

WWF-UK
Phase 1: Mid Term Evaluation Consultancy of
HSBC funded Climate Solutions Partnership:
Asia Sustainable Palm Oil Links (ASPOL) Programme

Jan 2020 – December 2024

TERMS OF REFERENCE

19/05/22

Pillar Name(s)	Asia Sustainable Palm Oil Links (ASPOL) Programme
Programme Location(s)	China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, UK
Names of Programme Executants	Commissioned by WWF-UK as office with main accountability to the donor. Sonia Sezille (Climate Solutions Partnership Programme Manager); Lesley King (Design & Impact Advisor)
Period to Be Evaluated	Jan 2020-now
Potential Sites to Visit	TBC
Programme Budget Sources and Amounts (for period to be evaluated)	\$10million USD over the 5 years
Names of Implementing Partners	WWF: China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, UK

PROJECT/PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The Asia Sustainable Palm Oil Links (ASPOL) Programme is a USD\$10 million five year programme, and is a pillar of the WWF-WRI- HSBC Climate Solutions Partnership (CSP). Having commenced in January 2020, amongst the onset of COVID- 19, the programme has reached its mid-point with WWF Network Standards requiring an internal mid-term evaluation to be facilitated by a third party evaluator. This is also the right time to learn from the previous 2.5 years in order to be able to apply that learning to the coming 2.5 years.

Palm oil is a significant driver of deforestation, environmental degradation and GHG emissions, whilst also being important to food security and the economy of Less Economically Developed Countries. The Asia Pacific palm oil market dominated overall global demand in 2015. Global palm oil production grew from 15 million tonnes in 1995 to around 72 million tonnes in 2018, and the area under production expanded from 8 million ha to 23 million ha during the same period. Oil palm covers 23.75mn ha globally, 17 million ha of which comes from Indonesia and Malaysia.

Hence, palm oil plays an important role in global and regional food supplies of countries, and traded products and supply chains of businesses. It is also a major force for habitat change in Southeast Asia. As such, sustainable palm oil production and consumption that minimises negative social and environmental impacts and brings positive development benefits to men and women in local communities, businesses and national governments has emerged as an urgent response to poor social and environmental practices at the production level.

Programme Goals and Objectives:

ASPOL focuses on the two largest global producers of palm oil: Indonesia and Malaysia, and two largest national importers of palm oil: India and China, along with a regional palm oil trading hub: Singapore, to harness combined government and business action which supports sustainable production and sustainable consumption of palm oil, all along the supply chain.

Goal By 2030, halt deforestation from oil palm supply chains to protect and restore forest landscapes in Asia, benefiting people and nature.

The aim is to realise three **transformational outcomes** [by end 2024]:

- 1) Sustainable production of palm oil achieved in six living landscapes covering 12m hectares through integration of protection of forests and wildlife, production of RSPO CSPO and restoration of habitats
 - Objective 1a: By 2025, stronger national policy frameworks and standards ensure palm oil production is responsible and sustainable.
 - Objective 1b: By 2025, integrated land-use plans across living landscapes (5) secure 3 million hectares of protected forests.
 - Objective 1c: By 2025, 1150 growers (smallholder and middle-size independents) in living landscapes are supported to produce RSPO certified palm oil covering 120,000 hectares.
- 2) Palm oil from traders representing > 75% of global trade is responsibly sourced and sold, and 100% of RSPO CSPO from the living landscapes is traded as RSPO CSPO
 - Objective 2a: By 2025, four traders can trace the supply of palm oil from at least 7 mills to plantations in at least two living landscapes and are promoting the use of traceability systems.
 - Objective 2b: By 2025, at least four of the largest traders deliver on sustainability commitments (including traceability, NDPE and RSPO) in Living landscapes; and have strengthened and improved implementation of their commitments across their operations.
- 3) Market uptake of RSPO CSPO volume increases by 50% year-on-year in India and China.
 - Objective 3a: By 2025, at least 80 companies in India, China and Indonesia take concrete actions that increase commitment to, and update of, RSPO CSPO to deliver deforestation free supply chains and support living landscapes.
 - Objective 3b: By 2025, 4 million Indian and Chinese consumers are aware of the sustainable palm oil and demand CSPO.
 - Objective 3c: By 2025, the governments of India and China are supportive of initiatives that promote RSPO CSPO and sustainable palm oil, deforestation free supply chains and living landscapes.

ASPOL in 2022

Covid has undoubtedly caused difficulties for the delivery of this program and resulted in significant delays. The ASPOL program is currently undertaking a review of its plans and revising the country level TOCs and adjusting workplans. This process is being facilitated by a consultant. Our expectation is this MTR will review these revised plans.

