

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

No.	Questions	Answer
1	Getting started	
1.1	How is MSPO certification scheme operated in Malaysia?	<p><i>MSPO is operated by MPOCC which oversees the development and implementation of the MSPO standards and scheme documents.</i></p> <p><i>To be certified, entities must be audited by an accredited certification body (ACB) that are qualified in certifying entities against the MSPO standards. A certification body is accredited by the Department of Standards Malaysia (DSM).</i></p>
1.2	What does it mean to have MSPO certification?	<p><i>Having an MSPO certification shows that you are committed to produce certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO) as well as promote and work together to ensure sustainability in the oil palm supply chain.</i></p>
1.3	Is MSPO certification scheme a rival to other certification scheme?	<p><i>The MSPO certification scheme was established independently and is not aimed at competing with other certification schemes that are available in the market.</i></p> <p><i>The MSPO certification scheme reflects the realities of the local oil palm industry and is devised to respond to concerns expressed by interested stakeholders.</i></p> <p><i>The MSPO certification scheme encompasses the fundamentals of the 3Ps (people, profit and planet) for sustainable development that address environment, social and economic aspects. For this to be implemented, it is critical to balance these aspects and take into consideration the country's development.</i></p>
1.4	What do I need to do to prepare myself for MSPO audits?	<p><i>You must first obtain the relevant MSPO Standard and ensure that you are complying with all the relevant requirements and</i></p>

		<i>documents needed to obtain MSPO certification.</i>
1.5	How long does it take for an entity to be MSPO certified?	<i>The length of time taken to be MSPO certified varies depending on several criteria such as the size of the planted area, certification bodies (CBs) Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of the Certification Body (CB), and time taken to close out any non-compliances issued during the audit.</i>
1.6	Why do palm oil products exported from Malaysia need to comply with sustainability requirements?	<i>There is an increasing expectation and demand by consumers in many of the foreign markets in relation to the impact of palm oil production in producer countries like Malaysia, particularly with regard to environmental and social aspects. These markets therefore demand for sustainability criteria to be addressed in the importation of palm oil products.</i>
1.7	Is it necessary to certify areas which are not yet in production, such as newly replanted and areas with immature crop?	<i>MSPO certification promotes sustainable management of oil palm plantations and therefore its requirements should be complied with at all stages of operation.</i>
2	Malaysian Palm Oil Certification Council (MPOCC)	
2.1	How are the members of the Board of Trustees (BOT) elected?	<p><i>Members of the BOT are elected through a stringent process and must have vast knowledge of the oil palm industry, environment, economy, society and sustainability.</i></p> <p><i>The BOT is a governing body which manages the affairs of the council and decides the overall policy and direction in carrying out MPOCC's activities.</i></p> <p><i>Members of the BOT comprises of experts from government, NGOs, civil society, oil palm industry associations, academic and R&D institution as well as smallholders' associations.</i></p>

2.2	How do stakeholders get involved in the development of the MSPO Standards?	<p><i>There are several ways for relevant stakeholders to participate in the MSPO standards development and certification processes. The MSPO standards development and review of the MSPO Standards is facilitated by MPOCC as the Secretariat of the Technical Working Committee on MSPO [TWC(MSPO)].</i></p> <p><i>Stakeholders under the relevant interest groups, namely government agencies, industry players, smallholders, environmental NGOs, indigenous people organisations, workers representatives and academia/R&D institutions can contribute their expertise through the TWC(MSPO). Apart from that, the standard setting process also allows for feedback and input from all the stakeholders in the country, through public comments and consultations.</i></p>
2.3	Is there any formal collaboration with stakeholders such as NGOs?	<p><i>MPOCC welcomes any form of positive collaboration with stakeholders to improve the effectiveness of the MSPO Certification Scheme. Any feedback received will be used for consultation with relevant stakeholders and implemented in the present framework wherever possible.</i></p> <p><i>NGOs do contribute to MSPO's development. As an example, relevant NGOs are a part of the Technical Working Committee on MSPO [TWC(MSPO)] facilitated by MPOCC as the Secretariat to further develop the MSPO Certification Scheme.</i></p>
2.4	Do you have enough manpower and resources to conduct MSPO audits? What assurance can MPOCC provide if there is a	<p><i>MSPO audits are conducted by third party CBs that are accredited by the Department of Standards Malaysia (DSM). These CBs are certified competent to conduct audits under the MSPO Certification Scheme.</i></p>

