Information and Certification Requirements

RSPO

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Contents

Revision History

Rev No	Revision Date	Page No	Sec. No	Brief Description of Change
1	Feb 2020	-	-	New Issued
2	Mar 2020	Whole doc	Whole doc	Change of document title to RSPO Certification Requirements.
3	Feb 2021	Whole doc	Whole doc	Change of RSPO Supply Chain Certification Requirements .
4	Apr 2021	Whole doc	Whole doc	Change of RSPO P&C Certification Requirements.
5	Mar 2023	14 15	8.1 9	• Complaints • Complaints and Appeal
6	Nov 2024	Whole doc	Whole doc	Change the structure of the document to align with other Scheme Certification Requirements.

1 Scope

This information requirements document sets out terms which satisfy the related Accreditation and Scheme requirements and forms part of the Service Agreement between client and BSI as indicated in the SRF (Service Request Form) which is completed by your organization when applying for the RSPO Scheme Certification.

The requirements included in this document does not cover all Scheme rules and therefore the complete Scheme requirements shall be found in the related RSPO Scheme documents and followed at all times.

For more information about the Scheme please visit the RSPO Scheme Owner website available here.

2 General Scheme description

The Roundtable Sustainable Palm Oil is a global scheme offered globally covering RSPO Principles & Criteria Certification, RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard and RSPO Supply Chain Certification.

The RSPO certification is an assurance to the customer that the standard of palm oil production is sustainable, addressing the global concerns that the commodity is produced without causing harm to the environment and society. The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) is a global multi-stakeholder initiative on sustainable palm oil.

The stakeholders of the RSPO and participants in its activities come from many different backgrounds, including oil palm plantation companies, processors and traders, consumer goods manufacturers and retailers of palm oil products, financial institutions, environmental NGOs and social NGOs, from many countries that produce or use palm oil.

The RSPO comprises of 3 certification standards:

- RSPO Principles & Criteria (P&C) Certification, also known as "producer/grower certification" for ensuring oil palm is grown sustainably and the processing of the palm oil is processed sustainably.

- RSPO Supply Chain Certification (SCC) for ensuring the integrity of the trade in sustainable palm oil, i.e. that palm oil sold as sustainable palm oil has indeed been produced by certified plantations.
- RSPO Independent Smallholder Standards (ISH).

2.1 Related normative requirements

- RSPO Certifications Systems for Principles & Criteria and RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard, endorsed by the RSPO Board of Governors on 12 November 2020
- RSPO Supply Chain Certification Systems, endorsed by the RSPO Board of Governors on 1 February 2020
- Scheme additional document as appropriated for the scope of certification;
- ISO 17021:2015 and ISO 17065:2012
- IAF Mandatory Documents – as applicable and appropriated in accordance with Scheme Rules.

3 BSI accreditation scope

Certification to this standard is accredited by Assurance Services International (ASI).

BSI Services Malaysia Sdn. Bhd. holds accreditation scope for the RSPO SCCS, RSPO P&C (Single Site & Group). This scheme follows the requirements of RSPO Certification Systems for P&C and RSPO Independent Smallholders Standard – 12 November 2020; RSPO Supply Chain Certification Systems 1 February 2020; ISO 17021-1 and ISO 17065:2012.

BSI Services Malaysia Sdn. Bhd. is member of the BSI Group of Companies is the legal entity that is responsible to ASI for all the RSPO Certification activities provided to its clients and/or clients of its affiliate BSI offices (all affiliate and BSI Services Malaysia Sdn. Bhd. will be referred as BSI unless stated).

4 BSI scope coverage

The accreditation hold by BSI Services Malaysia Sdn. Bhd. as the accredited office is worldwide scope.

5 Application process

BSI will require completion of an official application form, signed by an authorized representative of the applicant site. It is the responsibility of the applicant site to ensure that adequate and accurate information is shared with BSI about the details of the applicant site.

6 Certification agreement

BSI will have a legally enforceable agreement with your organization for the provision of the RSPO certification activities in accordance with the relevant requirements.

7 Audit planning

Your site is required to make all necessary arrangements to allow the certification activities to take place in accordance with the Scheme requirements.

