

Headline	RSPO Transparency on land use, ownership essential to tackle haze problem		
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## RSPO: Transparency on land use, ownership essential to tackle haze problem

**KUCHING:** The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) urges companies and governments to work together to tackle public transparency issues of land use and land ownership which is essential to addressing the question of responsibility for fires the annual haze problem.

RSPO outlined this in a press statement after undergoing analysis on specific concessions areas of companies which various media and online platforms have reported to be implicated in the forest fires in Sumatra.

“Companies and governments should work together to provide consistent concession boundaries to the public, including concessions not certified by the RSPO.

“This would include all relevant company holdings, joint ventures, and the concessions of exclusive suppliers,” the statement said, adding that RSPO calls on other stakeholders to do the same.

To recap, on June 24, the RSPO requested five of its member companies, namely Sime Darby Bhd, Kuala Lumpur Kepong Bhd (KLK), Golden Agri Resources Ltd (GAR), Tabung Haji Plantations Bhd (TH Plantations), and PT Jatim Jaya Perkasa to submit digital maps of their concession areas in Indonesia.

### Concession maps do not align with maps from companies

As of July 9, four of these five companies have submitted digital

maps in a format appropriate for analysis. PT Jatim Jaya Perkasa has submitted concession information that cannot be used for precise analysis, and the RSPO has requested that the company submit digital map files in a more usable format.

Fire alerts within company boundaries were analysed separately by the World Resources Institute (WRI) and Malaysian scientist and Geographic Information System (GIS) expert Dr Khali Aziz Hamzah from Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM).

The RSPO has identified that the concession maps currently in the public domain, from Indonesia's Ministry of Forestry and other agencies, do not align with the maps provided by the companies listed by RSPO.

The RSPO therefore called out for further clarification from these agencies about the precise concession boundaries.

Meanwhile, RSPO said that the recent fires in Indonesia also represent an opportunity for RSPO and its members to play a positive role to help other companies and governments mitigate, or avoid altogether, the annual fires and haze in Southeast Asia.

The RSPO firmly believes that mitigating or avoiding fires on peat systems require landscape level collaboration and management.

As such, the RSPO firmly encourages its members with existing plantations on peat and elsewhere to adopt fire prevention measures within their concessions.

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**CLEARING OUT THE HAZE:** A worker sorts bunches of harvested oil palm fruit on a truck as haze surrounds the area in Indonesia. The RSPO urges companies and governments to work together to tackle public transparency on issues of land use and land ownership which is essential to addressing the question of responsibility for fires the annual haze problem. — Bloomberg photo