

The SPOTT toolkit: holding commodity producers to account on sustainability commitments

The Sustainable Palm Oil Transparency Toolkit (SPOTT) is an online platform that provides assessments and public disclosure of the operations of many of the world's largest palm oil producers, and outlines their commitments to improving environmentally and socially responsible production and trade. SPOTT is primarily directed at investors and buyers to inform responsible investment and procurement decisions, and helps support corporate commitments. It encourages best practice by facilitating informed engagement between companies, financial institutions and purchasers.



SPOTT promotes transparency and accountability in order to drive the uptake and implementation of best practice in commodity production, providing the necessary company-specific and sector-specific data required to monitor, assess and manage the associated

risks. The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) launched SPOTT in November 2014 to assess palm oil production. Building on early experiences, the toolkit is being expanded, and will include timber, pulp and paper producers from early 2017.

ZSL conducts SPOTT assessments twice a year to capture progress made by companies using ten indicators: 1) company policy and operations; 2) availability of maps and a “land bank”; 3) reduced deforestation, protection of high conservation values (HCV) and high carbon stock (HCS) areas; 4) environmental management; 5) peat, fire and greenhouse gas emissions; 6) community and land rights; 7) labour rights; 8) certification and traceability; 9) smallholder and supplier support; and 10) governance and grievances. These indicators were developed in consultation with users, commodity producers and civil society organizations, and are likely to differ with different commodities or in different countries. Each assessment indicator allows companies and their stakeholders to use SPOTT to identify areas where better management of the risks associated with commodity production is needed.

ZSL is piloting SPOTT at the landscape level in South Sumatra with Kelola Sendang, with partners that include the regional government. Kelola Sendang is a public-private-people partnership that is addressing the challenges of deforestation, peatland degradation, wildfires and associated climate impacts, while supporting green growth and biodiversity conservation. The aim is to develop a scalable and replicable model for sustainable landscape management for South Sumatra and beyond. In this context, ZSL is exploring how SPOTT can support better dialogue and incentives for the implementation of best practice in a specific landscape, linking group-level commitments with on-the-ground implementation. Find out more at www.sustainablepalmoil.org/spott.

Clara Melot works for the Zoological Society of London, UK.