. Bhd.. The lack of explicit requirement in the MSPO standard suggests that the publishing of such reports are not expected of certification bodies nor accreditation bodies of MSPO⁵⁴⁻⁵⁶.

Accreditation

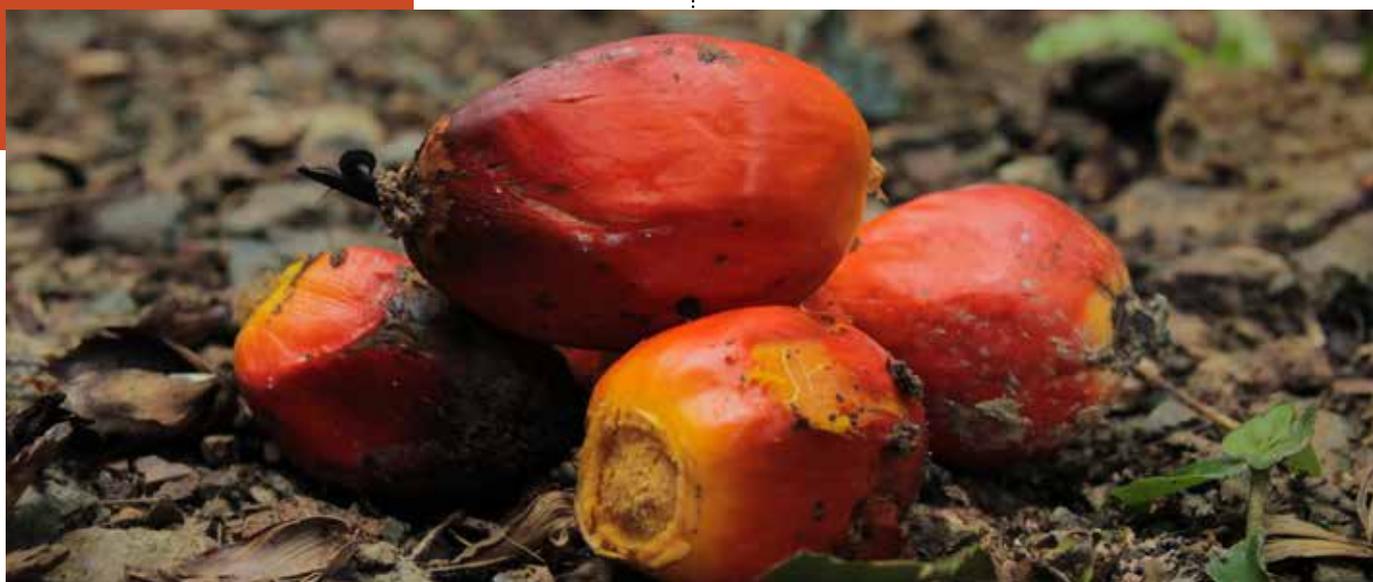
The MSPO standard does not require that the accreditation organisation conduct risk based auditing and surveillance of accredited certification bodies, whereas RSPO does. The summaries of such assessments are therefore only publicly available for RSPO. Unlike RSPO, the MSPO standard and its related documents do not detail any procedures for handling disputes and complaints related to approval and accreditation of certification bodies^{65,69}. Making available such documents allows recognised stakeholders and organisations to routinely monitor and assess if the relevant procedures are done according to the expected standards. As sustainable management is a multi-stakeholder endeavour, information transparency is key to its success. It is recommended that such important documents (e.g. SIA and EIA summary reports) are made publicly available to allow independent vetting of procedural standards for continuous improvement.

Chain of Custody

Both RSPO and MSPO standards lack scheme procedures for assessing risks related to the origin of materials in labelled products. Likewise, both schemes do not require certificate holders “to manage critical control points along the supply chain with a scope and rigour that corresponds to the risks”^{72,73}. Certification bodies (CB) are not explicitly required to survey the certificate holders’ operation of chain of custody procedures in the MSPO standard and its related documents, although companies are expected to document the relevant processes to ensure the availability of such documents should the CB require them. Comparatively, the RSPO standard clearly requires that CB review management documentation to ensure they fulfill the requirements of the RSPO Supply Chain Certification Standard (2014)⁷⁴. To improve rigour and better man-

products by a certificate holder, although there are guidelines for the usage of the MSPO logo specified in the “Usage of MSPO Logo” document by MPOB. The survey of the use of the RSPO claims, trademarks and labels, ‘on and off products’ by a certificate holder is required in the RSPO standard⁷⁵. “The Usage of MSPO Logo” document by MPOB states that the MSPO logo is not allowed to be used on products, but only on “pamphlets, etc. for advertising”, and on “larger boxes etc. used for transportation of products”.

