

Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)

The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) is a non-profit association based in Zurich, Switzerland. It brings together stakeholder groups from 7 sectors of the palm oil industry: oil palm growers, palm oil processors and traders, consumer goods manufacturers, retailers, banks and investors, environmental/nature conservation NGOs, and social/developmental NGOs. RSPO was founded in 2004 with the mission to develop and implement a sustainability standard for palm oil and advance the engagement of stakeholders.

Since 2008, RSPO has issued a standard for sustainably produced palm oil based on 8 Principles and 43 Criteria. This has now become the most-used standard worldwide for sustainably produced palm (kernel) oil. Around 10% of the palm oil traded worldwide is certified to the RSPO standard.

With some 386 members, Germany is the country with the most RSPO members (total membership currently numbers around 3650).

RSPO Principles and Criteria

The RSPO Principles and Criteria for the Production of Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO P&C) are globally applicable guidelines.

The Roundtable has developed 8 principles and 43 practical criteria to define the sustainable production of palm oil. These are designed to ensure that the basic rights of indigenous landowners, local communities, workers in producing firms, and smallholders and their families are respected and considered fully. The RSPO P&C also seek to guarantee that from November 2005 onwards no additional rainforest areas or high conservation value areas are cleared for palm oil production, and that millers and growers minimise their environmental impacts.

RSPO members must comply with the following **8 Principles**:

1. Commitment to transparency
2. Compliance with applicable laws and regulations, e.g. concerning legal entitlements to use cropping areas
3. Commitment to long-term economic and financial viability
4. Use of appropriate, proven and exemplary practices by growers and millers, for instance to maintain soil fertility and prevent erosion over the long term
5. Environmental responsibility and conservation of natural resources and biodiversity
6. Responsible consideration of employees, and of individuals and communities affected
7. Responsible development of new plantings
8. Commitment to continuous improvement in key areas of activity or when using agrochemicals.

The RSPO P&C must be revised every five years. This review is conducted in accordance with the stipulations made by ISEAL Alliance, the global association for sustainability standards. The first review of the general P&C began on that basis in 2012. The first revised P&C were adopted in April 2013 by RSPO members at an extraordinary general assembly.

Figure 1:
RSPO logo



Supply chain options

There are four different options for sourcing RSPO-certified palm oil:

- **Identity Preserved (IP):** Sustainable palm oil from a specific production site remains separated from other palm oil throughout the supply chain.
- **Segregation (SG):** Sustainable palm oil from various production sites remains separated from other, non-certified palm oil throughout the supply chain.
- **Mass Balance (MB):** Sustainable palm oil from a certified production site is monitored administratively along the supply chain, but is blended with non-certified palm oil.
- **Book and Claim (B and C):** The supply chain is not tracked. Final consumer product manufacturers or retailers can purchase RSPO Credits covering their required quantities of sustainable palm oil or palm kernel oil. In this manner, companies are assured that certified sustainable palm oil was produced somewhere in the world in the amount matching the volume of certificates purchased by the company.

Certification procedure

To gain RSPO certification, a company must first become an RSPO member. After securing membership, a company can commission a certification body approved by RSPO to certify its operations (accredited certification bodies are listed on the RSPO website, see http://www.rspo.org/en/certification_bodies).

Companies which have gained RSPO certification are listed on the RSPO website (see http://www.rspo.org/en/current_list_of_supply_chain_certification). Only these members may sell certified palm (kernel) oil.

Audit frequency

Audits are conducted annually. If audits are successful, certificates only need to be renewed every 5 years.

Trademark communication and use

Companies which use RSPO palm oil can communicate this on their products and on their website. RSPO has produced rules for market communication and claims.

The communication rules define, among other things, how the RSPO logo may be used on products.

You can download the rules for communication [here](#).

Costs

The extra costs incurred by sourcing certified palm oil differ depending upon the certification option chosen by a company.

The physically segregated options (IP and SG) are more expensive than the others because here the palm oil is physically separated from non-certified palm oil, which results in additional costs for transport and handling.

Current price information on Identity Preserved, Segregation and Mass Balance can be requested from oil and fat suppliers. The prices of RSPO Credits for sustainable palm oil can be found at <https://www.rspo.org/palmtrace>.

In all trading systems, RSPO levies a fee and information about the fee can be found here - <https://www.rspo.org/palmtrace>. Part of the fee is for RSPO to finance its ongoing work to promote sustainable palm oil production and part of it goes to UTZ who provide traceability services and the marketplace for credit trading for RSPO.

Contact

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