

Indonesia Forestry Transparency Forum

2020 Report

OSPOTT TRACKING TRANSPARENCY SUPPORTING SUSTAINABILITY

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1. Introduction

The 2020 Indonesia Forestry Transparency Forum was held on 4th March 2020 in Jakarta. This Forum was organised by the Zoological Society of London's (ZSL) <u>SPOTT initiative</u> in partnership with the <u>Indonesia</u> <u>Business Council for Sustainable Development (IBCSD)</u>. This report provides an overview of the presentations and discussions that took place as participants debated the benefits and challenges of increasing transparency in Indonesia's forestry sector, including the support needed to drive greater transparency, and the role of SPOTT.

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1.1 The SPOTT initiative

ZSL launched <u>SPOTT</u> in 2014 for the palm oil sector and expanded to cover the tropical timber and pulp sectors in 2017. SPOTT – Sustainability Policy Transparency Toolkit – is a free, online platform supporting sustainable commodity production and trade. By tracking transparency, SPOTT incentivises the implementation of corporate best practice. SPOTT assesses commodity producers, processors and traders on their public disclosure regarding their organisation, policies and practices related to environmental, social and governance issues. SPOTT scores tropical forestry and palm oil companies annually against over 100 sector-specific indicators to benchmark their progress over time. In 2019 it also began assessments of 15 of the largest companies in the natural rubber sector.

Through a recent grant from DFID's¹ Forest Governance, Markets and Climate (FGMC) programme, SPOTT expanded to assess and engage a greater number of timber and pulp companies. This expansion primarily targeted FLEGT²-partner countries at various stages of Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) development – specifically, Indonesia, Cameroon, Republic of Congo and Gabon. At the same time, SPOTT has started to assess timber traders in China that source from Africa. Key activities in 2020 include the review of the SPOTT timber and pulp indicator framework and alignment with palm oil and natural rubber frameworks, SPOTT assessments of 100 timber and pulp companies (up from 50 in 2018 and 97 in 2019), continuing to build support via the SPOTT Supporter Network for investors and other users, and direct support to companies looking to increase their transparency through workshops and face-to-face meetings and training with SPOTT staff.

1.2 Objectives of the Forestry Transparency Forums

The 2020 Forestry Transparency Forums were developed to help SPOTT engage with forestry sector stakeholders in its target geographies. Unlike in 2019, workshops will only be held in Cameroon, Indonesia and China in 2020. This is to strike a balance between the cost of one-off annual workshops vs. more detailed and bespoke guidance being provided to companies directly through one-to-one meetings with SPOTT staff.

The Forums enabled participants to meet the SPOTT team and increase their understanding of SPOTT's approach, processes and users. The SPOTT team also had the opportunity to hear stakeholders' feedback and concerns, helping to improve the SPOTT initiative. Key forestry sector stakeholders were also provided with opportunities to discuss issues associated with varying levels of transparency in the forestry sector. The participants considered the opportunities and benefits associated with greater transparency in the forestry sector, identified the obstacles to increasing transparency and discussed potential actions to overcome them.

¹ United Kingdom's Department for International Development.

² Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade – FLEGT is a European Union Action Plan established in 2003.

A further series of Forestry Transparency Forums will be organised in the same countries in the next phase of SPOTT (2021 – 2025) to support continued debate and knowledge sharing.

1.3 Agenda and participants

In Indonesia, the 2020 Forum focused on sharing the lessons learnt from the implementation of timber trade transparency in Indonesia from the perspectives of different stakeholders: government, business and civil society. These issues were discussed in the context of Indonesia's FLEGT licensing system and voluntary certification schemes, and considering the need for progress ahead of 2020's international conferences on the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UN Climate Change Summit. Both of these and the recognition of required progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will see 2020³ as a year where buyers and investors shall be seeking more demonstrable progress by producers. Therefore, ZSL demonstrated how SPOTT can be used as a tool to retain and attract business and investment in the post-2020 context.