Therefore, product-labelling requirements⁴ that accompany the use of the MSPO logo does not apply for the MSPO standard as in the RSPO standard, where fully segregated and mixed materials are accordingly labelled on products. However, while the RSPO standard does not require that “products of mixed origins do not contain any (focus commodity) materials defined as controversial’, ‘unacceptable’ or similar”, “ille-



age the chances of uncertified products entering the supply chain, both RSPO and MSPO should require certificate holders to manage critical control points along the supply chain with a scope and rigour that corresponds to the risk. To mitigate the resources necessary to achieve the above, perhaps the use of relevant incentivization (i.e. rewarding producers that are fully compliant) or collaborative peer-policing (i.e. staff involved in managing these critical points could be from different collaborating producers, reducing the overall human resources necessary and at the same time, providing accountability between producers) could be attempted.

CB are not explicitly required to survey the use of the MSPO claims, trademarks and labels, on and off

gally harvested or traded”, originating “from areas where traditional and civil rights are violated”, or where “HCVs 1-6 are violated”, a direct comparison cannot be made with the MSPO standard as it does not allow the use of its logo on products⁷⁶⁻⁸⁰. Yet, in view of the overarching theme of sustainable palm oil production³, collective involvement and inclusion of consumers are invaluable to the mass adoption and success of the scheme. Hence, the usage of the MSPO logo on its products, and the requirement of CB to survey the use of MSPO claims, trademarks and labels on and off products by a certificate holder are recommended to aid in the process of educating the consumers to make an informed choice, and at the same time to recognize and acknowledge the MSPO standard and the sustainable practices it stands for.

RSPO vs MSPO (based on Section 2: Standard)

Legality, Tenure and Use Rights

Both RSPO and MSPO standards do not require producers to specifically “take measures against unauthorised or illegal activities and settlement on the management unit”, though the MSPO standard mentions “discouraging any illegal or inappropriate hunting, fishing or collecting activities and developing responsible measures to resolve human-wildlife conflicts”⁹. To be better aligned with its goals of sustainable management, MSPO (and RSPO) is recommended to at least necessitate informing the relevant authorities regarding such illegal activity to prevent its proliferation.

Community Relations

The MSPO standard does not require producers to support economic development nor socially relevant welfare programmes by providing opportunities for local employment and provision of services, but instead required “commitment to contribute to local sustainable development in consultation with the local communities through appropriate programmes” (4.4.3, part 1), which is in contrast with the RSPO standard that fulfills both requirements of economic development and relevant welfare programmes support^{18,19}. For truly sustainable development, the engagement of the local community is vital. Hence, it is recommended that the MSPO commits to contribute to local sustainable development in consultation with local communities through appropriate programmes.

Workers' Rights

While both RSPO and MSPO standards do not explicitly require the declaration of ILO rights²¹, the MSPO standard omits the mention that “producers are not allowed to use force or otherwise involuntary labour”, a requirement that the RSPO standard covers²³. While it is unlikely that ‘involuntary labour’ is a regular practice in Malaysia, MSPO is recommended to appropriately amend the relevant portions of the standard to affirm their stand. Both RSPO and MSPO standards are only required to provide compensation when land rights are infringed, but are not required to “address grievances related to working conditions

and workers’ rights and to provide compensation for occupational injuries”. Palm oil production involves hazardous operations, including the use of pesticides, machinery etc.. It is therefore only reasonable for best management practices to “address grievances related to working conditions and workers’ rights and to provide compensation for occupational injuries”, which is recommended both for MSPO and RSPO.



Water and Soil

The MSPO standard cites the Malaysian Standard Good Agricultural Practices as a normative reference but makes no further requirement of producers to abide by these practices. This is in contrast with the RSPO standard which explicitly requires “evidence that good agriculture practices, as contained in Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), are followed to manage soil fertility to a level that ensures optimal and sustained yield, where possible”³⁹. The MSPO standard requires the management of producers to “organise regular meetings with employees where their concerns about environmental quality are discussed”, and also for “The results of the SEIA to be incorporated into an appropriate management plan and operational procedures developed, implemented, monitored and reviewed”, but does not explicitly require regular monitoring of their impacts on soil and water nor to adapt management as necessary for improvements. Conversely, the RSPO standard requires “evidence of periodic tissue and soil sampling to monitor changes in nutrient status”⁴⁰. The lack of mandatory terms here in the MSPO standard limits its influence over management practices of producers. As MSPO is a relatively new national standard, gradual steps toward firm, mandatory requirements for its members is a necessity for it to remain relevant as a certification for sustainable management practices.

