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## WWF STATEMENT ON THE REQUIRED CHARACTERISTICS OF SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL INITIATIVES

WWF is working for the transformation of all commodity supply chains to make them more sustainable so that they no longer negatively impact nature or people. WWF considers credible and independent voluntary market-driven certification as an important method to improve mainstream production practices for commodities.

For any sustainability standard or certification scheme to be credible and effective and to be supported by WWF it should, amongst other things:

- **Focus on minimizing or eliminating important negative environmental and social impacts, as well as creating positive environmental, economic and social outcomes,**
- **Provide transparency through meaningful stakeholder participation in decision-making and public reporting on certification progress and outcomes.**
- **Require independent third-party verification, certification and accreditation.**
- **Require truthful claims, and where applicable, traceability.**
- **Be committed to continuous improvement.**

See a complete list of WWF's principles for any credible certification scheme [here](#).

In palm oil, we believe that the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil ([RSPO](#)) is the only initiative that meets these principles today and which has sufficient size and influence to achieve the necessary change. Therefore, WWF supports the RSPO and its certification standard and system as the foundation of a sustainable palm oil industry and as the best opportunity for global transformation, while meanwhile recognizing that the scheme must improve in certain areas.

The RSPO and its members are committed to continuous improvement of the standard, its systems and of the performances of the roundtable and its members. WWF supports this process. This includes working to improve the RSPO's Principles and Criteria and the systems that support the implementation of the standard. In addition, WWF is keeping pressure up on individual companies through tools like scorecards and one-to-one engagement to ensure the demand for CSPO is strong and growing and that the industry is tackling all of the challenges it faces.

While the RSPO and the palm oil produced by its certified members (i.e. Certified Sustainable Palm Oil or CSPO) are the basis of sustainable palm oil and the best way for the industry to achieve global transformation, WWF recognizes that other initiatives can support companies at different stages along

the journey to sustainability. The journey begins with eliminating poor practice and achieving legality, in palm oil production, then moves on to achieving RSPO certification and finally builds on the RSPO to achieve best practice. Along this spectrum, a wide range of emerging palm oil initiatives and action exists. Some are not certification schemes *per se*, but commitments made by individual companies or groups of companies. Some involve national standards and some are developed as stand-alone efforts. Some focus on headline environmental or social issues or on related concerns such as traceability. Sometimes they involve the use of consultants or contracting companies to help companies to fulfill these commitments. Many have not been developed in a true multi-stakeholder fashion. And in many cases it can be difficult to judge the credibility of such systems due to a lack of transparency regarding how they function.

WWF welcomes these recent commitments and initiatives for the innovation and learning that they can offer. Yet to be truly valuable, these initiatives need to do more than change individual company performance. They also need to help transform the wider industry by building on the RSPO standard and systems.

To ensure that they can transform the wider industry, palm oil sustainability initiatives and commitments must be:

- **COMPREHENSIVE:** Tackling the wide range of social and environmental challenges facing the industry rather than only headline issues
- **CREDIBLE:** Verifying progress transparently through accredited, independent third parties
- **COLLABORATIVE:** Ensuring stakeholders can work together to learn from innovation rather than keeping expertise in-house
- **MEASURABLE:** Delivering change against a consistent set of criteria – such as that offered by the RSPO – in order to allow progress between companies to be compared directly.
- **AMBITIOUS:** Striving for RSPO criteria and beyond

One initiative that meets these criteria is the Palm Oil Innovation Group ([POIG](#)), which WWF founded with Greenpeace, RAN, Forest Peoples Programme and progressive grower members of the RSPO. POIG provides an opportunity for companies to build on RSPO systems in order to implement industry best practice in key performance areas. By building independent third party verification into POIG it aims to ensure that credible proof of real change on the ground will be available. POIG takes the best of the RSPO and improves on it. See WWF's [position on POIG](#).

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