8 Certification cycle

When your organization has achieved certification, BSI will provide you with a Certificate as a statement that your organization has achieved certification to the relevant standard(s) with validity of five (5) years. The certificate should be displayed where it will be seen by customers and potential customers. The certificate will include important data such:

- Name and location of the certified unit
- Name of supply base (for RSPO P&C)
- RSPO membership name and number
- Certified area by name and size (for RSPO P&C)
- Certified FFB, CSPO and CSPK volume (for RSPO P&C and RSPO SCCS Independent Mill)
- Certified FFB, IS-CSPO, IS-CSPK, IS-CSPKE (for RSPO ISH Standard)
- Supply Chain model
- Date of certification and expiry
- Scope of certification
- Certification number
- Standard for which certification has been granted.

When copies or elements of the certificate are used in tenders or offered to potential or existing customers, the certificate should be accompanied by the scope of certification document (if issued separately) as it is important for them to understand the scope of activities for which certification has been granted (see 'scope' below).

Incorrect use of the certificate can result in a customer being misled as to the extent of your organization's certification. Clients are obliged to ensure that BSI has been formally notified of the latest address, ownership, changes to key management responsibilities, major management system changes and capability information so that the certificate maintains its currency. Failure to do so may compromise your organization's certification status.

All original certificates remain the property of BSI Services Malaysia Sdn. Bhd. and must be returned on request.

9 Certification and audit process

The purpose of the Certification Audit is to establish whether your organization's RSPO management system has been implemented and complies with the relevant standard by examining actual practices, documentation and records and comparing them against the organization's policies and procedures. The audit process is, effectively, an undertaking to establish that your documented policies and practices are understood by your personnel and have been effectively implemented.

The Audit will be led by appropriately qualified and experienced Auditors and, where required, Witness Auditors, Observers, Translator/Interpreter, and/or Technical Specialists acting as advisers to the audit team may also be present. These specialists bring current specialized knowledge of the activities being audited to the audit team and ensure that the audit provides a relevant and practical review of aspects critical to the business.

BSI assessors use RSPO checklists to complete your assessment. These checklists form the basis of the report.

9.1 Initial and continuing certification activity

9.1.1 P&C Certification audit

The Certificate validity period is five (5) years (including MS B certification). In order to maintain continuity of the certification, a Re-certification audit of compliance must take place 4 months before the certificate expired. If any nonconformity raised, CAP and their acceptance shall be done before certificate is expired.

If a re-certification audit is not conducted before the certificate expiry, the certification is automatically lapse which leads to suspension and termination. To reinstate a certificate, you are required to be treated as a new applicant and a completely new BSI Certification Cycle, Initial Certification audit applies.

Public Notification announcing the intent to conduct Initial Certification and Recertification audit for all P&C, ISS, and Group Certification shall be carried out. The Public Notification shall be published in the RSPO and BSI Malaysia website. Prior preparing the notification, your liabilities status will be checked with RSPO Secretariat. The notification of audit at your management unit shall be forwarded to RSPO Secretariat at least five (5) days before the scheduled public announcement. The notification period shall be minimum of 30 days.

Unless approved by RSPO Secretariat, if there is any liability within your certification unit, public notification can only proceed when the Concept Note has been submitted to the RSPO Secretariat. When there is scope extension to an active certificate, your liability status will be checked with RSPO secretariat prior to the onsite audit.

The audit window for the first Annual Surveillance Audit to check continued compliance shall take place within 8-12 months after the certificate issuance and subsequent ASA including Recertification shall take place not earlier than 8 months of the PalmTrace License expiry.

If a surveillance audit is not conducted within 12 months, the certificate shall be suspended. Once the required surveillance audit is completed successfully with reasonable timeframe, the suspension will be lifted. Surveillance audits shall be undertaken within six (6) months of the suspension date, otherwise a full recertification audit shall be required.

If the Surveillance audits had started but cannot be completed within 12 months, a request for applying time extension (PalmTrace) can be sent to RSPO Secretariat. A maximum of 90 days or 3 months PalmTrace time extension is permitted by RSPO Secretariat.