Biodiversity

The RSPO does not require the maintenance of “representative areas of native ecosystems in the management unit”. Conversely, the MSPO standard requires that “oil palm shall not be planted on primary forest or land designated for protection of nature, ecosystem services and social or cultural values. Oil palm shall not be planted on land with high biodiversity value unless it is carried out in compliance with the National Biodiversity Policy and/or State Biodiversity Legislation”. However, the MSPO standard does not exclude the conversion of areas with high above-ground carbon stock such as secondary forests⁴⁶. There are large areas of peat swamp forests harbouring both large above- and below-ground carbon stocks in Malaysia, as well as other systems that harbour great biodiversity. As not all of these areas are designated for protection, MSPO would be best aligned with its purpose of sustainable palm oil production through



the prohibition of planting on such ecosystems, which should have been covered in the recommendations of the required EIAs.

In the MSPO standard, producers are only required to discourage “any illegal or inappropriate hunting, fishing or collecting activities and developing responsible measures to resolve human-wildlife conflicts”⁴⁸, which compares to the RSPO requirement of “controlling any illegal or inappropriate hunting, fishing or collecting activities, and developing responsible measures to resolve human-wildlife conflicts”. MSPO is recommended to necessitate informing the relevant authorities regarding these matters if it endeavours toward the conservation of biodiversity but does not wish to burden its members with further human resource requirements. Both standards do not require producers to refrain from introducing or using “invasive alien species in the management unit”⁴⁹. The introduction of invasive alien species poses the risk of destabilising established food chains in neighbouring ecosystems via mechanisms such as outcompeting keystone species. It is therefore prudent for MSPO and RSPO to require its members review EIA reports and also consult ecologists/experts before intentionally introducing any invasive species to plantations.

Pollution, Waste and Greenhouse-Gases

The MSPO standard does not require the producers to implement Integrated Pest Management (IPM), nor prohibit the use of Hazardous chemicals (as defined in WHO 1A and B and the Stockholm and Rotterdam conventions). The RSPO standard requires compliance to IPM and the prohibition of Hazardous chemicals. RSPO further requires producers “to document all application, handling, storage and disposal of agrochemicals and to ensure that procedures comply with good practice and/or manufacturers’ recommendations”, whereas MSPO only requires documentation for accidents and meetings about employee safety between employers and employees^{51,53}. The MSPO is thus recommended to at least be on par with the requirements mandated by RSPO to ensure that all procedures are not only traceable, but provides managers and CB the information necessary for continual improvement.

Both standards do not require producers “to take measures to increase resilience and reduce negative impacts from severe climate events”. Similarly, both schemes assess for greenhouse gas emissions, but do

not provide for the estimation of sequestration⁶⁰. Currently, it is expensive to assess Green House Gasses (GHG) emissions and sequestration, both assessments which require technically advanced knowledge and skills to perform. Thus, to provide impartial and good quality assessments of plantation GHG emissions and sequestrations, it is recommended that plantations under MSPO pool together funding for independent research directed at these specific goals by higher-degrees of research by students in local institutes, and setting realistic timelines for the publishing of the research results.

In the MSPO standard, smallholders are exempted from performing EIAs and from making available management documentation upon request; these criteria are required in the RSPO standard for smallholders as well as large plantations. While such a requirement may negatively exceed the expectations of independent smallholders certified by MSPO, a time-bound plan toward making management documentation available upon request and even compulsory EIA seems reasonable. If the fees required for EIA are too costly for independent smallholders, the possibility of subsidisation could be explored if adequate funding is a realistic option. Large plantations and organised smallholders certified by MSPO are required to com-



ply with the above criteria. Producers are not explicitly required to publish the reports of their Social and Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA) on their official websites⁶⁶. Again, to allow independent vetting, this should be made mandatory for oil palm plantations. Further, unlike the RSPO standard, HCV assessments are not explicitly required in the MSPO standard, although the latter requires SEIAs by large plantations which covers HCV and for management documents to be made available publicly⁶⁹.

Both standards do not literally mention catchment governance mechanisms such as integrated river basin management, but in RSPO, HCV provides for the “protection of water catchments”, whereas for MSPO, “the results of the SEIA shall be incorporated into an appropriate management plan and operational procedures developed, implemented, monitored and reviewed”, adequately addressing participation in catchment governance mechanisms⁶⁸. However, as MSPO does not require HCV assessments, it also does not address whether “producers are ... allowed to expand cultivation or establish plantations at the expense of one or more HCVs”⁷⁰. The RSPO standard requires producers not to expand cultivation or establish plantations at the expense of one or more HCV. To demonstrate seriousness in their promotion



of sustainable practices in palm oil production, a time bound plan towards full ISEAL certification and hence, full-compliance to HCV would be encouraged. However, the mentioned large numbers of independent smallholders in Malaysia mean that MSPO would do best to gradually implement HCV requirements to independent smallholders if it so chooses.