Climate Solutions Partnership

The ASPOL program is one pillar of work in the HSBC-WWF-WRI partnership program 'The Climate Solutions Partnership'. The Climate Solutions Partnership is powered by USD100 million of philanthropic funding from HSBC and, with a network of local partners, aims to scale up climate innovation ventures, nature-based solutions and help to transition the energy sector towards renewables in Asia, by combining our resources, knowledge and insight.

The Climate Solutions Partnership seeks to influence governments, business, and finance sectors to set natural capital at the heart of decision making. HSBC seeks to contribute to bending the curve on biodiversity loss and reducing the impacts of climate change on the world, by encouraging these sectors to align to a 1.5° future in their decision making.

The Climate Solutions Partnership will work to remove barriers and create incentives in four Pillars:

- **Energy transition:** The partnership includes renewables and/or energy efficiency programs in Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, and Vietnam – who combined account for more than 35% of the world's power consumption. These aim to support Asia's energy sector to shift towards renewables, and scale efficiency initiatives in key sectors - such as healthcare, textiles, and apparel.
- **Nature-based solutions and NBS Accelerator:** Supporting more than 20 projects globally to protect and revitalise wetlands, mangroves, and forests, and to promote sustainable agriculture. Working with a network of local partners, these projects will contribute to net zero goals by better enabling natural CO2 capture, while increasing social and environmental resilience in markets most at risk from climate change. The NBS Accelerator is a joint initiative by HSBC, WRI and WWF that provides technical and financial expertise to a global network of organisations to help scale nature-based solutions.
- **Business Innovation:** Start-up firms and next-generation technologies offer the potential to develop new approaches to cutting carbon emissions, but often face challenges to access the finance and business mentoring needed to scale. Utilising WWF's Impactio collaboration platform, the partnership will help support business innovations to scale, in collaboration with leading universities, research institutes, incubators and accelerators. The first pilot challenge, involving 18 start-ups from 5 markets, was completed in 2021, and the first live challenge commenced in 2021 and is expected to complete in May 2022.
- **Sustainable palm oil:** The goal of the Asia Sustainable Palm Oil Programme (ASPOP) is by 2030 to halt deforestation from oil palm supply chains to protect and restore forest landscapes in Asia, benefiting people and nature. By 2025, we aim to realise three transformational outcomes: 1) sustainable production of palm oil achieved in six living landscapes covering 12m hectares through integration of protection of forests and wildlife, production of RSPO CSPO and restoration of habitats; 2) palm oil from traders representing > 75% of global trade is responsibly sourced and sold, and 100% of RSPO CSPO from the living landscapes is traded as RSPO CSPO; and 3) market uptake of RSPO CSPO volume increases by 50% year-on-year in India and China.

As a result, we will see a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, positive gains in conservation of biodiversity and an increase in human wellbeing which is likely to include climate adaptation.

ASPOL was designed and agreed before the Climate Solutions Partnership and has subsequently been brought under the umbrella of the partnership. As such, the Program objectives do not fully align with the ASPOL objectives - there is a gap in terms of climate mitigation and shifting sources of finance for this type of work from philanthropic and donors to private investment.

Phase 2 of the evaluation

We will be commissioning MTR's of these three other pillars later in 2022. This MTR is to be a useful precursor to the next set of evaluations. We request that the evaluators of ASPOL consider in their recommendations ways to support the next set of MTRs.



Figure 1 Map of the Asia Sustainable Palm Oil Programme (ASPOP), showing countries with a focus on sustainable consumption: India & China, and those with a focus on sustainable production: Indonesia & Malaysia, each with three Living Landscapes. Singapore (red circle) is a regional trading centre for palm oil, where work on trade and traceability will be a focus.

EVALUATION PURPOSE AND USE, OBJECTIVES, AND SCOPE

Phase 1 Purpose:

To surface learning from the current work within the Pillar and provide recommendations to be able to inform improvement to strategic approaches that will strengthen delivery (by each implementation partner and across the portfolio, to all applicable outcomes and objectives) over the remaining 2.5 years and support adaptive management decision making.

