

Challenges and Limitations of RSPO Program Audit, a Review Based on Auditing Experiences of SAI Global Indonesia

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Certification held important roles for providing assurance of the RSPO stakeholders. SAIGI, as one of the approved Certification Body (CB), would like to share CB's challenge and limitation experienced and how to deal with in order to maintain CB's credibility.

Although establishment of the audit criteria of RSPO P&C and RSPO SCC involved multi discipline and represent different kind of RSPO stake holders, CB still identified different interpretation of criteria and indicators. There are some "grey" areas in the P&C and different level of understanding that lead to different interpretation of criteria and indicators e.g. for HCV and OHS application in the oil palm plantation. What are the boundaries set and how deep the assessment has to be conducted?

As auditors who have more experience in management system auditing, we used to explore all necessary indicators until the objective evidences collected adequate to support compliance to the standard requirements. During audit of RSPO P&C, CB identified that sometimes indicators do not adequately reflect compliance against criteria, or there are indicator which less stringent compared to the legal requirements. When dealing with this kind of situations, CB engaged technical expert, for their knowledge and justification. CB referred to universal principles or other equivalent principles. CB also tried to look beyond indicators but also justified whether the criteria and principles are being complied with. Adequate audit time allocation and focus on the high risk area during audit is one of the key principles.

CB found that some revisions of the RSPO standard, (e.g. new partial certification requirements) have not been well disseminated yet to the grower/producer and this lead to difficulties in arranging assessment of the requirements. In addition, difficulties were also found when acting as first CB who assesses partial certification requirements on client with many mills under Time Bound Plan. Dealing with only one of the Mills but had to have access to all necessary information for all units under the Time Bound Plan is another challenges. Adequate time have to be allocated for assessing partial certification requirements, excluding time allocation for assessing other requirements for mill and its supply bases.

We have limited experience in SC auditing, however we experienced that the main limitation and challenges in SC auditing is that the client/prospect having poor understanding of SC requirements and SC certification requirements. Therefore we have to put more effort in disseminating of SC requirement and SC certification requirements to our prospect until they understand what the choices are and what requirements to be fulfilled.