Agriculture: Other Good Practices

Both standards do not require producers to cultivate “a mix of genotypes of each main crop”⁷¹. Genetically Modified Organism(GMO) crops were not addressed in either standards as there are no any successfully cultivated transgenic oil palm varieties in the market^{72,73}. With the increasing proliferation of basal stem rot disease caused by *Ganoderma boninense*, it is perhaps wise to explore a mix of oil palm genotypes to assess whether there are varieties that are particularly resilient toward the spread of said disease. However, much research is required before firm, actionable procedures could be recommended.

Both standards do not prohibit the use of hazardous chemicals of the class WHO, nor those in the list of PAN International for Highly Hazardous Practices^{74,75}. MSPO only requires that trained personnel handle chemicals and pesticides according to safe operation protocols. It is recommended that experts are consulted to monitor and trace the migration of such chemicals in the environment to see if they result in any unsafe consequences. Neither standards require intercropping or the adoption of agro-ecologic practices by producers such as the non-use of pesticides etc.^{76,79}. Agro-ecologic practices can be explored to test their effectiveness in oil palm cultivation, but should not be mandated should it significantly and negatively affect yields.

Soil fertility assessments, fertilizer input records and periodic tissue and soil sampling are required in the RSPO standard, but not explicitly in the MSPO standard. However, the MSPO standard provides that “the results of (the) SEIA shall be incorporated into an appropriate management plan and operational procedures developed, implemented, monitored and reviewed”, which may indirectly address the optimisation of “nutrition of the cultivated crops”. Yet again, the MSPO standard would do well by providing clear guidelines in such matters.

Appendix: WWF Certification Assessment Tool (CAT) Criteria

		RSPO	MSPO
SECTION I: Scheme			
Section I Breakdown			
A. MISSION AND GOVERNANCE			
1	The scheme is set up to continuously improve the social, environmental and economic benefits of producing a specific commodity or category of commodities. The long term social, environmental and economic impacts are defined and documented”	TRUE	TRUE
2	Scheme core normative documents, e.g. statutes, bylaws and principles and criteria (audit manual or comaprable), are publicly available on a scheme website.	TRUE	TRUE
3	The scheme is a (full or associate) member of ISEAL.	TRUE	FALSE
4	The scheme has a resourced Secretariat with clearly defined staff and functions related to, at a minimum; finance, standard development, communication, membership/participant handling, quality assurance and complaints and the contact details are publically available online.	TRUE	TRUE
5	The scheme is open to membership (and/or similar level of participation in governance) for all stakeholders who share the scheme’s values and objectives.	TRUE	FALSE
6	Names and affiliation of members are publicly available on a scheme website.	TRUE	TRUE
7	Members and/or Participants are required to commit to scheme values and objectives through signing a Code of Conduct (or similar).	TRUE	FALSE
8	Member’s Code of conduct requires legal compliance, adherence to ILO core conventions and Free Prior and Informed Consent and maintenance of High Conservation Values (HCVs) as defined by the HCV Resource Network.	FALSE	FALSE
9	Members from the private sector are required to develop and adhere to a time-bound plan towards certification and/or procurement of certified products, and report annually on progress.	TRUE	TRUE
10	Procedures are in place to suspend or terminate membership for gross violations of the Code of Conduct, i.e against legal compliance, adherence to ILO core conventions and Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and maintenance of High Conservation Values (HCVs) as defined by the HCV Resource Network.	FALSE	FALSE
11	The scheme’s highest decision-making forum is, or is formally mandated by, the membership/scheme participants.	TRUE	FALSE
12	Highest decision-making forum procedures ensure that no single interest group (economic, social or environmental) can dominate governance decision-making.	TRUE	FALSE
13	Highest decision-making forum procedures ensure that non-economic sector constituencies collectively have (at least) the same governance decision-making power as economic sector constituencies.	TRUE	FALSE
14	Highest decision-making forum procedures ensure that constituencies representing economic, social and environmental interests have equal governance decision-making power.	TRUE	FALSE
15	Highest governance decision-making forum requires balanced participation of economic, social and environmental representatives.	TRUE	FALSE
16	Changes to core normative document require voting by the scheme members/ participants.	TRUE	FALSE
17	Executive (secretariat) functions are overseen by a Board of Directors or Trustees composed of individuals mandated by voting among scheme members / participants.	TRUE	FALSE
18	Minutes of Board or Trustee meetings are publically available.	TRUE	FALSE

