



Research project of counterparts funded at UNJA

Name	Counterpart	Title
Rosyani, Rukayah Rofiq	C02	Independent smallholder strategies to sustain the roundtable on sustainable palm oil (RSPO) certification. Oil palm smallholder group association Tanjung Sehati (Gapoktan), Merangin District, Province of Jambi, Sumatera, Indonesia

Background

The Round Table on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) is a voluntary certification scheme for sustainable palm oil production for both companies and smallholders. In Indonesia, 112 companies have obtained RSPO certification. These include the Asian Agri group, the Wilmar group and the Sinar Mas group. In contrast, very few smallholders have obtained RSPO certification. This is probably because smallholders, particularly independent smallholders, face several problems. These are associated mainly with limited funds, limited knowledge, unclear title to land, and low availability of seedlings, pesticide, fertilizer, and documentation. Nevertheless, in Jambi Province, two Gapoktan (Smallholder Group Associations) have obtained RSPO certification. These two are Gapoktan Tanjung Sehati Merangin District (RSPO certification in 2012) and Forum Petani Swadaya Merlung Renah Mendalu (FPS-MRM) in Tanjung Jabung Barat District (RSPO certification in 2017). Given the above mentioned problems, it is important to understand how independent smallholders can sustain RSPO Certification.

Objectives

Objectives of the study were 1) to understand the motivation of Gapoktan Tanjung Sehati in obtaining RSPO certification, 2) to investigate the internal and external factors necessary for sustaining RSPO certification, 3) to analyze the strategies undertaken by Gapoktan Tanjung Sehati in maintaining RSPO certification for the long term.

Approach

This study investigated Gapoktan Tanjung Sehati consisting of 214 households, of which 45 households represented the population. Focus group discussions were conducted to collect important data from the key informants. Data were analyzed using Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis.

The SWOT analysis indicated that the position for development is in Quadrant 1 (aggressive strategies). Aggressive strategies indicate benefit because they have opportunities and strengths. These strategies use strengths and utilize opportunities to sustain RSPO certification and to implement principles and criteria for the production of sustainable palm oil. The development of the Gapoktan Tanjung Sehati involves cooperation between stakeholders: 1) financial administration and transparency are well recorded, 2) Gapoktan organization is structured, 3) advanced information and technology are accessible, 4) marketing results coordinated by Gapoktan, 5) a trained internal supervisor already exists, 6) most members have implemented RSPO certification Principles and Criteria, 7) profit gain is not only from financial (Premium Price), 8) most members have understood the benefits of environmentally sound plantation management, 9) and then the strengths are supported for the opportunities (S-O), 10) after that strength and opportunities factors can overcome weaknesses and threats.

Conclusion

(1) the motivations for independent smallholders are mutual strength, supported by the Setara Foundation for the provision of empowerment and environmental knowledge to smallholders so that they can be independent, and also supported by researchers and others, (2) the various factors supported the sustainability of RSPO certification remembering that strong factors must be guaranteed and improved and the weak factors must be anticipated and fixed, and (3) the strategy for maintaining RSPO certification found in the first quadrant is an aggressive one.