

**MINUTES OF FOURTH MEETING OF GHANA NATIONAL INTERPRETATION
WORKING GROUP ON ROUNDTABLE ON SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL PRINCIPLES
HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
14TH September 2010**

Date: Tuesday 14th of September 2010

Venue: Centre for African Wetlands

C/O P.O Box LG67

University of Ghana, Legon

Accra, Ghana

Time: 9 am – 3 pm

ATTENDANCE

Annex 1.

PROGRAM:

Annex 2.

SUMMARY

The meeting started at 9:00 am after the registration of the participants. Miss Anke Massart (Secretary for the Ghana National Interpretation Working Group - GNIWG) welcomed the working group members and gave a brief outlook for the day's program, the objectives and the time line of the process on the National Interpretation. The major task for the day was to reduce the sum of major indicators as the group realized that they have the highest percentage of major indicators among the countries working on RSPO. Further, comments from the website, held forums and the public consultation period were presented and discussed among the group members. The meeting ended with the outlook on the tasks left to do until the submitting of the final draft of the National Interpretation end of October and of projects which should follow afterwards.

INTRODUCTION

Ms. Massart gave an overview about the current Ghana National Interpretation process and the steps to finalize the document. These are to work on the major/minor status of the indicators of the National Interpretation and which major tasks have to be tackled in the next meetings. Special focus was given on the supply chain certification system, the three types of the production units were presented once more.

- Unit 1: Mill and their Scheme Smallholders, producing certified CPO
- Unit 2: Independent Smallholders, producing certified FFB
- Unit 3: Downstream Actors, ranging from refiners and blenders till retailers

Further Ms. Massart explained that for each unit there is an own certification system. After this point the definitions for Scheme and Independent Smallholders as for the Ghanaian context were presented to the Working Group, as they were defined by the Smallholder Working Group in the August meetings.

Then the group was taken through the Ghana National Interpretation Process starting in October 2009 with the first meeting of the Working Group. Since then three drafts were drawn and sent out for public consultation each time, a special Smallholder Working Group was formed, which worked through the guidance of the Scheme and Independent Smallholders. To address more people fora were held on topics like 1) Environmental and Natural Resources, 2) Labour and 3) Smallholders.

Further the future steps were presented which are

- Finalizing the fourth draft, and its public consultation period until the 3rd October
- Field Test of the National Indicators at the estates of the major producers in October
- Submitting of the final draft to the Executive Board for approval

NATIONAL INDICATORS – Major/Minor

Ms. Anke Massart defined to the group the context of the major and the minor indicators. Major means the unit has to comply with the indicator by the audit of the certification body. A certificate of conformance with RSPO P&C cannot be issued while any major nonconformities are outstanding. Major nonconformities found during surveillance assessments need to be addressed within 60 days, or the certificate will be suspended. Major nonconformities not addressed within a further 60 days will result in the certificate being withdrawn.

If the unit is compliant with all the majors the RSPO-certificate is valid for five years, before the end of the five years a re-assessments has to take place and also annually monitoring and surveillance assessments . Minor nonconformities will be raised to major if they are not addressed by the following surveillance assessment.

The rules for the National Indicators is that at least 45% of all indicators have to be major whereby there are fixed major indicators defined by the RSPO Board. Further it was shown that compared to Malaysia, Indonesia and other countries working on RSPO Ghana is the one having the highest percentage (61.82%). This meaning that the Ghana National Interpretation is most difficult to achieve and that there is a need to reduce the number of major indicators to ensure that Ghanaian producers can apply for certification. Then the Working Group went through a list of major indicators which status was possible be discuss. In the end nine major indicators were changed to minors, resulting in a percentage of major indicators of 53.6%.

COMMENTS WEBSITES/FORUMS

The Working Group discussed three comments given on the website.

- 1) **Criterion 7.3:** *New plantings since November 2005, have not replaced primary forest or any area required to maintain or enhance one or more High Conservation Values.*

The major problem is to prove to the certification body that there was compliance to this criterion since 2005 till 2010, as the RSPO-process in Ghana started just 2008. That meaning that there is/was no official HCV system in place that can "officially" ensure compliance with this - and certainly not for the period 2005-2010 (or whenever such a system is finally available).