19	There are procedures in place and clear time bound requirements for handling disputes and complaints by members / participants related to governance and executive functions.	TRUE	FALSE
20	There are defined procedures for appealing the handling of disputes and complaints related to governance and executive functions open to all members / participants.	TRUE	TRUE
B. SETTING STANDARDS			
21	Nationally applicable certification standard(s) constitute, or are adapted from, a set of internationally, regionally or nationally applicable principles and criteria (or equivalent).	TRUE	TRUE
22	The Principles and Criteria (or equivalent) address as a minimum: social and environmental impacts, workers' conditions and rights, community relations, environmental services, conservation of biodiversity and good management practices.	TRUE	TRUE
23	Applicable certification standards are (or were) developed in accordance with formally defined scheme procedures.	TRUE	TRUE
24	Representatives of major economic, social and environmental interests are actively invited to participate in the development of nationally applicable certification standards.	TRUE	TRUE
25	Applicable certification standards are developed with a meaningful participation of economic, social and environmental representatives.	TRUE	FALSE
26	Applicable certification standards are developed by consensus or in processes where no single interest group can dominate decision-making.	TRUE	FALSE
27	Applicable certification standards taken in account the ISEAL Impact Code for the development and revisions.	TRUE	FALSE
28	Draft certification standards are developed in processes where input is solicited from scientific and technical experts.	TRUE	TRUE
29	Draft certification standards are subject to multiple rounds of public consultation.	TRUE	FALSE
30	Input received in consultations on draft certification standards is documented and there is report back on how issues raised are addressed.	TRUE	FALSE
31	Draft certification standards are formally approved by the scheme.	TRUE	TRUE
32	Applicable certification standards are publicly available on a website.	TRUE	TRUE
33	Applicable certification standards have auditable indicator(s) for each criterion.	TRUE	FALSE
34	Most indicators of applicable certification standards require an absolute level of performance (as opposed to merely relative improvement or the existence of a process).	TRUE	FALSE
35	Applicable certification standards clearly distinguish mandatory requirements from recommendations and guidance.	TRUE	FALSE
36	Applicable certification standards have separate requirements for small and/or medium sized management units and/or are formulated so as to take account of the scale and intensity of operations.	TRUE	TRUE
37	Applicable certification standards are revised at least every five years.	TRUE	FALSE
38	Applicable certification standards are developed and revised in full compliance with the ISEAL Code of Good Practice.	TRUE	FALSE
39	The scheme either applies the same certification standard in all areas of operation, or has procedures for developing and harmonizing national/regional interpretations.	TRUE	TRUE
40	The scheme either applies the same certification standard in all areas of operation, or has procedures for certification based on scheme principles and criteria (or equivalent) in countries that do not (yet) have national interpretations.	TRUE	TRUE
C. CERTIFICATION			
41	Producers are certified by independent third party certification bodies operating in compliance with ISO requirements.	TRUE	TRUE
42	Producers are required to certify all (eligible) units under their control in accordance with a time-bound plan.	TRUE	FALSE

43	Searchable databases with names, sizes and locations of all certified units, including expiry dates, are publicly available on a scheme website.	TRUE	FALSE
44	Certification bodies post information about upcoming scheduled certification and surveillance audits on a common national and/or international scheme-operated website or mailing list.	TRUE	FALSE
45	Certification bodies are required to conduct annual or more frequent surveillance audits of certificate holders.	TRUE	TRUE
46	Certification bodies are required to proactively consult with affected stakeholders during both certification and surveillance audits.	TRUE	TRUE
47	Certification bodies are required take account of stakeholders' comments during certification and surveillance audits.	TRUE	TRUE
48	Certification bodies are required conduct risk-based auditing and surveillance.	TRUE	TRUE
49	Certification bodies are required to adjust the intensity of auditing and surveillance to match observations in the field.	TRUE	FALSE
50	Certification bodies are required to conduct unannounced audits in high risk contexts.	FALSE	TRUE
51	Certificate holders are required to rectify non-compliances identified during certification and surveillance audits within a set timeframe that does not exceed one year.	TRUE	TRUE
52	Adequate sanctions are applied in situations where less severe (minor) non-compliances are not rectified in time.	TRUE	TRUE
53	Severe (major) non-compliances that are not rectified in time lead to suspension or termination of the certificate.	TRUE	TRUE
54	Summary reports of certification and surveillance audits (including dates, locations and scope of auditing, team composition, main findings and corrective action requests) are publicly available in a UN language on a website.	TRUE	FALSE
55	Summary reports of certification and surveillance audits (including dates, locations and scope of auditing, team composition, main findings and corrective action requests) are publicly available in a common local language on a website.	TRUE	FALSE
56	Summary reports of certification and surveillance audits are made publicly available within ninety days after completion of the audit.	TRUE	FALSE
57	Certificates are valid for no more than five years after which a new full certification audit is required.	TRUE	TRUE
58	Certification bodies implement formal and transparent, publicly available procedures for handling disputes and complaints related to certification and surveillance.	TRUE	TRUE
59	Certification and surveillance complaints procedures have clear deadlines.	TRUE	FALSE
60	Certification and surveillance complaints procedures include appeal mechanisms open to use by any affected party.	TRUE	TRUE
D. ACCREDITATION			
61	Certification bodies are accredited by an ISEAL member accreditation organization.	TRUE	FALSE
62	The accreditation organization(s) list(s) upcoming regular assessments and surveillance audits of certification bodies publically on a website.	TRUE	FALSE
63	The accreditation organization provides mechanisms for stakeholder input during assessment and surveillance audits of certification bodies.	TRUE	TRUE
64	The accreditation organization verifies that certification bodies engage effectively with stakeholders during auditing and surveillance.	TRUE	TRUE
65	The accreditation organization conducts risk based auditing and surveillance of accredited certification bodies.	TRUE	FALSE
66	Less severe (minor) non-compliances that are not rectified within the time set are escalated to severe (major) non-compliances.	TRUE	TRUE
67	Severe (major) non-compliances that are not rectified within the time set lead to suspension or termination of the accreditation.	TRUE	TRUE
68	Summaries of the accreditation assessments of certification bodies are publicly available	TRUE	FALSE

