

Palm oil companies join NGOs to find palm oil solutions

Jakarta, 28 June 2013 – A group of progressive palm oil companies together with environmental and social NGOs today announced their intention to push the boundaries of current requirements of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). The group says that the new RSPO standards agreed by RSPO members at its meeting in Kuala Lumpur last April do not go far enough to adequately address the most critical issues facing the industry today.

The Palm Oil Innovation Group (POIG) released the following joint statement at the Tropical Forest Alliance meeting in Jakarta:

“We are innovators in one or more aspects of palm oil production; and we are NGOs active in environmental and social issues and together we wish to show what responsible palm oil production could look like. We hope others who want to tackle the most burning issues facing our industry will join us.

The current negative image of palm oil needs to be reversed if the sector is to thrive. The palm oil innovation group will demonstrate that by setting and implementing ambitious standards that stretch the RSPO principles and criteria we can break the link between deforestation and social conflict and palm oil.

One of our objectives is to develop a Palm Oil Innovation Group Charter¹ and to explore ways to increase the market demand for palm oil products that are produced by innovators within the industry. It's not an easy challenge, but this is a call for other innovators to join us.

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¹ See annex 1

Palm Oil Innovations Group

The POIG aims to build on RSPO standards and commitments by both demonstrating innovation to implement RSPO existing standards but also on additional critical issues. With a focus on the three thematic areas of environmental responsibility, partnerships with communities, and corporate and product integrity, POIG members will strengthen their commitments to socially and environmentally responsible palm oil production.

The POIG is a constructive group that focuses on leveraging its experience to innovate the palm oil industry and act as advocates for these innovations. The current negative image of palm oil needs to be reversed if the industry is to thrive. The Palm Oil Innovation Group will demonstrate that by setting and implementing ambitious standards, the industry can in particular break the link between deforestation, and human, land and labour rights violations, and palm oil.

Objectives and Purpose:

- promotes and supports innovation and improvements in oil palm plantation and extraction mill management on a range of environmental, social and governance issues, and seeks to have the innovations rolled out across the palm oil industry and reflected in the RSPO standard.
- creates added value for innovative and progressive producers through increased market recognition and demand for palm oil products from innovative and improved practices.
- acts as a forum for open discussions and sharing of experience with innovations and improved oil palm plantation and extraction mill management practices.
- acts as a forum to collectively engage with governments towards achieving recognition and support for innovations, and have them included in regulations and law.

POIG Charter Elements:

1. Environmental Responsibility:

- 1.1 Breaking the link between Palm Oil Expansion and Deforestation: Forest protection through conserving and restoring High Conservation Value (HCV) and High Carbon Stock (HCS) areas:**
- 1.2 No peat clearance and maintenance of peat lands:**
- 1.3 Greenhouse gas (GHG) Accountability:**
- 1.4 Pesticides use minimization:**
- 1.5 Chemical fertilizer:**
- 1.6 GMOs prohibition:**
- 1.7 Water accountability:**
- 1.8 Protect and conserve wildlife:**

2. Partnerships with Communities

- 2.1 Comprehensive Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of indigenous peoples and local communities:**
- 2.2 Food Security:**
- 2.3 Effective Conflict resolution:**
- 2.4 Social Conditions:**
- 2.5 Workers Rights:**
- 2.6 Support Palm Oil Small Holders:**

3 Corporate and Product Integrity

- 3.1 Transparency and Corruption:**
- 3.2 Traceability and Segregation:**
- 3.3 Report on Social, Labour and Environmental Performance:**
- 3.4 RSPO Certification and Company Operations:**