

Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition for-India (I-SPOC) 10th Members Meeting January 19, 2024

Objectives

- 1. Updates from Secretariat**
 - I-SPOC updates
 - Activities since last meeting in April 2023
 - Knowledge Products released or to be released
- 2. Roundtable discussion on:**
 - a) Trade of Sustainable Palm oil and its implications along with providing inputs about:**
 - Developments on trade (each participant's perspective based on their organization)
 - Issues in trade and uptake of sustainable palm oil by the value chain actors
 - Support required by I-SPOC in making the transition
 - Way Forward
 - b) Domestic Production of Sustainable Palm Oil along with that providing inputs about:**
 - Developments regarding production of palm oil in India (role of the supply chain actors in promoting domestic production of palm oil in India)
 - Issues in production of palm oil and the uptake of sustainable palm oil
 - Support required by I-SPOC in making the transition
 - Way Forward
- **Deliberation on the way forward for I-SPOC**
- **Useful Resources: Presentation on Forest Forward Program by WWF-India**

Summary of the Proceedings

- 1. Updates from Secretariat**

Bhavya Sharma from CRB started the meeting by setting the context followed by giving a brief update on the activities that have been undertaken by the coalition with various stakeholders, post the Members Meeting in April 2023.
- 2. Updates since April 2023**
 - a. I-SPOC conducted the first open day for 2023 on the 5th May 2023 in Mumbai. The event was attended by major palm oil sustainability experts from AAK, Patanjali Foods Limited, Galaxy Surfactants Limited and Malaysian Palm Oil Council (MPOC) amongst others.
 - b. I-SPOC hosted the Stakeholder Conclave on Sustainable Palm Oil on the 24th of May 2023. The event aimed to facilitate discussions and gather insights from key stakeholders, including government representatives, businesses, and policymakers, on integrating sustainability practices into domestic palm oil production in India. The discussions

focused on the global vegetable oil scenario, the linkages between National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct (NGRBC) and National Mission on Edible Oils- Oil Palm (NMEO-OP), along with looking at the role of various stakeholders in transitioning to sustainable palm oil. To read the summary report, please click [here](#).

- c. CRB and RSPO finalized and launched the Policy Input Note on '[Towards a Policy Framework for Financing Sustainable Palm Oil in India](#).'
- d. I-SPOC has also drafted a briefing paper on **Comprehending and Implementing 'Traceability' within the Indian Palm Oil Value Chain**. This paper will be utilized to raise awareness about the traceability challenges related to the EUDR and to engage stakeholders in discussions and initiatives regarding traceability issues.
- e. Engagement with States: I-SPOC has been engaging with the states where the NMEO-OP mission is being implemented. The goal of these engagements has been to initiate discussions on integrating sustainability into domestic production of palm oil. I-SPOC has finalized a briefing paper on [Aligning Sustainability Principles into Oil Palm Production Policy in India](#). The paper aims to offer recommendations to both central and state governments for aligning sustainability principles within the national palm oil production initiative. Additionally, it will serve as a tool to engage businesses and stakeholders involved in palm oil production and related activities across the country.
- f. Engagement with Financial Institutions (FIs): I-SPOC has been engaging with FIs to increase awareness on their role in agro-commodities, especially palm oil. I-SPOC aims to organize capacity building workshop (s) with FIs in 2024 in order to build their capacity on the subject, understand their challenges and identify how I-SPOC can support FIs in integrating sustainability into agro-commodity lending especially for palm oil .

3. Roundtable discussion

A round table discussion was conducted to collect the insights from the members about

- 1) the development of trade of palm oil and
- 2) developments regarding the production of sustainable palm oil in India.

The members shared their perspectives from their respective organizations and highlighted areas where support from I-SPOC is needed to facilitate the transition.

- During the discussion, Kamal from WWF- Singapore emphasized the importance of engaging new NGOs and collaborating with them on policy matters, as well as leveraging I-SPOC to unite a significant portion of the market. He stressed the need to focus on engaging premium multinational corporations (MNCs) in India and suggested that I-SPOC could serve as a facilitator to bring non-RSPO members into the coalition and advance collective efforts.
- Harshal Thakare from Galaxy Surfactants suggested the idea of listing the top 20-30 companies as a starting point for further action. He emphasized the importance of influencing mid-level companies and engaging with small enterprises to broaden the impact of sustainability initiatives and the need to focus on large companies that control

the majority stake.

- Aakash Deep Arora from RSPO highlighted the importance of collaborating with other member organizations. Additionally, he mentioned an upcoming workshop in February for Certification Bodies (CB) on the European Union's Due Diligence Regulation (EUDR) tailored for Indian companies. The workshop will be organized by RSPO in collaboration with CII-CESD and Preferred by Nature.
- Swapnil Patil from IFFCO Allana discussed trends, demand issues, and volumes of palm oil. He further highlighted the growing interest in Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (CSPO) in the Indian market. He provided an estimate of the total usage of CSPO and emphasized the need for certification in plantations in India. To capitalize on this information, he proposed the idea of leveraging it within I-SPOC to enhance the market's growth potential.
- Vishal from WWF-India talked about the concerns of growing production in India. He underscored the importance of considering the impact of production expansion on government and privately-owned unclassified forests in these areas. Vishal emphasized the necessity for cautious engagement with state governments and thoughtful policy development to prevent environmental challenges similar to those faced in Malaysia and Indonesia from arising in India. In alignment with the same he mentioned that WWF-India is engaging with biodiversity-rich regions like Assam and planning to engage with Arunachal Pradesh with the help of CRB. He also talked about the partnership with Godrej in making one whole supply line sustainable and also how they are engaging with larger companies on the same.
- Pratibha from WWF- India talked about WWF's certification project in Vijayawada and the ongoing process of internal gap assessment of the same. She also mentioned their new grant with RSPO called RSSF grant to have domestic sustainable supply chains within India keeping up with NMEO-OP 2021.
- Kalyan Verma from WWF-India spoke about increased engagement with the members and added that we should collectively bring in at least 10 more industries for the next meeting.

4. **Presentation on Forest Forward Program by WWF-India**

Pratibha from WWF- India delivered a presentation on the Forest Forward Program, where WWF collaborates with companies (currently 26 member companies) to align their sustainability, social impact, and business goals with forest conservation efforts. She outlined how the program addresses legal requirements, brand value, climate targets, and a company's impact on nature through a commit, act, and collaborative framework. Pratibha highlighted WWF's assistance in implementing responsible sourcing and improving forest management practices. She presented a case study featuring HP Inc. and demonstrated how WWF developed paper footprint calculating technology for this purpose. Pratibha extended an invitation to members and observers to participate in the Forest Forward Program, encouraging them to become the first Indian company to join.

Annex 1: List of Attendees

S.NO.	Name	Company
1	Kamal Prakash Seth	WWF- Singapore
2	Shivnayan Aggarwal	RSPO
3	Aadarsh Mohandas	Preferred by Nature
4	Vishal Dev	WWF-India
5	Pratibha Baveja	WWF-India
6	Kalyan Verma	WWF-India
7	Swapnil Patil	IFFCO Allana
8	Rijit Sengupta	CRB
9	Bhavya Sharma	CRB
10	Harshal Thakare	Galaxy Surfactants
11	Aakash Deep Arora	RSPO
12	Bhavit Pant	Rainforest Alliance
13	S.P. Kamrah	IVPA