

**ABSTRACT**  
**Challenges in auditing against RSPO Standard**  
**SIRIM QAS**

RSPO Principles and Criteria Malaysia National Interpretation (MY-NI) April 2008 has included Indicators under each Criterion with guidance notes. These notes provided invaluable assistance to auditors in forming a conclusion on compliance. This is especially crucial in cases where any deviation would constitute a major non-compliance which leads to not being able to be certified unless rectifying actions are taken.

Different levels of interpretation of these indicators by auditors and the management of certification units would make the audit process challenging. One of the many indicators to cite as an example of the different levels of interpretation is the protection of water courses and wetlands which specified the need to have riparian buffers.

Identification and management of HCV sites and ERT species would be another example where different opinions may arise. This is especially true in a biologically very diverse ecosystem in the country. Determination of endangered, rare and threatened species is still at the research level.

There is also a challenge to the certification bodies to conduct a comprehensive audit of the principles, criteria and indicators for each Certification Unit within reasonable practical and realistic duration in accordance to prescribed audit techniques. Owing to uniqueness of many estates separated by distances ; auditors would have to spend part of the auditing time for travelling to inspect these sites to obtain a representative sample of the Certification Unit audited .