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Responsible Development of New Oil Palm Plantings – RSPO’s Approach*

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The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) was established in 2004 to promote the production and use of sustainable palm oil for people, planet and prosperity. The RSPO is a non-profit multi-stakeholder initiative which has a vision to “transform the markets to make sustainable palm oil the norm” and has a mammoth task ahead to materialise this vision. This paper provides information on the RSPO New Planting Procedure and compares it with feasibility studies carried out by growers and investors.

The RSPO New Planting Procedure (NPP) is a process that is required prior to actual land development by RSPO members. The main aim of the NPP is to have a knowable and transparent a priori knowledge as to the compliance of the new planting criteria. The member prepares the plan, verifies it through a third party assessor and the results of the independent verification is posted on the RSPO website for 30 days for public comments. The NPP is not a standard but acts as a process to ensure that the member and RSPO would know at an early stage, if there were any non-compliance of the RSPO standard.

The RSPO NPP was proposed on 20 November 2008, formalised in May 2009 and came into effect for all new oil palm plantings from 1 January 2010. Prior to 2008, knowledge of the compliance to the RSPO new plantings criteria was ‘post-priori’. As such, the NPP is seen as a powerful risk-management tool for RSPO members. RSPO would be aware of any misinterpretation of the standard that had occurred at an early stage.

Keywords: *New planting procedure, oil palm, RSPO, high conservation value, FPIC.*