Independent Smallholder Standard Audit
The ISS Audit is a phase approach that consist of Eligibility, Milestone A and Milestone B. The auditing approach of each phase are as below:

Eligibility (E)
Minimum requirements that need to be met in order to enter the certification system. The E phase validity for a smallholder is 2 years. Upon pre-audit assessment, 40% of RSPO Credits will be allocated and no further third party audit is required until a smallholder moves to MS A.

Milestone A (MS A)

Intermediate requirements to be met within 2 years of achieving Eligibility. The MS A phase validity for a smallholder is 1 year. Upon pre-audit assessment, 70% of RSPO Credits will be allocated. An MS A phase audit is required to be conducted 4 months before the expiry of Eligibility.

Milestone B (MS B)

Full compliance and final requirements to be met within 1 year of achieving MS A. Upon certification, 100% of physical volume will be allocated. An MS B phase initial certification audit is required to be conducted 5 months before the expiry of MS A. Annual Surveillance Audit shall be applied from then on. All subsequent Annual Surveillance Audit and Recertification audit window shall be not earlier than 8 months after the certificate issuance and shall not be later than 12 months.

A smallholder can progress directly to MS B if they can demonstrate compliance with MS A and MS B when they are at phase at Eligibility or MS A. They can move forward and be audited for MS A and MS B at the same point of time. When at MS B, a smallholder is required to comply to indicators of Eligibility, MS A and MS B, while when at MS A, a smallholder is required to comply to indicators of Eligibility and MS A. A full certification is only considered when a smallholder is certified to MS B. The 5 year certificate validity is then start on the date where certification decision is made for MS B.

Any changes in membership number, total hectarages, or total FFB volumes, shall be adjusted at the next annual surveillance audit. Your new members can join the group at any stage and shall be assessed according to their readiness to comply with the standard. For example, a group of smallholders who are already at MS A can have new members who are at the Eligibility phase joining the group. The group will be assessed together but the requirements for the new members that will be assessed for will be according to the Milestone they are complying with.

The conversion of certified FFB to IS-CSPO, IS-CSPKO and IS-CSPKE volume and RSPO Credits allocation are as below:

	IS-CSPO	IS-CSPKO	IS-CSPKE	FFB
Eligibility	• 20% *total FFB* 40%	• 2.25% *total FFB* 40%	• 2.75% * total FFB * 40%	• Not applicable
Milestone A	• 20% *total FFB* 70%	• 2.25% *total FFB * 70%	• 2.75% * total FFB * 70%	• Not applicable
Milestone B	• Not applicable	• Not applicable	• Not applicable	• 100%

P&C Group Certification Audit

The RSPO certificate of compliance is awarded to the Group as a whole, and in an annex each individual grower or scheme smallholders is listed with the size of their landholding. All changes in membership number, total hectares or total FFB volumes can be adjusted at the next annual surveillance audit.

9.1.2 Supply Chain Certification Audit

Supply Chain certification includes on-site audit of an operator's management system for supply chain who takes legal ownership and physically handles (including receipt into storage tanks), RSPO Certified Sustainable palm oil products. Any site that is looking for certification shall be operational at least three (3) months before an initial certification audit can be conducted.

Certificates of compliance to the RSPO Supply Chain Certification Standard will be awarded to the organization or Central Office or Group Manager, listing all other companies/operations/sites where applicable who were audited by BSI and have demonstrated full compliance with this system.

The Certificate validity period is five (5) years. In order to maintain continuity of the certification, a Re-certification audit of compliance must take place 4 months before the certificate expired. If certificate has expired, the certificate can be restored within 6 months provided the recertification audit is carried out and all previous Non-conformance is closed. The effective date on the certificate shall be on or after the recertification decision and the expiry shall be based on prior certification cycle.

During the Initial Audit (Certification Audit), all non-conformances shall be addressed to the satisfaction before certification is granted. If non-conformances are not addressed within three (3) months of the audit, a full re-audit shall be required. The audit window for the first Annual Surveillance Audit and all subsequent surveillance including recertification shall follow the provisions stated above.

If a surveillance audit is not conducted within twelve (12) months due to BSI's actions, a maximum 3 months' time extension can requested and approved by the RSPO Secretariat. If the audit is not conducted due to the organization, the certificate will be suspended. In order to reinstate the certification, the surveillance audit shall be conducted within (6) months of the suspension date, otherwise an initial certification audit shall be carried out.