69	Accreditation organizations implement formal and transparent, publicly available procedures for handling disputes and complaints related to approval and accreditation of certification bodies.	TRUE	FALSE
70	Certification and accreditation complaints procedures include appeal mechanisms open to any involved party.	TRUE	FALSE
E. CHAIN OF CUSTODY			
71	There are scheme procedures for monitoring custody and trade of materials from certified producers (regardless of Chain of Custody model).	TRUE	TRUE
72	There are scheme procedures for assessing risks related to the origin of materials in labeled products.	FALSE	FALSE
73	Certificate holders are required to manage critical control points along the supply chain with a scope and rigour that corresponds to the risks.	FALSE	FALSE
74	Certification bodies survey certificate holders' operation of chain of custody procedures.	TRUE	FALSE
75	Certification bodies survey certificate holders' use of claims, trademarks and labels, on and off products.	TRUE	FALSE
76	The scheme either only allows for claims on products consisting of fully segregated materials, or requires that claims associated with products containing a physical mix of certified and non-certified materials are clearly distinguished, e.g. by use of terms such as 'mixed', 'proportion' or 'contains...'	TRUE	FALSE
77	The scheme either only allows for claims on products consisting of fully segregated materials, or requires that products of mixed origins do not any contain any (focus commodity) materials defined as controversial, 'unacceptable' or similar.	FALSE	FALSE
78	The scheme requires that products labeled or otherwise claimed as certified do not contain any (focus commodity) materials that are illegally harvested or traded.	FALSE	FALSE
79	The scheme requires that products labeled or otherwise claimed as certified do not contain any (focus commodity) materials from areas where traditional or civil rights are violated.	FALSE	FALSE
80	The scheme requires that products labeled or otherwise claimed as certified do not contain any (focus commodity) materials from areas where HCVs (1-6) are threatened.	FALSE	FALSE
SECTION II: STANDARD			
SECTION II BREAKDOWN			
A. LEGALITY, TENURE AND USE RIGHTS			
1	Producers are required to be legally defined entities.	TRUE	TRUE
2	Producers are required to have legal land tenure or title and valid resource use rights to use the management unit.	TRUE	TRUE
3	Producers are required to comply with all applicable local, national and international laws and regulations.	TRUE	TRUE
4	Producers are required to identify legal and customary rights of tenure, access and use of other parties that apply on the management unit.	TRUE	TRUE
5	Producers are required to uphold legal and customary rights of tenure, access and use of other parties, unless these rights are delegated through documented Free, Prior and Informed Consent.	TRUE	TRUE
6	Producers are required to respect the rights, customs and culture of indigenous peoples as defined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) and ILO Convention 169 (1989).	TRUE	TRUE
7	Producers are required to engage with affected stakeholders and document measures taken to resolve disputes related to land tenure, access and use.	TRUE	TRUE
8	Producers are required to engage with affected stakeholders and document measures taken to resolve disputes related to water.	TRUE	TRUE
9	Producers are required to take measures against unauthorised or illegal activities and settlement on the management unit.	FALSE	FALSE
10	Producers are required to commit in writing not to offer or receive bribes or engage in any other form of corruption.	TRUE	TRUE
B. COMMUNITY RELATIONS			