ZSL provided a detailed presentation on 'the Business Case for Sustainable and Transparent Forestry' and 'Practical SPOTT Guidance' aimed at helping companies understand SPOTT indicators and how to improve their transparency and improve sustainability commitments. Participants were provided time after each panel session to ask questions and provide feedback and suggestions (see <u>SPOTT questions and answers</u> below). Following the presentations a practical exercise session was conducted for participants to apply the knowledge learned from the SPOTT presentations. The exercises gave participants three examples of different policy commitments and examples of fictional company policies and other evidence, which they were asked to review, discuss and score in groups. Each group reported back and identified scores and their justifications, including any gaps in policies and how they could be improved. This helped to engage participants and aid understanding of precise SPOTT requirements by companies when they come to create or revise policies ahead of the 2020 timber and pulp assesments (to be launched in July 2020).



Participants in the Indonesia Forum (Jakarta, 4th March). Image credit: ZSL

Representatives from the following organisations attended the Forum:

Forestry & Agriculture companies (16 companies)

- APP Sinarmas
- APRIL
- PT Austindo Nusantara Jaya
- PT SMART Tbk
- PT Kirana Megatara
- PT Salim Ivomas Pratama Tbk
- PT Indo Komoditi Korpora
- PT Astra Agro

- MP Evans
- PT Sila Agri Inovasi
- Asian Agri
- Apical
- Korindo
- PT Wana Subur Lestari
- PT Riau Andalan Pulp & Paper (RAPP)
- Royal Utama Lestari

³ And now 2021, due to the spread of COVID-19 and inability of many businesses to enact their planned ESG compliance activities in 2020.

Private sector associations & service providers (6 organisations):

- Indonesia Business Council for Sustainable Development (IBCSD)
- Association of Indonesian Forest Concessionaires (APHI)
- IFCC (PEFC)
- FSC Indonesia
- PT 8villages Indonesia
- PT Agrotek Lestari Internasional

Civil society & Donors (5 organisations):

- CRU
- USAID
- YKAI

- Multi-stakeholder Forestry Programme phase 4 (MFP4)
- Zoological Society of London (ZSL)

National and local government (1 organisation):

• Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK)

2. Speaker presentations

2.1 Presentation of SPOTT

During the Forum, ZSL presented the objectives, audience, and methodology underpinning <u>SPOTT</u>. ZSL explained how SPOTT helps to respond to demands for greater transparency, why SPOTT is relevant and can be useful to companies, how the SPOTT team can help companies increase their transparency and score on SPOTT, who uses SPOTT and how. Key findings from the <u>2019 SPOTT Timber and Pulp assessments</u> were also provided and discussed. A question and answer (Q&A) session was then held to address any questions stakeholders might have about the SPOTT initiative.

The questions and answers covered during all of the Forestry Transparency Forums held by ZSL in 2020 have been collated below. The SPOTT team also took note of the feedback and suggestions participants made during the Forums to inform the future development of the initiative.



Welcome & Registration during the Indonesia Forum. Image credit: IBCSD

2.2 SPOTT questions and answers

How does SPOTT assess companies?

SPOTT assesses companies on their public disclosure regarding their organisation, policies and practices. During each annual assessment, the SPOTT team examines each company's websites, public reports, and other publications against the SPOTT indicator framework.

The SPOTT team is unable to go into the field to verify if companies respect their commitments and the companies do not send information directly to ZSL. However, companies are given the opportunity to provide feedback on their assessment and improve their disclosures before the results are finalised and published on the SPOTT website.

SPOTT also provides a 'media monitor' that collates any news stories and reports on company activities, helping users to understand whether companies are implementing their commitments in practice. These news stories and reports are not scored in the assessments but provide important contextual information to users.

Do companies need to give their approval to be assessed on SPOTT?

Permission is not needed to carry out an assessment of a company on the SPOTT platform, due to the fact that assessments only consider publicly available data. However, whenever valid contact details are available, SPOTT makes every company aware that they are being assessed each year and gives them ample opportunity to interact with the SPOTT team on their assessments. SPOTT has also been approached by some companies who wish to be assessed on the platform in order to be part of the benchmark and identify areas for improvement.

How does SPOTT select companies? Do you only select large companies?