For scope Extension (i.e. To add a site into an existing multi-site certification):

a. Internal audits of the sites that are to be added shall be completed prior to adding to the multi-site certification.
b. If the multi-site scope extension is combined with the existing surveillance audits, then this shall be in addition to existing audit requirements (i.e. additional audits shall be needed to account for these additions).

When a non-conformance is raised for a multisite / group certification at one site and not addressed according to the required timeline, it can lead to suspension of the whole multi-site / group certificate. The Central Office / Group Manager has the option to voluntarily remove that participating site from the certificate. To add the site back in, scope extension rules apply.

9.1.3 RSPO Book and Claim (B&C) Audit

RSPO Book and Claims audit does not require a physical site visit. The remote / offsite audit method applies.

9.1.4 NPP Verification

The New Planting Procedure verification is an "one-off" onsite assessment. After completing the verification including a successful technical review, the Summaries of Assessment and BSI's verification statement shall be forwarded by BSI to the RSPO Secretariat for Public Notification on the RSPO website for minimum of thirty (30) days within five (5) working days from the date the BSI's Verification Statement is finalized. If any comments are raised, your confirmation of satisfactory resolution is required.

9.2 Unannounced program

From the current normative documents stated in 2.1 above, there is no specific requirement for unannounced program for both RSPO Principle and Criteria and also RSPO Supply Chain Certification.

9.3 Non-conformance management

9.3.1 RSPO P&C non-conformance

Non-conformities are categorized as Critical (Major) and Minor. Opportunity For Improvement (OFI) may be raised.

For initial certifications where Critical (Major) non-compliances remain outstanding after twelve months, a full re-assessment is required. For Critical (Major) non-compliances raised during surveillance and re-certification audits shall be closed successfully within 90 days, or the certificate will be suspended, and subsequently withdrawn if the Critical (Major) non-compliances are not addressed within an agreed timeframe as set between BSI and you, not longer than six months from the last day of the audit.

Minor non-compliances will be raised to major if they are not addressed by the time of the following successive audits.

The timeline for non-compliances is accounted from the date of the closing meeting.

If there is recurring Critical (Major) non-compliances on the same indicator (including the supply chain indicators) in successive audits (include surveillance and recertification) will automatically lead to immediate suspension of the certificate. This suspension shall be lifted when the non-compliances are successfully addressed.

If there is recurring minor non-compliances on the same indicator in successive audits (include surveillance and recertification) will automatically be escalated to Critical (Major) non-compliance. If there are five or more Critical (Major) non-compliances within one Principle being observed in an Annual Surveillance Audit or re-certification audit, this will lead to immediate suspension from the RSPO P&C certification. Upon successful closure of the non-compliance within 1 Principle, certificate shall be reinstate.

Non-conformities can also be raised against the Minimum Requirements for Multiple Management Units and Time Bound Plan. All non-conformities raised will be categorised as Major non-conformance. Especially if non-conformance is raised against the uncertified estates, certification cannot be proceed unless it is closed or evidently being actively addressing with RSPO.

It is a requirement that BSI informs RSPO Secretariat within 24 hours of the decision to suspend certification.

9.3.2 RSPO SCC non-conformance

Non-conformities are categorized as Major. Opportunity For Improvement (OFI) may be raised. All non-conformances shall be addressed to the satisfaction by the organization before certification is granted by BSI. For Initial certification, if non-conformances are not satisfactorily addressed within three (3) months of the initial certification audit, a full re-audit shall be required.

Non-conformances raised during surveillance audit against a certified organization are serious and the integrity of the RSPO Supply Chain Certification is at risk. A maximum of one (1) month is to be given to the certified organization to address the non-conformance. The CB shall assess the effectiveness of the corrective and/or preventive actions taken within 14 days after submission of the proposed corrective actions.

Should the non-conformance not be satisfactorily addressed within the one (1) month plus 14 days timeframe, the certificate shall be suspended and subsequently terminated if the non-conformance is not addressed within an agreed timeframe as set by CB and client, not longer than three (3) months from the last day of the audit. A full re-audit shall then be necessary.

