

**STRATEGIES TO SUSTAIN RSPO CERTIFICATION**  
**A Case Study of Oil Palm Smallholder Group Association Tanjung Sehati**  
**Merangin Province of Jambi, Sumatera Indonesia**

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**ABSTRACT**

RSPO is a voluntary certification for sustainable palm oil production for both companies and smallholders. In Indonesia, 112 companies have obtained RSPO certifications such as Asian Agri group, Wilmar group and Sinar Mas group. In contrast, very few smallholders have obtained the RSPO certification. Smallholders, particularly independent smallholders faced several problems including limited funds, knowledge, land titles, seedlings, pesticide usage, fertilization, and documentation. Nevertheless, in Jambi Province, Sumatra, Indonesia, there are two Gapoktan that have been certified by RSPO. They are Gapoktan Tanjung Sehati Merangin District in Jambi Province obtaining RSPO certification in 2012; and Gapoktan Usaha Berkah. Corresponding to the aforementioned problems, it is important to know how the farmers can sustain (or continue) the RSPO Certification.

This study observed Gapoktan Tanjung Sehati consisting of 214 households, of which 69 households were sampled to represent the population. The objectives are to study Gapoktan Tanjung Sehati in terms of the motivation to obtain RSPO certification and also their motivation to continue RSPO certification. Strategies undertaken in maintaining RSPO certification in the long term were explored. Focus group discussions were conducted to collect important data from key informants. Data were analyzed using SWOT analysis.

This study showed that sustaining RSPO Certification and meeting its Principles and Criteria (P&C) depended on several factors. They were the availability of global strategies for independent smallholders, supporting policies and supports from local government, the development of facilities and programs of science and technology (IPTEK). Operationally, to encourage the implementation of the RSPO Certification, development strategies are necessary, such as:

1. Improving agriculture in broader context of P&C of RSPO. The local economy should be improved by revitalizing the existing agriculture practices as well as encouraging the development of the new agriculture business model.
2. Sustaining natural resources and environment by utilizing various knowledge and traditions. These natural resources will be expected to provide better environmental services for the community.
3. Developing Smallholder Group Association (Gapoktan) in the larger scale or context, e.g. in the development of natural resources and environment. Thus, Gapoktan could be evolved as an institution for the nurturing and inspiring independent smallholders towards sustainability.
4. Implementing premium price program as incentive for the community to pursue RSPO certification.