Three options were explained to the group to find a suitable solution for this time gap based on the following paragraph: "HCVs assessments should be conducted according to the National Interpretation of the HCV criteria, or according to the Global HCV Toolkit if a National Interpretation is not available [see Definitions] ...

Option 1: " land conversions that took place in the period 2005 - [agreement on date for NI] are only acceptable if a full, legal EIA was undertaken and a retrospective assessment in relation to HCVs concludes that HCVs are unlikely to have been destroyed"

- The environmental organizations among the GNIWG stated in this meeting that it would be possible from their side to draw statements for a retrospective HCV assessment,
- In Ghana there is so far one RSPO-certified auditor (Ghana Wildlife Society), other like the Conservation Alliance may apply rather soon

Option 2: to follow the example of Malaysia/Indonesia which stated to be compliant to the specific guidelines for November 2005 – November 2007, as they were already working on their RSPO-guidelines during this time

Option 3: as Thailand stated as time frame: specific guidelines for November 2005 - date approval Thai NI

For producers in Ghana this would mean:

Specific guidance for plantation development in period: November 2005 until date when Ghana NI is approved

- Record the date of land preparation and the beginning of operation
- Assess HCV in the plantation
- In case where there is a HCV within oil palm plantation, prepare a rehabilitation plan to conserve such area for RSPO certification
- In case where there is a HCV within oil palm plantation but cannot be rehabilitated or in the process of rehabilitation, such area must be set aside for conservation. Other fields can still be certified.

The group agreed on the following version in the guidance for now:

- *HCVs assessments should be conducted according to the National Interpretation of the HCV criteria, or according to the Global HCV Toolkit if a National Interpretation is not available [see Definitions]. Land conversions that took place in the period 2005 - [agreement on date for NI] are only acceptable if a full, legal EIA was undertaken and a retrospective assessment in relation to HCVs concludes that HCVs are unlikely to have been destroyed. New plantings must be in compliance with existing regulatory requirements that relate to social and environmental impact assessment i.e. SIEA (criterion 7.1) and also comply with the legalized land spatial planning.*
-
- *Specific guidance for plantation development in period November 2005 until date when Ghana NI is approved:*
 - *-Record the date of land preparation and the beginning of operation*
 - *-Assess HCV in the plantation*
 - *-In case where there is a HCV within oil palm plantation, prepare a rehabilitation plan to conserve such area for RSPO certification*
 - *-In case where there is a HCV within oil palm but cannot be rehabilitated or in the process of rehabilitation, such area must be set aside for conservation. Other fields can still be certified.*

Another comment from the website was in regard to **Criterion 4.4: Practices maintain quality and availability of surface and ground water.**

The question was raised if the National Buffer Zone Policy could be summarized in some sentences for practical use? The group agreed on the following insertion into the NI.

“The recommendations on buffer widths are:

1. *municipal reservoir shoreline protective buffer: 60 to 90 meters (e.g. Weija Dam, Lake Bosomtwe);*
2. *major perennial rivers/streams: 10 to 60 meters (e.g. Volta, Tano, Offin),*
3. *minor perennial streams: 10 to 15 meters;*
4. *important intermittent streams: 10 to 20 meters;*
5. *and streams within forest reserves: 10 to 50 meters.*
6. *Wetlands will require a buffer zone of 30-meters around the perimeter as defined from the high water elevation.*

Note: slope width of buffer:

15-20 % add 3 meters

20-25 % add 10 meters

25-30 % add 20 meters”

Another comment was on **Criterion 4.2: Practices maintain soil fertility at, or where possible improve soil fertility to, a level that ensures optimal and sustained yield.**

In the guidance it was written: *Managers should ensure that best agricultural practice is followed. Thereby, the establishment of cover crops is highly recommended. In addition, leaf fronds should be **packed** in the field.* It was found that “packed” is not the right expression, the GNIWG decided to replace “packed” with “stacked”.

After the website- comments several comments raised in the various fora and by working on the Independent Smallholder guidance were discussed among the group and changes will be integrated into the fourth draft.