	sudden surge in MSPO certification applications received?	<i>MPOCC provide auditor training programmes as the demand for MSPO certification increases to allow more CBs to obtain accreditation from DSM.</i>
2.5	What is MPOCC's role in ensuring market acceptability and credibility of the MSPO certification outside Malaysia?	<i>MPOCC ensures market acceptability of the MSPO certification by working closely with the Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities, Malaysian Palm Oil Board, Malaysian Palm Oil Council and other related agencies to promote market acceptance of MSPO.</i>
2.6	What is the outreach for MSPO certification, both nationally & internationally?	<i>MPOCC seeks to raise the profile of the MSPO Certification Scheme through increased collaboration with relevant partners, both local and international, and intensify the promotion of the MSPO Certification Scheme.</i>
3	Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB)	
3.1	What are the role and responsibilities of MPOB in the implementation of the MSPO Certification Scheme?	<i>MPOB has been tasked to organize the independent smallholders into Sustainable Palm Oil Clusters (SPOCs) and get them ready for MSPO certification audits. MPOB also provides financial support to cover the certification fees, training, chemical stores and personnel protection equipment (PPE) to the smallholders towards obtaining MSPO certification. Please contact MPOB at 03-8769 4400 for further information.</i>
3.2	Who can assist smallholders to become MSPO certified?	<i>If you are an independent smallholder with a land area of less than 100 acres (40.47 hectares), you can contact the MPOB TUNAS Office nearest to you for assistance. In certain situations, an organised smallholder with a land area of less than 100 acres may be referred to the MPOB TUNAS Office as well. Please contact the nearest MPOB TUNAS Office or MPOCC for further information and assistance.</i>

4 Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO)	
4.1	<p>Why should I choose the MSPO Certification Scheme?</p> <p><i>The MSPO Certification Scheme is the national scheme for oil palm products originating from Malaysia. The scheme brands Malaysian palm oil as sustainability produced and of high quality in the international market. Furthermore, markets are able to differentiate certified and sustainably produced Malaysian palm oil from that originating from other countries.</i></p>
4.2	<p>What are the strong points of MSPO standards compared to other certification standards?</p> <p><i>MSPO standards are national standards, committing the country to fulfil sustainability requirements and strive for continuous improvement.</i></p>
4.3	<p>Will the MSPO Standards be revised in the future?</p> <p><i>In line with international practice, standards are reviewed once every five years. Therefore, it is expected that MPOCC will start the process of reviewing the present standard in 2018.</i></p> <p><i>The process is expected to be a multi-stakeholder consultative approach involving all the relevant stakeholders (including industry, social and environmental NGOs and labour organizations) in the country.</i></p> <p><i>In the meantime, MPOCC will continue to actively engage with all the relevant stakeholders in matters pertaining to the operations of the scheme.</i></p>
4.4	<p>Where can I get a copy of the MSPO Standards?</p> <p><i>The MS2530 series of the MSPO standards are publicly available for purchase at a price of RM20 per standard. The standard can be purchased from https://www.msonline.gov.my/. Copies of the MSPO Standards can also be provided by MPOCC upon request.</i></p>
4.5	<p>What does it mean if an oil palm estate is MSPO certified?</p> <p><i>MSPO certified means that the entity is producing and selling Fresh Fruit Bunches (FFB) from a planted area that is managed</i></p>

		<i>in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.</i>
4.6	Is it true that currently, there is only a minimal uptake for MSPO certification by the industry players?	<i>It is true that the uptake of MSPO certification has been rather gradual over the past few years. However, with the mandate to make MSPO certification compulsory, the approach by the industry players is bound to change.</i>
4.7	Does it mean that currently, there is no demand for MSPO-certified oil in the market?	<i>At present, the demand for certified sustainable palm oil is limited. The demand for MSPO certified palm oil will certainly increase once the market accepts and recognises the supply of MSPO certified palm oil through the supply chain certification, which is currently being developed.</i>
4.8	What is the validity of the MSPO Certificate?	<i>The MSPO Certificate is valid for five (5) years, with annual surveillance audits. The certificate holder has to undergo recertification upon expiry of the certificate validity.</i>
4.9	What are the barriers that may exist in the efforts being taken for independent smallholders to be certified under the MSPO Certification Scheme?	<i>Among the barriers is the lack of understanding and knowledge of the requirements of the MSPO Standards. Apart from that, training and the additional cost involved in certification in combination with the limited external support provided by other players, such as dealers, traders and millers who deal with the smallholder's crops also play a key role in the uptake of MSPO certification. Mills that are MSPO certified are obliged to support their smallholder base to become MSPO certified.</i>
4.10	Is there any supply chain certification standard available under the MSPO Certification Scheme?	<i>MPOCC is currently developing the supply chain certification and traceability requirements for the MSPO Certification Scheme, which are expected to be finalised by early 2018.</i>