Evaluation Objectives:

1. To provide an external validation of progress towards the stated objectives and outcomes and assess whether the programme is on course to achieve its targets (acknowledging that the teams will have recently revised these objectives. For new objectives we are therefore looking for comment on their potential);
2. To enable each country programme to surface lessons (eg about their newly revised Theories of Change and processes) and plan improvements;
3. To review the newly revised overarching TOC and relook at the changed context, reflecting on the assumptions and test whether it still holds true. Make recommendations on how the program should adapt based on changes since the programme was designed;
4. To consider the ASPOL Governance structures and consider the suitability of this set up and provide recommendations on how to improve it;
5. To evaluate the role of ASPOL in the wider Climate Solutions Partnership and to recommend ways in which ASPOL can be better integrated to the Partnership objectives, including the achievement of its KPIs;

6. Assess whether we are set up for success: this includes analysis of strategies adopted, teams and resources deployed, internal ways of working;
7. Based on the analysis above, support teams to provide solutions and clear ways forward (or provide recommendations directly);
8. To run a portfolio wide workshop to validate the rearticulation of the Theories of Change, and discuss the recommendations from the evaluation outputs;
9. To deliver an MTR report clearly documenting findings and recommendations on an agreed set of items, with an executive summary for sharing with the CSP governance body.

EVALUATION AND GUIDING QUESTIONS

The consultant will be asked to make use of the following questions as a way to frame the Mid Term Evaluation; *in your response to this RFP, outline how you will use these questions:*

1. Relevance & Quality of Design

- Is there a clear and relevant definition of ultimate programme success in terms of the stated goal, outcomes and objectives?
- Has the programme focused on and does it remain relevant to issues of highest priority given changes in the political and economic environment?
- Has the (late) application of WWF's Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework enabled due adherence to WWF's social policies on human rights, gender and IP?
- Is the theory of change clear? Has the programme taken the best, most efficient strategic approach? Do the underlying assumptions still hold true? What needs to be improved or strengthened?
- How does the project portfolio 'add up' to a necessary and sufficient approach to achieving programmatic success?
- How relevant is the programme to national sector development priorities and WWF strategic priorities? What changes would be proposed to create greater alignment and synergies?

2. Coherence.

- Does this programme have internal coherence, such that the respective project interventions create synergies and interlinkages with other interventions in country/landscape by the same sector or institution? Have the policy and trade linkages between countries been maximised?
- Does this programme have external coherence, such that the interventions of this programme and respective projects are consistent and provide complementarity, harmonisation and coordination with other sectors within the same context?

3. Efficiency.

- Are the financial and conservation plans consistent with one another (i.e. sufficient financial resources to support planned conservation activities; priorities have been developed against different funding scenarios)? Are there improvements to be made in financial planning and

resourcing across the programme and within implementing countries? In what ways can processes be improved to support informed budget revision decisions?

- Are human resources (i.e. WWF programme, WWF Network, and via partnerships) appropriate, adequate, efficiently organized and operating effectively within and across the region to deliver and monitor the programmes outcomes? (e.g. include considerations of capacity needs and gaps, communications, division and clarity of roles and responsibilities, processes for evaluation and improvement)?
- Is the programme and respective projects delivering value for money in that costs are reasonable given the outputs and outcomes generated? How can value for money be maximised?
- Can the programme pivot to address bankability or at least leverage additional public and private sector investment to support the programmes objectives? Recognising that designing new innovative ways of financing the production and trading of sustainable commodities such as palm oil to reduce deforestation rates in the countries where they are produced is challenging. The project was not designed to be bankable but has been subsumed under the wider Climate Solutions Partnership for which this is an objective.

4. Effectiveness.

- Focusing on stated objectives, desired outcomes, and intermediate results (as opposed to delivery of activities and outputs), validate what has and has not been achieved (both intended and unintended)?
- To what extent have changes in the external context influenced the results – consider drivers, opportunities, threats at a national, regional and global level?
- Which strategies are proving to be effective, and which are not? What anticipated and unanticipated factors have promoted or impeded the programme's progress? What supporting or impeding factors might affect successful implementation in the next planning period?
- To what extent has coordination/communication been effective within and between the implementation team, stakeholders, partners and participants, as well as donor offices in the Network and external donors?
- Are the stakeholder engagement processes inclusive, gender-sensitive and accessible for all smallholders and community members? Have stakeholders been engaged at the right level for each of them throughout the programme cycle? Is there clear indication of increasing stakeholder capacity across the supply chain? Is there an effective complaint mechanism in place (usage of entry points, follow-up process, documentation etc.)?

5. Impact.

- To what extent is the programme progressing towards its stated vision and goals? Discuss observed impacts at all appropriate scales—local, landscape, national, regional, global, and present evidence
- How might the programme increase its impact and what would be the associated human and financial capacity needs? How was the process of increasing impact understood at the design stage (e.g. project replication, good practice guidelines through policy change, multi-stakeholder processes) and is there evidence that this has happened or is likely to happen?