SPOTT selects companies according to their size in the sector and potential impact on tropical forests, biodiversity and communities. Criteria considered include, amongst others, size of market capitalisation (if a listed company), extent of concession areas or volume traded, proximity of concessions to high value ecosystems (e.g. national parks), and evidence of poor social or environmental practices (e.g. in industry or media reports). Companies can be nominated by a third party or volunteer for inclusion on SPOTT by filling the dedicated <u>form on the SPOTT website</u>. SPOTT then selects companies on the basis of the above criteria. Companies can request that they are not assessed on SPOTT, but this is only allowed in exceptional circumstances – for example, if a company sells all of its forestry operations.

Are SPOTT results representative of verified information of either legality or sustainability?

For the Timber and Pulp assessments in 2020, the assessment process will include 'practice indicators' to ensure that companies are putting their policies into practice. In order to gain full points for most practice indicators, it is not sufficient for the company to have produced self-reported information: it would need to be verified by an external party, or certified under a credible scheme (for example, FSC certification).

Regarding whether SPOTT scores are indicative of legality, SPOTT does include eight legality indicators in the framework. Rather than developing a SPOTT-specific framework, SPOTT validates these indicators with reference to the Open Timber Portal (OTP) for companies in the Congo Basin and from 2020 will take into account the SVLK licensing process in Indonesia.

Please see the blog post here which explains how SPOTT uses OTP indicators for further details.

What are the differences between OTP and SPOTT?

Whereas OTP focuses on companies in Cameroon, Republic of Congo and DRC uploading documents required to demonstrate the legality of wood according to the laws of the country in question, SPOTT focuses on the transparency of companies regarding their sustainability policies and practices using an indicator framework that includes ten environmental, social and governance (ESG) categories. OTP indicators are used by SPOTT to assess the transparency around legal documents for timber legality indicators.

Is SPOTT an endorsement of a company's sustainability?

SPOTT is neither an endorsement nor a disapprobation of any company, but a platform through which buyers and financial institutions can see the level of transparency achieved by a company in question and gauge transparency throughout the timber sector (as well as palm oil and natural rubber). The main aim of SPOTT's assessments is to provide a measure of a company's overall transparency, including its commitment to social, environmental and governance (ESG) best practice. ZSL defines transparent information as information communicated by the company in publicly available materials that are freely and readily accessible to all stakeholders. Being more transparent is a vital component of ESG best practice.

How can a zero-deforestation commitment be implemented in the forestry sector when demand for products will continue to increase over time, requiring more land?

Tropical deforestation needs to stop, not only to protect wildlife and people dependent on forests, but also to meet international targets on tackling the climate crisis. A zero-deforestation approach means that companies looking to expand production must do so either through increasing yield on the land they already have, or by expanding only in areas of non-forested or degraded land. The High Conservation Value (HCV) and High Carbon Stock Approach (HCSA) methodologies are useful tools for identifying areas of forest that should not be developed, and areas where expansion will have less impact.

Additionally, by adopting more sustainable practices companies may be able to increase their profitability per hectare, without increasing deforestation. A <u>2015 study by WWF</u> found that overall, the financial benefits of FSC certification tended to outweigh the costs for companies they evaluated, particularly in tropical forest operations. This was due to a mix of greater market access, stronger stakeholder relations, and improved operational efficiencies and management practices.

What is the benefit to companies of engaging with SPOTT and increasing our scores?

SPOTT assessments are essentially a free assessment of company sustainability disclosure – companies can use them to identify weaknesses and gaps in their current policies and reporting on practices, and to improve their transparency and sustainability management. There are various operational, reputational, regulatory, financial and market-access risks associated with unsustainable production, as well as benefits for companies adopting better practices. We explore some of these for the palm oil sector in our <u>recent report</u> on a business case for sustainability, and many of these cases are applicable to the timber and pulp sector as well.

Key company stakeholders are using SPOTT assessment data, and many are making decisions about their involvement with companies based on it. Institutional investors, banks, downstream buyers and retailers use the platform, as well as NGOs and researchers scrutinising company transparency. We speak regularly with users who draw on SPOTT data in their investment and lending decisions, or when looking into compliance in their supply chains with their own sustainability commitments. Several stakeholders have publicly stated their support for SPOTT and its approach by joining our Supporter Network – see our website for a list of these Supporters: https://www.spott.org/supporter-network/.

