



Consultant Terms of Reference (ToR): Systematic literature review of the links between sustainable palm oil production practices and financial impacts

Date: 9th August 2019

1. Introduction

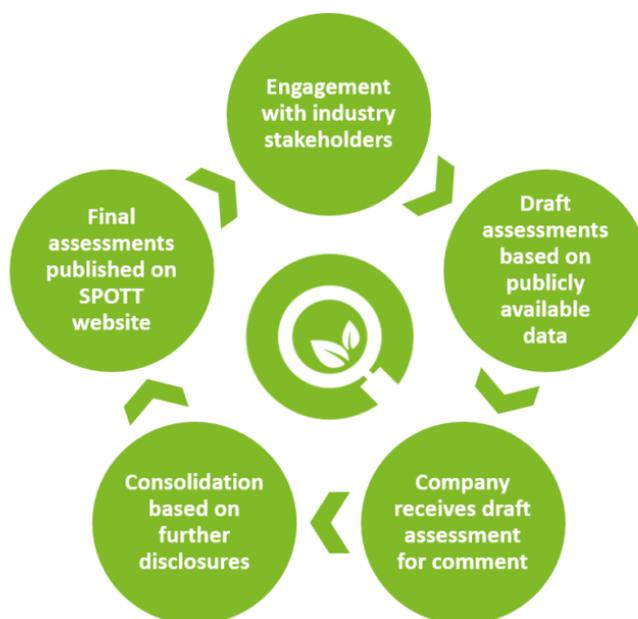
This ToR outlines the responsibilities and deliverables for a consultancy opportunity with ZSL's SPOTT Programme, to support the development of a 'business case' for sustainable palm oil. ZSL is looking for a Consultant to carry out a systematic literature review of the links between sustainable production practices and financial returns for palm oil producers, processors and traders.

2. Background

SPOTT is an online platform (www.spott.org) supporting sustainable commodity production and trade. By tracking transparency, SPOTT incentivises the implementation of corporate best practice. SPOTT assesses commodity producers and traders on the public disclosure of their policies, operations and commitments related to environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues. SPOTT scores companies annually against sector-specific indicators to benchmark their progress over time. SPOTT is managed by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL).

SPOTT assessments typically cover more than 100 indicators on key ESG issues with a level of detail which is unparalleled among freely available platforms, benchmarks and scorecards.

Companies do not report directly to ZSL to inform their SPOTT assessments. Instead, we conduct thorough reviews of their publicly available reports and publications, before contacting each company with its draft assessment. This engagement process means that companies have the opportunity to have a discussion with ZSL, make further public disclosures, and provide feedback ahead of the final review and publication on SPOTT.



Assessments are carried out annually in a process which can take up to 3.5 months per commodity (up to 100 companies at a time), twice a year.

SPOTT began assessing companies in the palm oil sector in 2014, starting by targeting the 24 most important producers and progressively adding companies to increase coverage and capture other supply chain segments such as traders (2017) and crushers and refiners (2019).

3. Description of the service

The Consultant will conduct a structured literature review to answer the following research question:

- ***What are the costs and benefits for palm oil producers, processors and traders associated with the uptake and/or use of sustainable production practices?***

The review should include an analysis of the links between specific sustainable palm oil production practices and (1) financial impacts (costs and benefits) and (2) management of non-financial risks (e.g. compliance, reputational). The literature review should be systematic, comprehensive and rigorous, following best practices for conducting such a review¹.

Note: The Consultant(s)' findings may or may not be used in future ZSL/ SPOTT-branded publications.

4. Outputs

The Consultant is expected to provide the following deliverables:

1. Conduct at least one face-to-face or virtual meeting with ZSL staff to understand the motivations for conducting the literature review and discuss the overall study approach.
2. A protocol for conducting the systematic literature review to be signed-off by ZSL staff prior to commencing the study. The protocol will include information on the project background, aims and objectives, and methods for conducting the literature review.
3. A draft report (15-30 pages, excluding any annexes) which includes the following: 1) Background; 2) Aims & objectives; 3) Methods; 4) Search results; 5) Details of studies included in the review; 6) Synthesis of results; 7) Conclusions & recommendations; and 8) References
4. A final report incorporating comments from ZSL staff on the draft report, as well as a synthesis document (max 4 pages) summarising the key findings from the literature review

5. Consultant qualifications

ZSL requires that the Consultant(s) have:

- Masters degree in a relevant subject or a BA/BSc complemented with relevant experience in responsible sourcing and sustainable commodity production
- Strong research skills with demonstrated experience conducting systematic literature reviews
- Technical knowledge of environmental and social best practices within the palm oil sector
- Excellent communication, analytical and writing skills

6. Timeframe and cost

The Consultant is expected to conduct the research in August and September 2019, with the draft report submitted by 22nd September 2019, and the final report by 30th September 2019.

- The total fee for this consultancy should not exceed £3,500.
- The total fee allocated for this consultancy is inclusive of all costs incurred by the Consultant, including the sourcing of scientific literature.
- The total fee allocated for this consultancy excludes VAT.

¹ See for example: Gough, D., Thomas, J., & Oliver, S. (2012). Clarifying differences between review designs and methods. *Systematic reviews*, 1(1), 28.

7. Proposals

Proposals in response to these Terms of Reference must be submitted by email to clara.melot@zsl.org and michael.quindon@zsl.org by midnight (BST) on 25th August 2019.

Note: ZSL is also tendering a separate consultancy project to analyse the links between SPOTT's ESG data and financial risk and performance measures (www.spott.org/consultancy-opportunities/). We welcome joint proposals for both projects with the submission of one larger report rather than two separate reports.

