

# IUCN Oil Palm Task Force Launch Workshop Distilled Notes and Scoping Situation Analysis

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Cambridge, UK

These notes capture the main points of discussion from the inaugural workshop of the IUCN Oil Palm Task Force (OPTF). At the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawai'i in September 2016, IUCN's Members passed Resolution WCC-2016-Res-061 on "Mitigating the impacts of oil palm expansion and operations on biodiversity" (<https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/46478>), calling for the establishment of a taskforce to undertake a situation analysis on oil palm and biodiversity conservation in the context of sustainable development, and communicate the results through promotion of inclusive decision-making processes and technical inputs into appropriate land-use planning for oil palm. The Task Force on Oil Palm was formally established through appointment of its Chair in March 2017.

The inaugural workshop of the Task Force was held from 15 to 17 June 2017 in Cambridge, UK. The objective of the workshop was to clearly define the objectives and modus operandi of the OPTF, determining terms of reference for membership, and discussing the approach for implementing the situation analysis.

The OPTF aims to inform the debate on the sustainability of palm oil, using the latest research and scientific information, and give guidance to, for example, IUCN about its policies and strategies that affect or are affected by palm oil. We aim to make use of IUCN's extensive knowledge networks on biodiversity and environmental issues, social, economic and cultural issues, and policy to comprehensively guide thinking on the complex issues of agro-industrial and small-holder oil palm in the world's tropical regions. The OPTF will act as an authoritative advisory body on oil palm and how this relates to global sustainability objectives, and an intermediary between the oil palm industry, the IUCN network, and the other stakeholders in the oil palm discussions.

## Workshop participants

1. Erik Meijaard (Chair)
2. Nicholas Macfarlane (IUCN-Science)
3. Rachel Hoffmann (IUCN)
4. John Garcia (ETH Zürich)
5. Conrad Savy (IFC)
6. Paul Hartman (GEF)
7. Rob McWilliam (TFT)
8. Ginny Ng (Wilmar)
9. Christopher Stewart (OLAM)
10. Darrel Webber (RSPO)
11. Lian Pin Koh (University of Adelaide)
12. Tom Clements (WCS)
13. Izabela Delabre (ZSL)
14. Kim Carlson (University of Hawaii)
15. Serge Wich (John Moores University)

16. Marc Ancrenaz (HUTAN)
17. David Gaveau (CIFOR)

### **Unable to attend, but involved with Task Force**

1. Giulia Carbone (IUCN Commission on Global Business and Biodiversity)
2. Marcus Colchester (IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy)
3. PC Abhilash (IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management)

The following issues were discussed during the workshop:

#### **1. Rationale for Task Force**

- a. Many IUCN members have divergent perspectives on oil palm; it will be useful to bring alignment to these viewpoints through a critical evaluation of the available evidence ensuring an independent and non-advocacy based approach.
- b. Oil palm may not be the biggest driver of deforestation, but it might be the biggest opportunity because of its place in the supply chain, and the European Market. It is also intensely interacting with carbon-rich high-value tropical forest.
- c. Oil palm is a good case study that we can then use to model other deforestation drivers that will have to go through this process.

#### **2. Terms of Reference (OPTF Chair to draft)**

- a. Task Force:
  - i. This will be drawn from the 5 points a-e of the mandate in the resolution.
  - ii. A structure to be defined which considers a possible Advisory Committee and a tier below of sub- /working-groups which may be defined by the future objectives of the group.
- b. Members – it is already becoming apparent that the OPTF will attract a great deal of interest particularly with regards to individuals wishing to join as a member. In view of keeping the group manageable and functioning efficiently and effectively, Terms of Reference will be written with consideration of the following:
  - i. ALL members will be expected to actively participate in the activities of the group (and therefore to avoid individuals being part of the group in name only).
  - ii. Commit to reviewing the final copy of the situation analysis.
  - iii. Commit to being responsive and carrying out tasks are required.
  - iv. Will help with / or provide ideas for fundraising for operational costs.
  - v. Will assist in providing the names and contact details for the consultative process and for prospective members (with the knowledge that the Chair is ultimately responsible for the final decision on who is appointed).
  - vi. Ensure that the Task Force has diversity by ensuring e.g., gender, age and geographical balance.
  - vii. Encourage members with a diversity of languages which reflect the important oil palm regions (suggested as Latin America, Pacific, Africa, SE Asia)
  - viii. Facilitate interdisciplinary engagement by encouraging the involvement of experts and practitioners from biological as well as social sciences, economics, humanities and other fields (land-use planning?).
  - ix. Should there be Government representation on the Task Force?

Terms of Reference for membership to the OPTF will be finalised in June 2017, and membership opportunities will become available from the Chair of OPTF as of July 2017. The Terms of Reference for membership will be shared online once the OPTF website is operational.