OUTLOOK

After this fruitful discussion among the group members the National Coordinator spread her word of thanks for all the contribution and help during this establishment process of the NI towards the audience. Furthermore she stated the importance of the following final steps.

- Public Consultation Period: 20/09/10 – 3/10/10
- Field Testing of National Indicators (25/10 – 30/10)
- Submission of document to RSPO Executive Board: 31/10/10

After the submission of the NI future projects have to take place:

- Bringing major producers to RSPO and therefore review Indicators/Guidance
- Bringing Scheme Smallholders to RSPO and therefore review Indicators/Guidance
- Bringing Independent Smallholder to RSPO and therefore review Indicators/Guidance

The major producers (BOPP, Norpalm and GOPDC) decided to conduct a field testing in regard to the indicators of the RSPO P&C. The field testing will be conducted end of October by an independent auditor, and will be an important step as it will give each producer the opportunity to see which conditions have to be addressed in the company to comply with the Ghanaian P&C of the RSPO document.

Prepared by Isabel Schlegel

Annex 1: Attendants 4th Ghana National Interpretation Working Group Meeting

Agronomy, Milling and Research	
Ghana Oil Palm Development Company (GOPDC) Ltd.	Anke Massart
Ghana Oil Palm Development Company (GOPDC) Ltd.	Emmanuel K. Wiafe
Ghana Oil Palm Development Company (GOPDC) Ltd.	Isabel Schlegel
Ghana Oil Palm Development Company (GOPDC) Ltd.	B.K. Oppong
TOPP Ltd.	Charles M. Sackay
TOPP Ltd.	Odartey Lamptey
TOPP Ltd.- Smallholder	Martin K. Arthur
TOPP Ltd.- Smallholder	Paul Frimpong Tandoh
BOPP	Victor Zutah
BOPP	Neneyo Mate-Kole
BOPP/TOPP/UNILEVER	Samuel Avaala
Norpalm Gh. Ltd.	Frank Owusu Amrado
Norpalm Ghana Ltd.	Charles Okata Mate-Kole
SG Sustainable Oil Ghana	Ransford Arthur
SG Sustainable Oil Ghana	Ofori Larrey
Golden Star Oil Palm	Isaac Quarm
EMILAND Farms	Samuel Akpobi
Kwaebibirim Palm Oil Millers Association	Barima Sarpong Kumankuma II
Ministry of Food and Agriculture	Susana Yohuno
AGRISERV	Raja A. Najjar
Environment & Natural Resources	
Ghana Sumatra	B.N. Nuertey
ADVANCE/ TUF	Charles Ofon Addo
NCRC	J. Agyei- Ohemp
IDS, UCC/UAI	E. Amemkwah
COPAMA	Yaw A. Boateng
CSIR – WRI	Collin Tay
Conservation Alliance	Vincent Awotwe Pratt
Water Resource Commission	Eric Muala

WWF Ghana	Glen Asomaning
Ghana Wildlife Society	Robert Oteng- Appan
Legal, License and Social	
Private consultant - Labour and Human Resources	Cornelius Yawson
West Africa Fair Fruit Company (Solidaridad)	Rosemary Addo
West Africa Fair Fruit Company (Solidaridad)	Hans Perk
West Africa Fair Fruit Company (Solidaridad)	Abdulai A. Nafeo
Ghana Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU)	Walter Atiako
International Finance Corporation (IFC)	Ken Key
Economics and Labour	
Nestlè	Klutse Kudom
Nestlè CWA	Patrick Afari
GTZ - PHD	Susanne Vãth

Annex 2: Program 4th GNIWG Meeting

Date: Tuesday 14 September		
8.30 – 9.00	Arrival & Registration participants.	Centre for African Wetlands Building
9.00 – 10.00	Introduction to RSPO and Ghana NI Process	
10.00 – 10.15	Coffee break.	
10.15 – 12.00	Review National Indicators and Guidance Major Producers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current Indicators. - Comments on Indicators. - Status Major/Minor. 	
12.00 – 13.00	Review Guidance Scheme Smallholders	
13.00 – 13.45	Lunch	
13.45 – 14.30	Review Guidance Independent Smallholders	
14.30 – 15.00	Closure Remarks Way forward	