Where objective evidence indicates that there has been a demonstrable breakdown in the supply chain caused by the certified client's actions or inactions, and that oil palm products have been or are about to be shipped which are falsely identified as RSPO certified product, then immediate action shall be taken by BSI, and the RSPO Supply Chain certification shall be suspended until such time that the situation has been addressed. It is a requirement that BSI informs RSPO Secretariat within 24 hours of the decision to suspend certification.

10 Audit reporting requirements

At the conclusion of the audit, the audit team will prepare a written report on the audit findings and the audit team leader will present these findings to your organization's senior management at the exit meeting.

The audit findings include a summary of the overall compliance of your system with the requirements of the relevant standard(s) or codes of practice. The final summary report will be subsequently provided after completion of the Audit and closure of any non-conformance.

For RSPO P&C summary report, the summary report shall be finalized within 30 days of the site assessment of the audit, for cases with no major NCs observed. For cases with major NCs, the full report will be finalised within two weeks of the closure of the last major NC, but no later than two weeks following the 90-day closure period. Upon successful certification, the RSPO P&C summary report and the RSPO P&C certificate will be published in the RSPO website. The same report will be published the BSI website.

For RSPO SCC summary report, the summary report shall be finalized and forwarded to RSPO Secretariat within 14 days of closure of the last non-conformance or if there is no non-conformance, within 14 days of the closing meeting. Upon successful certification, the RSPO SCC certificate will be published in the RSPO website.

The summary report will include the following information;

- Summary of the evaluation activity undertaken.
- Objective evidence and information of your organizations compliance to the RSPO P&C or RSPO SCCS or RSPO associated standards.
- Lists any non-compliances and/or non-conformances identified.
- List any stakeholders' comments.
- If applicable production and sales of palm oil and palm oil product.

Non-conformities will be discussed with your team during the Auditor's visit and outlined at the exit meeting. If you are unclear regarding the meaning of anything in your report, please contact your BSI Client Manager.

If non-compliances and/or non-conformances have been raised during your organisations' assessment BSI will provide guidance on the steps that are needed to take place to continue to certification. Such guidance may include timeframes for close out or requirement for re-assessment. BSI cannot provide guidance on how to close out non-compliances and/or non-conformances.

It is your organization's responsibility to respond to the non-compliances and/or non-conformities detailed in your audit report by the designated time frame. Failure to do so may result in suspension or cancellation of your certification.

11 Certification decision

BSI is responsible for, and retain authority for, its decisions relating to certification, including the granting, refusing, maintaining of certification, expanding or reducing the scope of certification, renewing, suspending or restoring following suspension, or withdrawing of certification.

12 Certificate and audit report ownership

A (certified) organization is the owner of an audit report (regarding the decision about who the report may be shared with), whilst BSI is responsible for the report data and therefore holds the ownership of the audit report content.

A (certified) organization is the certificate holder, not the owner. BSI is the data owner of the certificate data.

13 Auditing and certification status information

BSI may have to share the information of your organization relating to the certification and auditing process with the Scheme Owner, the related Accreditation Body, the IAF, GFSI and/or governmental authorities when required.
BSI and the Scheme Owner will share the information regarding your certification status with external parties through the related p latforms/ database.

14 Other persons attending the audit

It is a condition of undertaking an audit that the auditor may be accompanied by other personnel for training, assessment or calibration purposes. This activity may include:

*   training of new auditors by BSI;
*   witness audits by Accreditation Bodies, Scheme Owner and/or BSI;
*   use of technical expert and/or translator and/or observers.

By accepting the BSI contract your organization agrees to cooperate with such process.

15 Scheme Owner platform/ database management

The Scheme Owner maintains a register of certified sites and its status of certification. This register is publicly available on the Scheme Owner website.

The audit documents required by the Scheme Owner will be uploaded to their platform following the Scheme requirements timelines.

16 Scheme Owner audits and communication

The Scheme Owner reserves the right to conduct its own audit or visit to a site once certified in response to complaints and/or as part of the routine Scheme Owner compliance activity to ensure the integrity of the Scheme. Such visits may be announced or unannounced. The certification status may be affected in the event that access to any parts of the site or process or requests is unreasonably refused. The Scheme Owner may contact the site directly in relation to its certification status or for feedback on BSI performance or investigation into reported issues.

