



April 18, 2013

## **WWF Statement on the Review of the RSPO Principles & Criteria**

The Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) Principles & Criteria Taskforce recently finalized the review of the RSPO Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Palm Oil Production (P&Cs), and a document agreed by consensus amongst all the participants in the P&C Taskforce has been produced. While the debates within the Taskforce meetings featured tough negotiating and compromise from all sides, at the end there was no sustained objection from any member of the Taskforce to the final text. The revised P&Cs were presented to and endorsed by the RSPO Executive Board in February, and will be voted on by the RSPO ordinary membership at an extraordinary General Assembly meeting of members on April 25, 2013 in Kuala Lumpur.

The final version of the revised P&Cs that will be voted on by the General Assembly can be found at <http://www.rspo.org/file/revisedPandC2013.pdf>

The following statement has been prepared to help clarify WWF's perspective on the outcomes of this review process for external parties.

### **WWF Statement**

The RSPO Principle & Criteria (P&C) review has been a long process starting with a public consultation in 2011, four meetings of a taskforce made up of all RSPO member categories, and a second consultation on a proposed set of revisions in late 2012.

WWF participated in the taskforce and responded to both consultations. We argued hard for clear, tough standards on issues like the use of peat soils, banning hazardous chemicals and measuring and reporting GHG emissions. Some of what we wanted has been adopted but some has not. The majority of what WWF wanted has been addressed in the P&Cs but often in ways that fall short of our ideal. However we believe that, on balance, the revised P&Cs do represent the best compromise for the RSPO and are better than the current RSPO standard. Therefore WWF will be voting to endorse them at the forthcoming RSPO General Assembly meeting. WWF recommends that other RSPO members do as well.

However, because the review failed to accept strong, tough and clear performance standards within the P&Cs on issues like GHGs and pesticides, it is, unfortunately, no longer possible for producers or users of palm oil to ensure that they are acting responsibly simply by producing or using Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (CSPO). Therefore WWF is now asking progressive companies to set and report on particular performance standards within the framework set by the new RSPO P&Cs.

Responsible growers are those that not only certify all of their palm oil production against the RSPO principles & criteria but who also take the following further actions:

- immediate public reporting of GHG emissions from existing and new plantations using Palm GHG;
- for new oil palm developments: full implementation of the RSPO New Plantings Procedure and zero-net land use emissions over a single rotation, which will exclude cultivation on peat-soils and clearance of high carbon stock areas;
- for existing plantations and mills: significant annual GHG emissions reduction targets -- essential measures should include the treatment of mill effluent to eliminate methane emissions and the restoration of any plantations on peat at the end of the current rotation;
- an end to the use of pesticides that are categorized as World Health Organization Class 1A or 1B, or that are listed by the Stockholm or Rotterdam Conventions, and paraquat;
- only buying Fresh Fruit Bunches (FFB) from known sources, in particular no FFB originating from land illegally occupied or that is within any sort of designated or protected areas such as national parks;

The rest of the palm oil value chain – from investors to retailers – must also make parallel commitments to only do business with growers that take these extra actions.

To avoid the burden of extra auditing and verification, WWF is proposing that the RSPO helps stakeholders to understand which members are acting responsibly by ensuring that relevant reporting and auditing of these actions are incorporated into its existing systems including the annual reports, its New Planting Procedure notifications and its public certification reports.

So while the revised P&Cs are not perfect, on balance WWF believes that they are a step in the right direction and give progressive parts of the industry the right tools to demonstrate that they are acting more sustainably.

That is why WWF will be voting yes to the new P&Cs and why we would like all RSPO members to do so as well.

It is also why WWF is now inviting progressive companies along the whole oil palm supply chain who share our belief that the industry can show leadership in sustainability to discuss with us how to make these commitments and actions a reality.

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See the “WWF FAQ on the RSPO P&C Review” for a more detailed assessment of the proposed revisions to the RSPO P&Cs at [wwf.panda.org/rsपो/pcreview](http://wwf.panda.org/rsपो/pcreview)

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