Does SPOTT weight or rank the importance of indicators it assesses?

All SPOTT Timber and Pulp indicators are worth a total of one or two points. These indicators are the same for all companies wherever they operate. However, some indicators can be disabled according to the companies' scope of operations. For example, a company which only extracts wood from natural forests will not be assessed against indicators dedicated to plantation-based production. In the 2019 assessments, 104 out of 131 SPOTT Timber and Pulp indicators could be disabled to fit each company's characteristics and scope of operations. For example, SPOTT's legality indicators are linked to <u>Open Timber Portal</u>, which is only currently available in certain Congo Basin countries – so these indicators are disabled for companies not operating in these countries.

In 2020, SPOTT will be launching a weighting tool for users on the website. This will allow users to choose how much emphasis they wish to place on certain categories or types of indicators, in order to help prioritise engagement with SPOTT companies they invest in or buy from. A custom weighting option will be available, as well as pre-defined weightings for legality criteria, NDPE criteria, etc.

How do smaller companies cope with ESG requirements? And is there a possibility to make a SPOTT scorecard for smallholders?

None of the companies assessed on SPOTT could be classed as small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). All are large-scale operations and size of landholding or processing volumes is typically one of the reasons why they were selected. We recognise that increasing ESG requirements on all companies is a burden, but it is the cost of doing business as a private sector organisation.

SPOTT does not focus on SMEs currently, but due to the number and impact that smallholders can have in all soft commodity supply chains, we are looking at the best way to support sustainable smallholder producers. A SPOTT scorecard may not be the most appropriate way to do this, but ZSL has the expertise and capacity to provide training and support to smallholder associations and groups to improve practices and prepare for certification, where this is possible. If you would be interested in discussing how ZSL can support smallholder schemes, please get in touch with us.

How does SPOTT engage the low-scoring companies and get them to improve?

Companies are contacted at various stages of the assessment process and the SPOTT team invites them to send feedback and ask questions. The SPOTT team often meets companies to discuss their assessments and provide advice on how they can improve. The indicator framework, research protocols and assessments published on SPOTT also serve as guidelines for companies to identify gaps in the information they publish and to learn about environmental, social and governance best practice.

However, the lowest scoring companies on the SPOTT scorecard are typically those companies that engage with SPOTT least. Some have never responded to any of our outreach and provide no feedback. In some cases – especially for smaller companies without websites – it may even be difficult for us to verify the correct contact details for companies. We try to tackle these gaps by contacting companies and other stakeholders in each country to contact assessed companies. Please get in contact if you think your company or a fellow company in your sector could and should be scoring higher, so that the SPOTT team can reach out to provide support on how we assess companies.

How can timber and pulp companies cope with complex problems such as boundary conflicts and conflicts with communities?

The SPOTT Indicator Framework includes a number of indicators to help guide companies on how best to address community, land and labour rights. All of these are based on the premise that regardless of whether a commercial company is granted a concession license by government, it is still the obligation of the concessionaire to investigate community and land claims. Many of these may be legitimate and require engagement with communities, governments and civil society organisations to fully address issues. Engagement with communities should be proactive and continuous and should be based around the principles of Free, Prior & Informed Consent (FPIC), as well as recognising that your obligations as a commercial operator extend beyond the boundaries of your concession. Commercial operations should engage in landscape level approaches to collectively address their impact on social, environmental and governance issues.



Presentation Q&A during the Indonesia Forum. Image credit: IBCSD

Who are SPOTT users? How does SPOTT work with its users? Does SPOTT reach out to the local banks of the countries where the Forums were organised?