**3. General goals and guiding principles for the Task Force:**

- a. There was consensus to initially channel all efforts on the situation analysis (due to the time constraints of funding) and then use this to help scope remaining objectives and priorities of the group later in the Quadrennium.
- b. Plan for the Task Force to have achieved its objectives by the end of the current IUCN quadrennium.
- c. Ensure independence, be science-based and avoid advocacy.
- d. Play to our areas of authority and expertise (biodiversity) and seek to be value-adding.

**4. Situation Analysis:**

- a. See plan outlined below.
- b. There are approximately 5 months to deliver the first iteration of the situation analysis.
- c. This should not just be another report but focus on what's new, useful and be compatible to our audience.
- d. The core group -- a temporary group tasked with developing and informing the situation analysis -- will assist the compiling information for the first draft, which will be refined in a follow-up meeting in the first week of October. This will then be sent to a consultant (who will also attend that workshop) to produce a revised draft.
- e. Several potential consultants proposed, but the actual consultants will be selected through an open, competitive bid.

**5. Communications:**

- a. Due to the infancy of the Task Force, it was agreed that for the time being only the Chair only will speak on behalf of the Task Force.
- b. There will be regular updates on the situation analysis to inform the Advisory Committee of progress and any action needed.
- c. Dropbox that all can share
- d. Mailing lists
  - i. One for whole Task Force
  - ii. One for Situation Analysis core group
- e. Establish webpage

**6. Other notes questions and observations:**

- a. Darrel Webber has potentially offered the time of a couple of staff members to support the Task Force (exact duties would need to be discussed).
- b. Consider grey literature (the current edge of thinking)
- c. Exploit networks to reach out to relevant experts, stakeholders, practitioners.
- d. Consider media outlets e.g., the Guardian section on oil palm (RSPO has links)
- e. Consider plantation experience as the interface between large scale expansion and communities.

- f. OLAM is keen to be a testing ground for interesting research (Christopher Stewart)
- g. WCS is very keen to use the regions where they have relevant programs in place (Tom Clements)
- h. Funding brainstorming:
  - i. It will be very useful to have a product to shop around.
  - ii. Conrad Savy may be able to assist with e.g., presenting this to the financial sector (banks)
  - iii. Belinda Right from Packard (Tom Clements can provide the contact information)
  - iv. Moore Foundation
  - v. GEF – probably not until next cycle
  - vi. Ensure care re the origins of funding in order to not appear biased – perhaps have predetermined contribution caps from different sectors.

## Background to Situation Analysis

During the inaugural workshop of the IUCN Oil Palm Task Force in Cambridge 15-17 June 2017, it was agreed to first conduct a situation analysis as requested by Resolution 061. This relates to the current funding the Task Force has obtained from the GEF Global Commons project.

It has been agreed that the situation analysis must offer something new and insightful about the oil palm and biodiversity context, to provide a more constructive pathway to addressing sustainability challenges in the palm oil and other vegetable oil industries. This requires that our audience – the IUCN members and experts, as well as external groups and people – are willing to read the report resulting from the situation analysis. That in turn requires that we produce something that stands out among the many products being developed about palm oil and biodiversity, and is not so voluminous that it will never get read (*“we don’t read anymore, it’s all infographics”*).

The objective of the situation analysis on oil palm and biodiversity is to help the Task Force develop a strategy and workplan for the remaining years of the current IUCN quadrennium (2017 – 2020).

There are many things that could be done on issues related to oil palm and biodiversity, but given the resources available to the Task Force it is crucial that we identify the most impactful activities which avoids repeating what is already out there.

The plan for conducting the situation analysis is as follows. The Task Force members (currently the core group who attended the inaugural workshop) were requested to produce new insightful data about palm oil or focus on ~200 word text boxes that capture a novel insight or idea about palm oil and biodiversity. Where needed, those who need a budget to support their inputs were request to email Erik with a proposal.

The next step will be to use this data and short text boxes for a writing workshop, currently planned for 2 to 5 October in Chania, Greece, to assist in the development of these new insights into compelling texts and infographics into a collaborative writing effort. It was also proposed that a consultant may be invited to attend the workshop, with expertise in graphic design and report writing, with a view to ensuring that a visually appealing final product is developed to ensure the widest distribution and greatest uptake possible.

The draft document will be sent out to the IUCN network, with oversight from the SSC Chair’s Office, as part of a formal consultation process. This to ensure that an open and transparent review is carried out and all members are given the opportunity to provide their inputs. All comments will be collated, responded to and reviewed for possible inclusion/editing of the report. It is proposed that the final version will be developed by the consultant.

In a third workshop, tentatively scheduled for February 2018, we will use the results of the situation analysis, to determine future the strategy and objectives of the Task Force.

To demonstrate impact of this information sharing exercise, the aim to capture perceptions about oil palm and biodiversity through an online survey before and after the release of the situation analysis. The target audience for this is the IUCN network and members.