17 Communication obligations

17.1 Communication

Your organization has the obligation to immediately communicate with BSI on the following that may affect the validity of the certificate issued to the client or bring BSI's reputation in disrepute:

- any significant changes that affect the compliance with the Scheme requirements and obtain advice of BSI in cases where there is doubt over the significance of a change;
- Notification to BSI of any litigation or serious events or matters that relate to the scope of your certification.
- Changes to organization name, contact address and site details;
- Changes to organization (e.g., legal, commercial, organizational status or ownership) and management (e.g., key managerial, decision-making, or technical staff);
- Major changes to the certified system, scope of operations and product categories covered by the certified scope (e.g. new products, new processing lines, etc.);
- Any other change that renders the information on the certificate inaccurate.
- Any claim or threatened claim against BSI, any member or auditor has performed or is in the course of performing an Audit.

17.2 Additional obligations

Following certification, there are a number of managerial responsibilities which your organization will need to observe to maintain BSI's certification. These include:

- Continued compliance with the relevant systems standard(s) or code(s) of practice;
- Compliance with the BSI Standard Commercial Terms and Conditions and obligations as specified in this document as well as other guidance documentation that may be specifically provided from time-to-time;
- Provide access rights to BSI to conduct an unannounced audit to investigate complaint and to bring observers in the audit where required (for RSPO P&C and RSPO ISH certification).

- Conduct of regular internal reviews of your system, with appropriate documentation of such reviews and of any subsequent corrective actions;
- Meet the requirements of the Certification Agreement. This requires that your organization and products remain compliant with the scheme requirements at and the conditions of certification at all times.
- Fulfil the certification requirements, including implementing appropriate changes when are communicated by BSI in a time appropriate manner.
- Comply with all requirements under any relevant international standard, private standard or code of practice expressly governing the RSPO Certification Systems for P&C; RSPO Supply Chain Certification Systems and other associated RSPO certification systems services including but not limited to:
    i. Make all necessary arrangements to allow the evaluation and continuous assessment activities to take place to maintain your certification. This includes but is not limited to; Equipment, Product, Locations, Areas, Personnel and Sub-contractors.
    ii. Making necessary arrangements for investigation of complaints;
    iii. Making necessary arrangements for witness/compliance assessment by Accreditation Body.
    iv. Making claims regarding certification consistent with the scope of certification; and;
    v. Reproducing copies of the certification to others where relevant, in its entirety or as specified in the certification scheme
- Maintain in place appropriate managerial and control procedures (including a customer complaints management procedure), providing evidence of such when requested by BSI or BSI Malaysia to ensure compliance with all standards, private standard or code of practice the Agreement
- Take appropriate action and documents the actions taken if there are any complaints;
- Immediately inform BSI or BSI Malaysia if there are any claims, complaints and changes of the Client that may affect the validity of the certificate issued to the Client or bring BSI's reputation in disrepute.

18 Complaints and appeals

Please refer to BSI website for information related to complaints and appeals, including timeline and communication channel: Complaints and appeals.

19 BSI Impartiality

Impartiality is the governing principle of how BSI provides its services. Impartiality means acting fairly and equitably in its dealings with people and in all business operations. It means decisions are made free from any engagements of influences which could affect the objectivity of decision making.

Find detailed information here.

20 Misleading statement

Your organization is not permitted to use its certification in a manner that could bring BSI or scheme owner into disrepute. This includes making misleading or unauthorized statements.

21 BSI Mark of Trust and Accreditation Mark rules

The guideline related to access the marks and the related rules is available here.

22 Scheme Owner Logo rules

The usage of the RSPO Trademark, RSPO corporate logo and RSPO labels shall comply with the latest RSPO Rules on Market Communications and Rules. BSI Client Manager will assess the correctness usage of the Trademark logo and claims during the audits.

23 Scheme transition information

RSPO secretariat is initiating its five year review cycle of the 2018 RSPO Principles and Criteria (P&C) Standard, the review of the 2019 RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard as well as 2020 RSPO Supply Chain Certification Standard. RSPO Certification System document and trade and traceability system – prisma – to ensure that the digital system which is fully aligned with the revised standards and certification requirements will also be released by RSPO secretariat.

Further detailed information of this transition for both system documents and standard documents, it is available here.

Contact us
bsigroup.com