5 Certification Procedures		
5.1	What are the procedures for MSPO audits?	<i>You must ensure that you are prepared and ready to be audited for MSPO certification. Once ready, you can then proceed to appoint any one of the accredited certification bodies (CBs) to carry out the audit against the requirements of the applicable MSPO standard. For details pertaining to the oil palm management certification process, you can go to https://www.mpocc.org.my/certification-procedure</i>
5.2	Is there any fast track option to obtain MSPO certification?	<i>There is currently no fast track option to obtain MSPO certification. However, those who have obtained certification against other related sustainability standards (e.g. RSPO, ISCC, etc) may be exempted from the Stage 1 Audit.</i>
5.3	How is the competency of the CBs governed and monitored?	<i>The competency of auditors is the key requirement of the ACB-MSPO accreditation programme, which is verified by the Department of Standards Malaysia (DSM) which is the national accreditation body. For more information on the accreditation programme for CBs undertaking MSPO auditing and certification, please contact DSM at 03-8318 0002 or email central@jsm.gov.my.</i>
5.4	What is the purpose of the peer review process?	<i>The peer review process is to ensure that the integrity of the audit report and critical aspects of the audit are addressed. Peer reviewers will evaluate the audit report prepared by the from CB, and their feedback and comments are incorporated into the final audit report.</i>
5.5	How are the issues raised by peer reviewers treated?	<i>Issues raised by peer reviewers are evaluated in a transparent manner, and details can be requested from the CB concerned.</i>

6 Planting on Peatland		
6.1	How does MSPO certification address peat land conversion?	<i>Where planting on peat land is proposed, mitigation plans shall be developed and implemented to protect them without incurring adverse impacts. New planting and replanting may be developed and implemented on peat land as per MPOB guidelines on peat land development or industry best practice.</i>
7 Certification Bodies (CBs)		
7.1	Are accredited CBs considered as providers of independent third-party auditing?	<i>CBs are independent certification service providers who are accredited by DSM. CBs verify the clients against the requirements of the MSPO Standards and award the MSPO certificates to the successful applicants.</i>
7.2	How do you choose a CB to implement MSPO audit?	<i>A client should appoint a CB that has obtained accreditation from DSM to operate under the MSPO Certification Scheme. The list of ACBs is available at both the MPOCC and DSM websites.</i>
7.3	Can non-Malaysian auditors perform MSPO Certification audits?	<i>In implementing MSPO certification, the client engages an accredited CB. The CB will ensure that auditors employed or contracted meet the accreditation requirements and are allowed to work in Malaysia.</i>
7.4	Can non-accredited CBs operate under the MSPO Certification Scheme?	<i>Non-accredited CBs that carry out MSPO audits are not recognized under the MSPO Certification Scheme unless the CBs have submitted their full application to DSM for accreditation.</i>
7.5	What is the status of a MSPO certificate that has been issued by a non-accredited CB?	<i>The programme for the accreditation of CBs was launched in June 2016. The MSPO certificates issued by non-accredited CBs are considered as non-accredited certificates but they remain valid under the scheme.</i> <i>Once the certificate issuing CB has obtained accreditation from DSM, the certificates issued by the CB will be immediately</i>

