

Particulars

About Your Organisation

1.1 Member Name

The Proforest Initiative

1.2 Membership Number

8-0061-07-000-00

1.3 Membership Sector

Organisations

1.4 Membership Category

Affiliate

1.5 Country

United Kingdom

2.0 Does your company or organisation produce, process, consume or sell any palm oil or any products containing derivatives of palm oil?

No

2.2 Please select all the sectors that best describe the business activities of your company or organisation, including your primary RSPO membership sector. You may select multiple sectors and will be required to complete the ACOP form for the relevant sectors

- I am a bank or financial institution that finances or supports companies or organisations that produce or manufacture palm oil, palm kernel oil or related products
- I am a conservation and environmental NGO supporting the sustainable development of the palm oil industry
- I am a social and human development NGO supporting the sustainable development of the palm oil industry
- I am an Affiliate member of the RSPO, indirectly involved in the palm oil industry

Affiliates

1. Operational Profile

1.1 What are the main activities of your organisation?

Proforest helps people manage the world's natural resources sustainably. We are an independent, international organisation that works alongside producers, industry, governments, NGOs and communities to help them understand and address their sustainability challenges, bridge their differences and arrive at effective, integrated solutions. We deliver our work by supporting companies, collaboration and providing knowledge and capacity. Our work builds on a number of steps to achieve positive social and environmental outcomes through awareness, commitment, implementation, integration and scale to deliver goals. Our expertise delivers sustainable natural resource management – from policy, investment and procurement to production on the ground. Our vision is to achieve Sustainable Livelihoods in Sustainable Landscapes, and our approach to responsible sourcing aims to contribute to this transformation.

1.2 What activities has your organisation undertaken to promote sustainable palm oil, the RSPO and/or RSPO members in the reporting period?

We continued to facilitate and to provide technical support to the RSPO Assurance Standing Committee (ASC). The facilitation consisted of meeting coordination, communication, reporting and support to record keeping, while assuring accuracy, credibility of the process, attention to detail and timely progress to ensure ASC fulfils its mandates. In line with the agreement with the Secretariat, the 2 year project was intended to build capacity of Secretariat at the same time with a planned gradual handover, including review of session outlines, materials and minutes increasingly drafted by Secretariat colleagues. The project concluded in June 2022.

In 2022, Proforest has been commissioned by RSPO to conduct a study to assess the robustness of Mass Balance (MB) Chain of Custody (CoC) model, following the RSPO Resolution GA18-2c named "Enhancing the robustness of the RSPO Mass Balance model to accelerate uptake of Certified Sustainable Palm Oil" on 02 December 2021 GA18-2c. The objectives of this study were (i) to assess the robustness of the RSPO MB model, examining both at mill and supply chain levels (ii) to provide recommendations to enhance the robustness and the accessibility of the MB model, including the expected minimum level of environmental and social safeguards required for the non-certified materials entering MB supply chains. We provided these recommendations to ensure continued relevance of RSPO in the context of increasing regulatory pressure from many key markets. A final report was submitted in October and presented to the Standing Committees, who have now approved the report and instructed Secretariat to develop next steps.

POCG

Specifically, with regards to increasing RSPO certification, we carry on our engagement work with low performing actors across the supply chain as part of our role in the Palm Oil Collaboration Group (POCG), an initiative led by several prominent RSPO members, and specifically on the Implementation Reporting Framework (IRF) which features RSPO certification as highest achievable outcome. RSPO certification is one of the main elements which contributes to the composition of the IRF categories, therefore, we have created direct link to the certification. Apart from that, in other working groups under the POCG, like the Independent Verification Working Group, RSPO is included in all discussions around measuring performance across the supply base. We have a representative from RSPO US in one of the working groups – Deforestation Independent Verification. RSPO team members are also invited to the POCG workshops which take place twice every year. In 2022 we built on the relationship with RSPO through the renewed dialogue and aim to have more closer collaboration between the POCG and RSPO moving forward, including the publishing of potential joint statement.