- Recognising the ASPOL programme was designed prior to the inception of the Climate Solutions Partnership, how is the Programme contributing to the partnership objectives? How might the programme better address the objectives of the CSP? How does the programme complement or overlap with the other Pillars of the CSP?

6. Sustainability.

Is there evidence that the following key ingredients are being established or exist to the extent necessary to ensure the desired long-term positive impacts of the project or programme?

- Necessary policy support measures and enabling conditions.
- Changes in consumer behaviour
- Adequate socio-cultural integration, including no negative impact on affected groups (e.g. by gender, religion, ethnicity, economic class) and/or on benefits realized by them, as well as ensuring necessary motivation, support, and leadership by relevant individuals and groups.
- Adequate institutional and organisational capacity and clear distribution of responsibilities among those organisations or individuals necessary to ensure continuity of project/programme activities or impacts.
- Technical and economic viability and financial sustainability.

METHODOLOGY CONSIDERATIONS

Suggested methodological approach:

- I. Desk study to analyse existing documentation,
- II. Inception report to outline methodology to follow for KII etc.
- III. Key Informant Interviews with internal stakeholders,
- IV. Review of expert contextual understanding,
- V. Draft recommendations as per objective 1-3,
- VI. Run workshop (preferably in-person with all key staff attending in-person; alternatively, virtual),
- VII. Draft report for discussion and input by steering group
- VIII. Finalise report

PROFILE OF EVALUATOR(S) AND WWF SUPPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

At a minimum, the evaluator or evaluation team collectively should possess the following characteristics:

Essential

- Well qualified with demonstrated experience conducting evaluations similar to the one being commissioned.
- Proven ability to both assess past effectiveness and provide strong strategic thinking on future direction and adaptive management.
- Technical knowledge of, and familiarity of the region and commodity supply chains - with preference to palm oil- from production through to consumption.

- Sensitivity to local beliefs, manners, and customs and ability to act with integrity and honesty in interactions with stakeholders: demonstrating understanding of safeguarding approaches at community level especially – labour rights and human rights-based approaches.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English.
- Demonstrated ability to generate high quality, rich, readable products on time and in line with expected deliverables.
- Orientation and approach is collegial and facilitates learning and analysis by project/programme teams themselves.
- Cross cultural professional experience and strong active listening skills

Desirable

- Knowledge of influencing the private sector to change their business practices.
- Knowledge and understanding of corporate engagement.

WWF Support. Will be provided by an Evaluation Steering Group, led by Lesley King.

TIMELINE

This review is expected to be completed over a period of six weeks (July-Aug)

An initial report of findings and recommendations should be delivered **by COB 31st August**.

BUDGET, FUNDING, AND PAYMENT TERMS

The consultants are invited to submit a budget based on a clear workplan for performing this evaluation. It is estimated that, for documentation review, follow up, KII with 6 teams including WWF-UK and a workshop around 40 days over 6 weeks will probably be needed. Present a work plan (and deliverables from each phase) that is fully budgeted for analysis of this Request for Proposals. Note that payments will be staggered over 3 or 4 stages to be proposed by consultants.

HOW TO APPLY

Submit to **Lesley King (LKing@wwf.org.uk) by 15th June 2022** a 6 page response to the above ITT, indicating:

- Your understanding of the challenge & proposed method
- Your evaluation experience and examples of at least 3 similar assignments
- Your proposed team
- An outline workplan with expected deliverables
- Cost estimate for the project, to include the daily fee rate in GBP (£) (including time allocation if more than one person is involved). Please also include any applicable charity discounts you may offer.
- Submit 2 page CVs for the lead evaluators (in addition to 6 page limit above)

Shortlisted firms will be invited to an interview with the Evaluation Steering Group in w/c 20th June tbc.

Annex 1: Evaluation report structure

To support more systematic recording of evaluation findings to advance WWF's broader organisational learning, all evaluators should follow, to the extent possible, the evaluation report structure below (Part A) and complete the summary table (Part B), to be attached to the evaluation report. These provide standardised frameworks for summarising evaluation findings and support sharing results internally and externally.

Part A - Report Table of Contents

The following provides a basic outline for an evaluation report. While this should be easily applied to evaluations of simpler projects or programmes, adaptation will be needed to ensure reports of more complex programmes (e.g. Country Offices, multi-country regions, landscapes and seascapes, Network Initiatives) are well organised, easy to read and navigate, and not too lengthy.