11	Producers are required to engage in dialogue with neighbouring communities and individuals.	TRUE	TRUE
12	Producers are required to identify negative impacts from operations on communities and individuals.	TRUE	TRUE
13	Producers are required to take measures to minimise and mitigate negative impacts from operations on communities and individuals.	TRUE	TRUE
14	Producers are required to address grievances and provide fair compensation for negative impacts of operations on local communities and individuals.	TRUE	TRUE
15	Producers are required to assess potential impacts on communities and individuals, including impacts on food security and water availability, prior to any significant intensification or expansion of cultivation or infrastructure.	TRUE	TRUE
16	Producers are required to identify and respect sites of cultural and religious significance in the management unit.	TRUE	TRUE
17	Producers are required to assess and maintain High Conservation Values (HCVs) category 5 (basic necessities for local communities) in the management unit.	TRUE	TRUE
18	Producers are required to support economic development by providing opportunities for local employment and provision of services.	TRUE	TRUE
19	Producers are required to actively engage in welfare programs, where relevant to the social context.	TRUE	FALSE
20	Producers are required to regularly monitor their impacts on the local economy and to adapt management as necessary for improvement.	TRUE	TRUE
C.WORKERS' RIGHTS			
21	Producers are required to respect the core ILO rights of workers as defined in the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998).	FALSE	FALSE
22	Producers are required to ensure that children under the age of 15 (or higher if stipulated in national law) do not carry out productive work in the management unit.	TRUE	TRUE
23	Producers are not allowed to use forced or otherwise involuntary labor.	TRUE	FALSE
24	Producers are required to ensure that there is no discrimination at work and that workers are not subject to any form of corporal punishment, abuse, harassment or intimidation.	TRUE	TRUE
25	Producers are required to identify potential health and safety risks at work and take measures to avoid them.	TRUE	TRUE
26	Producers are required to ensure that workers are adequately equipped, instructed and trained for their tasks, including safe use and handling of chemicals.	TRUE	TRUE
27	Producers are required to respect workers' freedom of association and right to collective bargaining.	TRUE	TRUE
28	Producers are required to ensure that wages, working hours and leave comply with, or exceed, applicable legislation and sector minimum standards.	TRUE	TRUE
29	Producers are required to address grievances related to working conditions and workers' rights and to provide compensation for occupational injuries.	FALSE	FALSE
30	Producers are required to ensure access to safe drinking water, adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene (WASH)	TRUE	TRUE
D. WATER AND SOIL			
31	Producers are required to identify water resources potentially affected by operations, in as well as outside the management unit.	TRUE	TRUE
32	Large scale Producers are required to assess the catchment context in order to identify key water risks or shared challenges.	TRUE	TRUE
33	Producers are required to take measures to minimise and mitigate negative impacts from direct operations on water quality.	TRUE	TRUE
34	Producers are not allowed to create or aggravate situations of water scarcity.	TRUE	TRUE
35	Producers are required to maintain and to restore important water related areas including wetlands.	FALSE	TRUE
36	Producers are required to avoid or minimise run-off and siltation of watercourses.	TRUE	TRUE