SPOTT was designed at the request of financial sector stakeholders, to support constructive engagement between the financial sector and palm oil and forestry companies. SPOTT allows its users to identify areas in which a company excels or progresses, and where it should be more transparent or adopt best practice. SPOTT's primary target audiences are financial institutions (investors, asset managers, banks, research institutes) and buyers who are interested in the companies' environmental, social and governance practices. In 2019, over 22,300 users visited the SPOTT website and viewed pages more than 170,000 times. The SPOTT Dashboard, a free portal on the website (registration required) where users can download SPOTT assessment data and additional analyses, has seen over 900 registrations since its launch in February 2018. The SPOTT team currently has limited links with local banking institutions although this is focused upon in 2020, due to the impact these organisations have. During the 2020 SPOTT Workshop in Cameroon the Development Bank of the Central African States (BDEAC) spoke on the importance of ESG screening criteria in the forestry sector and importance of tools like SPOTT to support responsible investment. Local banking institutions are also encouraged to contact the SPOTT team if they would like additional information.

In 2020, SPOTT is also expanding its focus on consumer goods manufacturers (CGMs) and retailers as key user groups for SPOTT assessments. We are already aware that SPOTT is used by a number of retailers and CGMs to direct engagement with their supply chains, and we shall increase our support to these sectors.

2.3 Presentations by local stakeholders

Ms. Elim Sritaba, Chief Sustainability Officer for APP, provided opening remarks as a representative of the IBCSD, outlining the importance of transparency in this sector. **Dr. Ir. Rufi'l M.Sc,** Director for Processing and Marketing of Forest Products, Ministry of Environment and Forestry provided introductory remarks that highlighted the Ministry of Environment and Forestry's efforts to promote legal, sustainable and transparent forest sector development by promoting best practices across businesses. Following this, **Oliver Cupit**, SPOTT Manager provided a short introduction to SPOTT, stating the aims, assessment methods, and indicator framework.

These introductory remarks were followed by a **Morning Plenary Session and Panel Discussion**. This considered the lessons to be learned from existing efforts to increase timber trade transparency in Indonesia, as well as the challenges, benefits, good practices and opportunities. The session featured presentations and discussion from:

- Mr. Sigit Pramono, Sub-Director for Processing and Marketing of Forest Products, Ministry of Environment and Forestry "The importance of timber trade and production transparency and sustainability in Indonesia"
- Eleanor Spencer, SPOTT Technical Advisor, ZSL "2020 and beyond: ESG focus of buyers and investors and why it pays to be sustainable"
- **Triana Krisandini**, Assistant Director Sustainability, PT Riau Andalan Pulp & Paper (RAPP) "The benefits and challenges associated with greater forestry sector transparency"



Panel discussion during the Indonesia Forum. Image credit: IBCSD

The **Afternoon Plenary Session and Panel Discussion** featured contributions from three speakers and focused on practical steps and tools for organisations to increase transparency and sustainability in the Indonesian forestry sector:

- Oliver Cupit, SPOTT Manager, ZSL "Practical guidance on improving SPOTT assessment scores"
- Indra Setia Dewi, Marketing & Communication Manager, FSC "Overview of FSC, and the practicalities increasing transparency and progressing sustainability in the tropical forestry sector"
- Indroyono Soesilo, Association of Indonesian Forest Concessionaires (APHI) Chairman *"Increasing transparency and progressing sustainability in Forestry Industries: APHI lessons learned"*



Panel discussion during the Indonesia Forum. Image credit: IBCSD



Exercise session during the Indonesia Forum. Image credit: IBCSD



Exercise session during the Indonesia Forum. Image credit: IBCSD

3. Conclusions

SPOTT seeks to promote constructive dialogue between the forestry industry, government, financial institutions, companies and civil society organisations. In line with this approach, the 2020 Indonesia Forestry Transparency Forum gathered a wide range of stakeholders linked to Indonesia's forestry sector, to discuss the role of transparency in promoting greater sustainability and improved forest governance, and to learn more about SPOTT's approach. There were also some attendees from the palm oil and natural rubber sectors, which enriched the discussion with insights from other industries. The Forum included presentations and group discussions on the current status of transparency in the forestry sector in Indonesia, and how it might be improved over time. The majority of participants had not attended the 2019 workshop, and so this was a useful opportunity to bring this discussion to a new audience.