In 2022, Proforest continued to facilitate the POCG LATAM Chapter. The first in-person meeting of this recently created chapter was held in September 2022, where expected outcomes and strategic activities were discussed for its two working groups: Smallholders and Human Rights. Its 2023 roadmap prioritized issues such as the Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) process, traceability data collection and analysis, sustainability management best practices, and grievance management procedures. Second in-person is coming up in 2023, at the fringe of the Inter-America conference, taking place in Miami in June.

Palm Strategy 2025

As part of our Palm Strategy 2025 and priorities to support Sustainable Palm Oil uptake, we have developed the Palm Oil Toolkit (POTK) as part of the Good Growth Partnership's Responsible Demand Project with the financial support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and UK Aid from the UK government via its Forest Governance, Markets and Climate programme from 2020 to 2022. This toolkit is part of the responsible sourcing toolkit designed by Proforest to support companies in implementing commitments on responsible sourcing and production of palm oil, by-products and derivatives. It is an accessible guide to the many initiatives that aim to address key environmental and social issues in the palm oil supply chain, namely deforestation, development on peat and human rights violations. It covered 6 Briefing Notes and Executive Summaries as well as two Discussion Papers in English and Chinese as follow:

- BN01 - Assess and plan implementation
- BN2A – Understand the supply chain: main environmental and social risks
- BN2B – Understand the supply chain: traceability and risk analysis
- BN03 - Engage within and beyond supply chains
- BN04 – Monitor, verify and report
- BN05 – Monitor emerging issues and responses
- DP01 – Gender equality in palm oil production and sourcing
- DP02 - The case for responsible sourcing of palm oil in China

Proforest and RSPO China have co-organised an online webinar in November 2022 and introduced some of the Briefing Notes to the palm oil players in China. The webinar was conducted in Chinese. Please refer to <https://palmoiltoolkit.net> for more information.

Responsible Sourcing and Production

As part of our Responsible Sourcing and Production works, we have a sizeable Palm Oil portfolio, working with companies across the entire supply chain to support the sustainable production and responsible sourcing of palm oil, with RSPO certification advocated as key tool to achieving sustainability goals.

- In Africa, we directly support at least 8 RSPO members producer companies with efforts to achieve RSPO certification, particularly by conducting HCV-HCS assessment (Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda), Social Impact assessment (Ghana, Nigeria), Remediation and Compensation Procedure (Liberia, Ghana), HCV management and monitoring (Ghana).
- In Latin America, two New Planting Procedures (NPP) were carried out by Proforest for RSPO member companies in the Orinoco basin region of Colombia, an area with highly biodiverse tropical savannahs, forest remnants and indigenous communities' territories. Over 30,000 hectares were analyzed within a wider landscape exceeding 100,000 hectares. As an example of our work with palm oil mills, Proforest engaged with over 60 mills that supply a prominent RSPO member in the LATAM region to collect traceability and human rights data and identify/assess social and environmental gaps, and further worked with 12 of them to build capacities for closing them, improving their IRF and RSPO performance. For another RSPO member, Proforest conducted four webinars for different actors along their LATAM palm oil supply chain, fostering discussions and capacity building to bridge gaps in environmental compliance, labor rights, stakeholder engagement, grievance management, and smallholders' inclusion, among others.

RSPO Training

As an RSPO-endorsed training providers for the RSPO Lead Auditor P&C, we delivered in 2022 four RSPO lead auditor Principles & Criteria (P&C) courses in Spanish and English languages with a total of 73 participants as follow:

- RSPO lead auditor P&C with Femexpalma in Mexico, from 14 – 18 March 2022 (in Spanish, 26 participants)
- RSPO lead auditor P&C in Nigeria, from 15-19 August 2022 (in English, 11 participants)
- RSPO lead auditor P&C in Ghana, from 4-7 July 2022 (in English, 16 participants)
- RSPO lead auditor P&C in Malaysia, from 17-21 October 2022 (in English, 20 participants)

We are increasingly providing online and face to face training on HCV/HCS/FPIC/SIA courses in various countries such as Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Malaysia.