37	Producers are required to take measures to minimise negative impacts from operations on soil resources.	TRUE	TRUE
38	Producers are required to avoid or minimise soil erosion.	TRUE	TRUE
39	Producers are required to maintain or improve soil quality.	TRUE	FALSE
40	Producers are required to regularly monitor their impacts on soil and water and to adapt management as necessary for improvement.	TRUE	FALSE
E. BIODIVERSITY			
41	Producers are required to identify and maintain biodiversity values, potentially affected by operations, in as well as outside the management unit.	TRUE	TRUE
42	Producers are required to take measures to minimise and mitigate negative impacts from operations on biodiversity values.	TRUE	TRUE
43	Producers are required to assess potential impacts on biodiversity values prior to significant intensification or expansion of cultivation or infrastructure.	TRUE	TRUE
44	Producers are required to protect rare and threatened species and their habitats in the management unit.	TRUE	TRUE
45	Producers are required to assess and maintain HCVs category 1 (concentrations of rare and threatened species), 2 (large landscapes in a relatively natural state), 3 (rare and threatened ecosystems) in the management unit, and 4 (Basic ecosystem services in critical situations, including protection of water catchments and control of erosion of vulnerable soils and slopes.)	TRUE	TRUE
46	Producers are not allowed to convert native forest and/or areas of high above-ground carbon stocks to expand cultivation or plantations.	FALSE	TRUE
47	Producers are required to maintain or restore native vegetation along streams and watercourses.	TRUE	TRUE
48	Producers are required to take measures against any illegal or inappropriate hunting, fishing or collecting in the management unit.	TRUE	FALSE
49	Producers are not allowed to introduce or use invasive alien species in the management unit.	FALSE	FALSE
50	Producers are required to regularly monitor their impacts on biodiversity and to adapt management as necessary for improvement.	TRUE	TRUE
F. POLLUTION, WASTE AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS			
51	Producers are required to implement integrated pest management practices that minimise the use of pesticides.	FALSE	FALSE
52	Producers are not allowed to use Hazardous chemicals (as defined by WHO 1A and B and the Stockholm and Rotterdam conventions).	FALSE	FALSE
53	Producers are required to document all application, handling, storage and disposal of agrochemicals and to ensure that procedures comply with good practice and/or manufacturers' recommendations.	FALSE	FALSE
54	Producers are required to take measures to avoid or minimise negative impacts of agrochemical use on human health and the environment.	TRUE	TRUE
55	Producers are required to respect a 500 m minimum application distance of pesticides, growth promoters and liquid fertilizers to natural ecosystems and areas of human activities, if applied by helicopter or airplanes.	TRUE	N/A
56	Producers are required to take measures to increase resilience and reduce negative impacts from severe climate events.	FALSE	FALSE
57	Producers are required to estimate sequestration and emissions of greenhouse gases from the management unit.	FALSE	FALSE
58	Producers are required to take measures to reduce any net emissions of greenhouse gases from the management unit.	TRUE	TRUE
59	Producers are required to reduce waste through reuse, recycling or other environmentally appropriate utilisation.	TRUE	TRUE
60	Producers are not allowed to expand cultivation or plantations on peat soils and/or areas of high below-ground carbon stocks.	FALSE	FALSE
G. PLANNING AND TRANSPARENCY			
61	Producers are required to continuously improve key practises and operations.	TRUE	TRUE

62	Producers are required to have management plans appropriate to the scale and intensity of the operation that demonstrate commitment to long-term social, environmental and economic viability.	TRUE	TRUE
63	Producers are required to ensure that management plans account for future water resource conditions (i.e., climate change, demographic shifts, projected use increases, etc.)	TRUE	TRUE
64	Producers are required to make summaries of their management plans publicly available on their website (large producers) or by a request (small/middle producers).	TRUE	FALSE
65	Producers are required to use independent expertise for assessing social and environmental impacts prior to significant intensification or expansion of cultivation or infrastructure.	TRUE	TRUE
66	Producers are required to make summaries of their social and environmental impact assessments publicly available on their website (large producers) or by a request (small / middle producers).	TRUE	FALSE
67	Producers are required to identify HCVs (all six categories) prior to significant expansion of cultivation or plantations.	TRUE	TRUE
68	Producers are required to participate in catchment governance mechanisms such as integrated river basin management plans.	TRUE	TRUE
69	Producers are required to make summaries of their HCV assessments publicly available on their website (large producers) or through a request (small / middle producers).	TRUE	FALSE
70	Producers are not allowed to expand cultivation or establish plantations at the expense of one or more HCVs.	TRUE	FALSE
H. AGRICULTURE: OTHER GOOD PRACTICE			
71	Producers are required to cultivate a mix of genotypes of each main crop.	FALSE	FALSE
72	The standard does not allow the use of GMO crop species.	N/A	N/A
73	The standard has a separated supply-chain for non-GMO	N/A	N/A
74	Producers are not allowed to use hazardous chemicals class WHO 2.	FALSE	FALSE
75	Producers are not allowed to use hazardous chemicals according to the PAN International list of Highly Hazardous Pesticides.	FALSE	FALSE
76	Producers adopt agro-ecologic practices, including the non-use of pesticides, biological control of pests, etc.	FALSE	FALSE
77	Large scale producers are not allowed to expand cultivation in ways that impact negatively on local food security.	TRUE	TRUE
78	Producers are required to implement applicable and effective actions to ensure efficient irrigation.	TRUE	TRUE
79	Producers of annual crops are required to practise crop rotation. Producers of perennial crops are required to practise intercropping or promote mixtures of crops and native species.	FALSE	FALSE
80	Producers are required to adapt fertilisation to soil conditions and crop needs.	TRUE	FALSE

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WWF-Malaysia

1 Jalan PJS 5/28A
Petaling Jaya Commercial Centre (PJCC)
46150 Petaling Jaya
Selangor, Malaysia

Telephone: +603 7450 3773

Fascimile: +603 7450 3777

Email: my.sustainability@wwf.org.my



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and
to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

wwf.org.my