		<i>converted to accredited certificates but with the original certificate validity period.</i>
7.6	Who are the accredited CBs that can conduct audits under the MSPO Certification Scheme?	<i>As of October 2017, there are five (5) accredited CBs. However, several more CBs are in the process of obtaining accreditation from DSM. Clients can check with DSM or MPOCC for details of the accredited CB prior to engaging the CB.</i>
7.7	How does a CB obtain accreditation from the DSM?	<i>Under the MSPO Certification Scheme, CBs are required to apply to DSM to obtain accreditation. One of the pre-requisites is that the CB must have carried out at least one complete MSPO audit and have another upcoming client ready to undergo MSPO audit.</i> <i>DSM will then initiate a two-stage audit consisting of a documentation review and witness audit based on the requirements of the ISO 17021 or ISO 17065 document and other accreditation documents and requirements.</i>
7.8	Who comes up with the requirements for CBs to be accredited and their auditors to be trained?	<i>Accreditation requirements for CBs such as qualification, competency and experience of their auditors have been established by DSM which is the national accreditation body.</i>
7.9	Who certifies the smallholders?	<i>Just like in the case of any other entity, accredited CBs conduct the MSPO audits and issue any Non-Compliance Requests (NCRs) which will determine if the smallholders are eligible to be awarded the MSPO certificate.</i>
7.10	Who are the accredited CBs who can conduct audits under the MSPO Certification Scheme?	<i>You can refer to https://www.mpooc.org.my/certification-bodies for more information on the accredited CBs.</i>
8	Mandatory MSPO Certification	
8.1	Will MSPO Certification be made mandatory? And if so, when?	<i>The implementation of MSPO Certification will be made mandatory by the end of December 2019.</i>

9 Audit Cost	
9.1	<p>What is the audit cost for MSPO certification?</p> <p><i>Audit fee is negotiated on a business-to-business basis and as an independent scheme operator, MPOCC does not determine the audit fee. Nevertheless, the cost of MSPO certification is reasonable and very much within the means of the industry players.</i></p>
10 Benefit / Incentive	
10.1	<p>What is the benefit (value) for plantation companies to obtain MSPO?</p> <p><i>Uplift the management system of the organisation especially in demonstrating sustainability. As for incentive, being a national scheme, some tax deduction is available for the audit cost incurred to obtain certification.</i></p>
10.2	<p>What are the benefits for smallholders?</p> <p><i>The benefits for smallholders include:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1) Financial aids are provided</i> <i>2) Reduced cost in pesticides and fertilisers</i> <i>3) Future generation can continue sustainability effort</i> <i>4) Certified MSPO smallholders apply safer working practices</i> <i>5) Smallholders' rights are protected</i> <i>6) Become a supplier of sustainable palm oil</i> <i>7) Higher yield and income</i> <i>8) On-going technical support are provided for free</i> <i>9) Being in SPOC provides larger scale of production</i> <i>10) Certified processing mills prefers certified FFB</i> <i>11) Continuous growth in knowledge of palm oil</i> <i>12) Recognised land and use rights</i>

10.3	What are the incentives available for MSPO certification uptake?	<p><i>The incentives are open to estates and processing facilities licensed by MPOB. The qualifying criteria and incentives are as per the following:</i></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>ESTATE Larger than 40.46 ha</td> <td>40.46 - 1000 ha</td> <td>70% of auditing fee for MSPO Stage 1 and Stage 2 Audits</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>larger than 1000 ha</td> <td>30% of auditing fee for MSPO Stage 1 and Stage 2 Audits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Processing Facilities</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mills • Kernel crushers • Refineries </td> <td>30% of auditing fee for MSPO Stage 1 and Stage 2 Audits</td> </tr> </table>	ESTATE Larger than 40.46 ha	40.46 - 1000 ha	70% of auditing fee for MSPO Stage 1 and Stage 2 Audits		larger than 1000 ha	30% of auditing fee for MSPO Stage 1 and Stage 2 Audits	Processing Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mills • Kernel crushers • Refineries 	30% of auditing fee for MSPO Stage 1 and Stage 2 Audits
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11 Contact & Support											
11.1	Who do I call for support?	Please call us at +603–2181 0192 anytime during the working hours. Working hours are: Monday – Friday (8.30am – 5.30pm)									
11.2	I want to give some feedback to MPOCC, what should I do?	You can either call us at +603-2181 0192 anytime during the working hours. Working hours are: Monday – Friday (8.30am – 5.30pm), or email us at info@mpocc.org.my									
11.3	I want to find out more about MSPO, is there a website or office I can visit?	<p>You can find out more about MSPO on our website at www.mpocc.org.my or visit our office during the working hours at:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Malaysian Palm Oil Certification Council (MPOCC) 15th Floor, Bangunan Getah Asli (Menara) 148, Jalan Ampang, 50450 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia</p> <p>Working hours are: Monday – Friday (8.30am – 5.30pm)</p>									