### Details on situation analysis

The situation analysis addresses three temporal stages in the oil palm and biodiversity context: 1. The past – what have the impacts of oil palm been on biodiversity; 2. The present – what is being done about it, what initiatives exist, what have they achieved; 3. The future – what development scenarios exist for oil palm and what could be done to change the course of the palm oil industry towards a more sustainable future.

## 1. What are the impacts:

- a. What is the global area of oil palm? Come up with a best estimate that we can stand behind that captures the uncertainty, especially with regard to small-holder lands. An interactive map hosted somewhere would be very useful. Who is growing it (small, medium, large)? (**David Gaveau** to coordinate)
  - i. Definitions will have to be operationalized
  - ii. **John Garcia** may have data for Colombia
- b. How does oil palm overlap with where the biodiversity (hotspots, KBAs, finer-scale data, such as great ape distribution maps) are? (**Lian Pin Koh** will compile the biodiversity layers, **Rachel Hoffmann** will facilitate with IUCN members to secure additional necessary data)
  - i. This will depend on (a). There may also be the potential to use IUCN data for the biodiversity component.
  - ii. Notes: See Pirker et al., 2016.
- c. What % of deforestation is attributed to oil palm? (**Kim Carlson** will get a student to go through this and compile the numbers)
  - i. We could comment on this or inform this.
  - ii. The issue of small holders should come up here.
- d. How does palm oil compare to other broader interactions and impacts with biodiversity? This will be descriptive and focus on case studies (**Serge Wich** + student)
  - i. e.g., Charcoal, bushmeat
- e. How do oil palm and biodiversity influence each other? (**John Garcia** + student + deforestation student from **Kim Carlson**)
  - i. Some things to consider:
    1. Does retaining biodiversity makes economic sense for the growers?
    2. How much biodiversity is lost and persists (from literature review)
    3. BOX: what are the offsite effects outside of the plantations
    4. Can oil palm act as stabilizing landscapes and buffers.
    5. What are the positive impacts of oil palm?: This will need to be descriptive.

## 2. What sustainability initiatives exist today in the palm oil industry, and what are their effects on biodiversity?

- a. What are the available tools (eg policies, methodologies) to assess and address the impacts. (**John Garcia** – Will add this to his proposal)
- b. How do we benchmark different policies (eg. IFC standards)? (**John Garcia** and **Conrad Savy** to contribute on PS6)
  - i. A box from other sector best practices that could be used in palm oil?  
(**Conrad Savy**)
- c. What are the impacts of current policies on biodiversity in the oil palm sector (Are these tools adequate (**John Garcia**), effective, etc.? What are the unintended consequences of seemingly good policies and campaigns, eg. Stranded assets? (**Kim Carlson** + **Izabela Delabre**).
- d. How does the governance context influence success, eg. Indonesia and HCV? NOTE: we are only planning on looking at a couple examples, not comprehensive review of

government policies. (Kim Carlson+ Marc Ancrenaz + potentially Ginny Ng Siew Ling/Darrel Webber).

3. **What are the key debates and essential questions for the future of oil palm. These will be text boxes capturing angles that we are surprised about while maintaining the longer text for justification.**
    - a. What are geographic differences – Colombia, Indonesia, Cameroon (**John Garcia** and **Erik Meijaard**)
    - b. Lessons learned from paradox of oil palm report (**Erik Meijaard**)
    - c. Is there a scramble for Africa (**Marc Ancrenaz** coordinating with **Tom Clements**, **Christopher Stewart** and **Darrel Webber**)
    - d. What are the consequences of charismatic megafauna for oil palm sustainability? (**Erik Meijaard**+ **Marc Ancrenaz/Serge Wich**)
    - e. What's happening in the pacific islands (**Lian Pin Koh**)
    - f. What's happening with other neglected biomes (**John Garcia**)
    - g. Would a ban work? If not palm oil what would replace it? (**Kim Carlson**)
    - h. Poverty and oil palm (**Erik Meijaard**)
    - i. What would be the implications of higher palm oil yields (**Izabela Delabre**)
    - j. Other ecosystem impacts (tbd/all)
    - k. Others as needed (tbd/all)
  
  4. **What does IUCN think about palm oil? (Kim overseeing a student project to design an appropriate survey)**
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#### **Way forward on the Situation Analysis:**

- Before end of June--Minutes of this workshop go to Task Force
- Skype calls prior to Greece (whole Task Force join)
- Pre-October need consultant in place (to possibly attend workshop in Greece)
- Pre-October – All to read the work completed by others
- Oct 5– Greece people bring text and process→ internal first draft
- Early October-- Raw document goes to wider Task Force membership
- Early October -- Consultant to combine into first consolidated version
- End November -- Document goes for IUCN consultation to members
- Beginning January -- Respond to Comments
- End January 2018 -- Deliver finished product to IUCN science and knowledge
- February 2018 – Targeted Dissemination and Peer Reviewed article