Speaker presentations provided a useful update on legality and transparency in the Indonesian forestry sector, which set the context for some of the discussions around certification requirements and market access. Presentations from stakeholders within the industry itself added useful detail on the practical barriers that companies can face in trying to improve their transparency and their practices on the ground in an Indonesian context, as well as insights on how SPOTT data has been useful to them. Feedback from the Forum's participants showed they found it a valuable opportunity to learn more about the SPOTT assessment process and methodology, and to understand the benefits of engaging with the team. The breakout sessions were useful in facilitating this, and highlighted some of the common ways in which company disclosure can fall short. Participants reported that going through this simple exercise provided useful context on the practicalities of how assessments are done, and how small changes can often make a significant difference to the quality and usefulness of the information being dislosed.

To drive forward transparency there is a need for incentives to be developed and communicated to the forestry sector. This could include regulatory and market incentives, strengthened by engagement by financial institutions and demand from consumers. Benchmarking can help in this respect, by allowing leading companies to be recognised for their disclosure efforts and helping others to recognise where improvements are required. Civil society can play an important role by interpreting demands for information and supporting industry in delivering greater transparency. Such support may include the development of common forums and collaborations that help to build trust across sectors and interest groups. Throughout all of this, it will be important to recognise that for many organisations, transparency will need to be delivered in a step-wise manner.

ZSL will organise another Transparency Forum in Indonesia between 2021 and 2025. This event will build on the 2019 and 2020 Forums and will take stock of the actions taken by stakeholders to increase transparency and responsible sourcing, the obstacles they have faced in trying to do so, and the support they need to further increase transparency. Until then, SPOTT and its partners will continue to support forestry companies in their efforts towards greater transparency and sustainable best practice.

Annex. Participants and feedback

Number of participants

a. By category of stakeholders

Soft commodity companies	17
 Timber and pulp 	3
Natural rubber	3
Palm oil	10
Other	1
Private sector associations & service providers	7
CSOs and Donors	7
Government representatives	2
Total number of participants	33

b. By gender

Total number of participants	33
Number of female participants	14
Number of male participants	19
Percentage of female participants	42%

Number of organisations

Soft commodity companies	11
Timber and pulp	2
Natural rubber	2
Palm oil	7
Other	1
Private sector associations and service providers	5
CSOs and Donors	5
Government representatives	1
Total number of organisations	22

Summary of feedback

Percentage of respondents	48.5%
Q1 - Transparency issues were adequately captured during the forum	4.3 / 5
Q2 - I found the presentations useful	4.1/5
Q3 - I found the breakout sessions useful	4.1/5
Average "Presentations and breakout sessions"	4.1/5
Q4 - SPOTT's objectives are clear	4.2 / 5
Q5 - SPOTT's methodology is clear	4.1/5
Q6 - SPOTT (findings, data) could be useful to my work/activities	4.3 / 5
Average "About SPOTT"	4.2 / 5
Q7 - I found the event efficiently organised (logistics, transport, venue, information)	4.1 / 5
Q8 - I found the facilitation efficient (welcome, moderation of sessions)	4.1/5
Average "Organisation and facilitation"	4.1/5
Average all questions	4.2 / 5

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About SPOTT

Developed by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), SPOTT is an online platform supporting sustainable commodity production and trade. By tracking transparency, SPOTT incentivises the implementation of corporate best practice.

SPOTT assesses commodity producers, processors and traders on their public disclosure regarding their organisation, policies and practices related to environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues. SPOTT scores companies annually against sector-specific indicators, allowing them to benchmark their progress over time. Investors, buyers and other key influencers can use SPOTT assessments to inform stakeholder engagement, manage risk, and increase industry transparency.

For more information, visit **SPOTT.org**.



The SPOTT initiative is funded by UK aid from the UK government; however, the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies.

About ZSL

ZSL (Zoological Society of London) is an international conservation charity working to create a world where wildlife thrives. From investigating the health threats facing animals to helping people and wildlife live alongside each other, ZSL is committed to bringing wildlife back from the brink of extinction. Our work is realised through our ground-breaking science, our field conservation around the world and engaging millions of people through our two zoos, ZSL London Zoo and ZSL Whipsnade Zoo. For more information, visit www.zsl.org