Smallholders

In the context of smallholders move towards RSPO certification:

- In the LATAM region, Proforest led two training and capacity building activities on the RSPO ISH certification scheme: (i) a virtual training for Cargill's palm oil supply chain, with 60 participants from mills across the region who have a facilitator role with their respective independent or scheme smallholder groups; and (ii) a face-to-face training on the RSPO ISH standard for 39 people from mills and smallholder groups in the Peruvian Amazon, as part of an IKI (the International Climate Initiative of the German Environment Ministry) funded project.

Proforest also continued its work on the Holistic Program in Mexico, a collaborative initiative with PepsiCo, Nestlé, Cargill, Femexpalma and Oleopalma to promote the sustainable development of the palm oil sector in Mexico. In 2022, RSPO and Oleofinos joined the program. Under this initiative, the first group of smallholders achieved RSPO certification in Mexico in 2022 (116 growers with 1,466 has). The first "Palmeros Sustentables" conference was held with over 250 participants, where past achievements were shared, and other mills and growers were invited to join. Proforest and Femexpalma created a baseline for 4,255 has, identifying 32% RSPO compliance and developing an action plan to close the remaining gaps. Three organic fertilizer alternatives were also identified, as well as a roadmap for their implementation at smallholder and association levels.

We also continued working with PepsiCo and Femexpalma in the 3-year Agrovita initiative, which aims to improve the livelihoods of smallholders and protection of land, water, and biodiversity in the impoverished south-southeast region of Mexico. Four more mills joined the program in 2022, increasing total participation of smallholders to 630 (31% women). Main activities this year included baseline data collection, training for mill technicians (and cascading to producers), establishment of a technical assistance program, and 18 new demonstration plots with 5 mills.

Technical support was also provided to 48 small-scale scheme producers in Guatemala on RSPO P&C implementation to close gaps on occupational health and safety, access to social benefits, and social and environmental assessments.

- In Africa, we provided support to associated smallholders project in a couple of RSPO members producer companies (Ghana, Nigeria).

We also contributed by providing feedback and comments on the RSPO first public consultation of the 2018 RSPO P&C and the 2019 RSPO Independent Smallholder Standards.

Proforest are currently doing the transition from APOI (Africa Palm Oil Initiative) to ASCI (Africa Sustainable Commodities Initiative). APOI, launched by the Tropical Forest Alliance 2020 (TFA) in 2014, focus in the development of principles for responsible palm oil production in West and Central Africa. As part of this, the RSPO P&C 2018 have become a strong reference point, with countries including the P&C into their country principles. At CoP26 in Glasgow in 2021, African Government Ministers gave APOI the mandate to engage with other commodities to ensure that all parties were working towards the same common goals, because working on palm oil in isolation was having less impact on deforestation and social and human rights issues than if they engaged with other commodities in the same production landscape. The Declaration for the Africa Sustainable Commodities Initiative was signed at CoP27 in Egypt in November 2022. This has resulted to the launch of the Africa Sustainable Commodities Initiative publication and marked a critical expansion of the Africa Palm Oil Initiative into a multi-commodity declaration, defining these principles of responsible production of cocoa, coffee, rubber, palm oil and more. ASCI builds and expands upon principles agreed at CoP22 in 2016 for the palm oil sector. The ‘Marrakesh Declaration for Sustainable Development of the Palm Oil Sector’ acknowledged the role of agricultural commodity development as a driver of deforestation, while emphasizing the critical role of forests and forest conservation in addressing climate change. The Marrakesh Declaration has been implemented through the African Palm Oil Initiative (APOI), comprised of ten countries in West and Central Africa: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Edo State (Nigeria), Gabon, Ghana, Liberia, Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone. These countries account for 25% of the world's tropical forest and 75% of Africa's forests. ASCI is an important progression, as a truly multi-stakeholder initiative, with every country engaging at the regional, national and local level throughout the process. Governments have recognized the potential for growth in production of palm oil, cocoa and other agricultural commodities to meet increasing global demand, and to contribute to food security and better livelihoods for millions of Africans, while protecting the region's remaining rainforests. Diversification of food production also provides resilience and improves each country's food security as well as helping to offset the impact of climate change. The Congo Basin alone can hold 30 billion tons of carbon, equivalent to three years of global fuel emissions; and its forests are essential for regional climate stability.