Title Page

Report title, project or programme title, and contract number (if appropriate), Date of report, Authors and their affiliation, Locator map (if appropriate)

Executive Summary (*between 2 to 4 pages*)

Principal findings and recommendations, organised by the core evaluation criteria from the TOR.

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

Body of the report (perhaps no more than 25 pages)

A. Introduction (max 3 pages)

- Concise presentation of the project/programme characteristics
- Purpose, objectives, and intended use of the evaluation (reference and attach the ToR as an annex)
- Evaluation methodology and rationale for approach (reference and attach as annexes the mission itinerary; names of key informants; a list of consulted documents; and any synthesis tables containing project/programme information used in the exercise; limitations of the methodology/evaluation.)
- Composition of the evaluation team, including any specific roles of team members

B. Project/Programme Overview (max 5 pages)

- Concise summary of the project or programme's history, evolution, purpose, objectives, and strategies to achieve conservation goals (attach theory of change including conceptual model, results chain or logical framework and project monitoring system as annexes)
- Essential characteristics: context, underlying rationale, stakeholders and beneficiaries
- Summarise WWF's main interest in this project or programme

C. Evaluation Findings (3-5 pages)

- Findings and lessons learned organised by each of the selected core evaluation criteria, including sufficient but concise rationale.
- Tables, graphics, and other figures to help convey key findings

D. Recommendations for this project (3-5pages)

- Recommendation organised each of the core evaluation criteria and the findings, including sufficient but concise rationale – recommendations should be specific, actionable and numbered.

- Suggestions for any modifications to the project theory of change.
- Project/programme performance rating tables to provide a quick summary of performance and to facilitate comparison with other projects/programmes (see the Summary Table Part B, below).

Annexes

- Terms of Reference
- Evaluation methodology detail
- Itinerary with key informants
- Documents consulted
- Project/programme theory of change/ logical framework/ conceptual model/ list of primary goals and objectives
- Specific project/programme and monitoring data, as appropriate
- Summary tables of progress towards outputs, objectives, and goals
- Maps
- Recommendations summary table

Part B. (Recommended) Evaluation Summary Table

Evaluators are to assign the project/programme a score assessing the extent to which the project/programme embodies the description of strong performance as described in the table below:

5: Excellent; 4: Very Good; 3: Good; 2: Fair; 1: Poor; N/A: Not Applicable; D/I: The criterion was considered but *data were insufficient* to assign a rating or score

Evaluators are also to provide a brief justification for the rating and score assigned. Identify most notable strengths to build upon as well as highest priority issues or obstacles to overcome. Note that this table should not be a comprehensive summary of findings and recommendations, but an overview only. A more comprehensive presentation should be captured in the evaluation report and the management response document. Even if the report itself contains sensitive information, the table should be completed in a manner that can be readily shared with any internal WWF audience.

Criteria	Description of Strong Performance	Evaluator Score	Evaluator Brief Justification
Relevance and Quality of Design	1. The project/programme addresses the necessary factors in the specific programme context to bring about positive changes in conservation elements – biodiversity and/or footprint issues (i.e. species, ecosystems, ecological processes, including associated ecosystem services) and human wellbeing.		
	2. The project/programme has rigorously applied key design tools including involvement of partners and community members, as appropriate, in the design		
	3. The project/programme has identified the right opportunities or strategies to respond to key threats		
Coherence	The project/programme interventions are synergistic with, and provide value to other interventions by the same actor in-country. They also are harmonized and consistent with other actors' interventions in the same context.		
Efficiency	1. Most/all programme activities have been delivered with efficient use of human & financial resources and with strong value for money.		
	2. Governance and management systems are appropriate, sufficient, and operate efficiently.		
Effectiveness	1. Most/all intended outcomes were attained.		
	2. There is strong evidence indicating that changes can be attributed wholly or largely to the WWF project or programme		

Impact	1. Most/all goals—stated desired changes in the status of species, ecosystems, ecological processes, human wellbeing—were realised.		
	2. WWF actions have contributed to the perceived changes		
Sustainability	1. Most or all factors for ensuring sustainability of results/impacts are being or have been established.		
	2. Scaling up mechanisms have been put in place with risks and assumptions re-assessed and addressed - as relevant.		
Adaptive Management	1. Project/programme results (outputs, outcomes, impacts) are qualitatively and quantitatively demonstrated through regular collection and analysis of monitoring data.		
	2. The project/programme team, involving key stakeholders, uses these findings, as well as those from related projects/ efforts, to strengthen its work and performance		
	3. Learning is documented and shared for project/programme and wider learning		