Additionally, we are pursuing our Production Landscapes Programme with funding from DfID, which focuses on landscapes in several countries including Ghana and Indonesia and looks at palm oil, cocoa and rubber sectors in those landscapes. Additionally, we secured funding from IKI (the International Climate Initiative of the German Environment Ministry) for landscape programmes focusing to align deforestation commitments from the international private sector with local and national government climate mitigation initiatives. The programme includes the development and testing of landscape and jurisdictional approaches and guidance, as well as capacity building among local and national stakeholders. Under this IKI programme in Peru, Proforest is supporting the Ministry of Agriculture and Development to develop a National Oil Palm Strategy called “Management instrument to promote sustainable oil palm in Perú” in collaboration with local cooperation entities, producers and industrial actors. In December 2022, Proforest have submitted to the national working group the final draft which is currently under national government revision to seek approval by June 2024. In collaboration with TFA and Coalition for Sustainable Production, an RSPO producer training was delivered for national government staff and small-scale producers in the Amazon region in June 2021, Tocache City, San Martín Region. There has been a large amount of interest of 33 participants from policy makers, producers, indigenous people etc. The IKI landscape programme also covers landscapes in Cote d'Ivoire (San Pedro region) and Ghana as well. In Indonesia, we furthermore co-organised a meeting between the Ministry of National Development Planning and the RSPO SEO to explore alignment options between the Sustainable Jurisdictions Indicators and the RSPO Jurisdictional Approach.

We are also frequently asked by various clients to provide benchmarks of standards including RSPO. For example, as part of the CGF FPC Palm Oil Working Group 2023 priority, we are analyzing how RSPO certification contributes to delivering on EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR).

1.3 What percentage of your organisation's overall activities focus on palm oil?

50.0%

1.4 Did members of your organisation participate in RSPO working groups and/or taskforces in the reporting period?

Yes

1.5 Does your organisation have any past or on-going collaborations with public or private sector palm oil industry players to support them in their efforts to increase the production or consumption of certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO)?

Yes

1.6 How is your organisation's work on palm oil funded?

Through private sector companies and grant funding, depending on the nature of the project or programme work concerned. Also, we cover our costs for training provision via course participant fees and service provisioning for RSPO directly is done via the Proforest Initiative and charged at our lower non-profit rates.

2. Actions for Next Reporting Period

2.1 Please outline activities that your organisation will take in the coming year to promote the production or consumption of certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO)

We aim to continue the portfolio of work described in section 1. Our programmatic funding continues in 2023 and we have a large portfolio of palm oil clients.

Additionally, we are continuing to provide direct support work with RSPO i.e. RSPO MB robustness study or a panel moderation at the RSPO Inter-American conference.

We also aim to contribute to any public consultations by RSPO i.e. the second public consultation of the draft of the (i) RSPO Principles & Criteria 2023 and the (ii) RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard.

We are currently working on benchmarking RSPO against EUDR frameworks.

Challenges and Support

1.1 What significant obstacles or challenges has your company encountered in the promotion of certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO)? What efforts has your company taken to address these obstacles or challenges?

- Awareness of RSPO in the market
- Difficulties in the certification process
- Certification of smallholders
- Competition with non-RSPO members
- High costs in achieving or adhering to certification
- Human rights issues
- Insufficient demand for RSPO-certified palm oil
- Low usage of palm oil
- Reputation of palm oil in the market
- Reputation of RSPO in the market
- Supply issues
- Traceability issues
- No challenges faced
- Others

Others

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1.2 In addition to the actions already reported in this ACOP report, what other ways has your company supported the vision of the RSPO to transform markets to make sustainable palm oil the norm?

- Communication and/or engagement to transform the negative perception of palm oil
- Engagement with business partners or consumers on the use of CSPO
- Engagement with government agencies
- Engagement with peers and clients
- Promotion of CSPO through off product claims
- Promotion of CSPO outside of RSPO venues such as trade workshops or industry associations
- Promotion of physical CSPO
- Providing funding or support for CSPO development efforts
- Research & Development support
- Stakeholder engagement
- No actions taken
- Others

Others

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1.3 If your company has any other publicly-available reports or information regarding its palm oil-related policies and activities, please provide the links here

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