



SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL COALITION FOR INDIA

I-SPOC

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



ABOUT I-SPOC

The Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition for India (I-SPOC) stands as a business-led, multi-stakeholder sustainability initiative dedicated to advancing the sustainable sourcing, trade, and consumption of palm oil and its derivatives across the supply chain. In the six years since its establishment, I-SPOC has become a platform for knowledge dissemination, capacity-building and multisectoral stakeholder dialogue on sustainable palm oil in India. It has also effectively showcased the viability of multi-stakeholder platforms in addressing intricate sustainability challenges within emerging economies, particularly India. Conceived by four Founding Members, [Centre for Responsible Business \(CRB\)](#), [Rainforest Alliance \(RA\)](#), [Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil \(RSPO\)](#) and [WWF- India](#), the coalition currently has [36 members](#) and 31+ Observers predominantly representing Businesses, FMCGs, International organizations, Financial Institutions, amongst others utilizing palm oil in India on both international and national scales.

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN IN 2024

1. I-SPOC Coordination Activities and Member Engagement

- **10th Members Meeting** of I-SPOC convened on January 19, 2024, with a comprehensive agenda aimed at advancing sustainability in the palm oil industry. Key highlights included the launch of the Policy Input Note on '[Towards a Policy Framework for Financing Sustainable Palm Oil in India](#)' and briefing paper on '[Aligning Sustainability Principles into Oil Palm Production Policy in India](#)'. The roundtable discussions delved into crucial topics such as the trade of sustainable palm oil and domestic production challenges, featuring insights from the participants. With active participation from diverse stakeholders, the 10th Members Meeting set a robust trajectory for I-SPOC's ongoing efforts towards promoting sustainable palm oil practices in India. A summary report detailing key outcomes and insights is available [here](#).



- **I-SPOC Steering Committee Meeting** was held on 4 April 2024. 2 new members have joined the Steering Committee (Kamal Prakash Seth, Climate & Sustainability and Global Palm Oil Director, WWF-Singapore; Harshal Thakare, Senior Manager of Sustainability and Business Process Excellence, Galaxy Surfactants Limited). The meeting aimed at discussing the way forward for I-SPOC (2024-25). Discussion included recommendations on capacity building for financial institutions and value chain partners, fostering collaboration between academia and industry, advocating for a collective policy framework at the national level, facilitating knowledge-sharing with state governments, supporting industry sustainability measures, and bridging gaps between expectations and actions. Feedback was received and later incorporated into the I-SPOC action plan (2024-25).

- **11th Members Meeting** of I-SPOC took place on July 23, 2024, with 24 participants from 17 member organizations joining both virtually and in person. A key highlight of the meeting was the official launch of the Policy Input Note (PIN): [Respecting and Promoting Workers' Rights in Palm Oil Production Landscapes in India](#). The meeting also featured engaging insights from Members and Observers sessions, with participants offering valuable suggestions for I-SPOC's future work. Neha Kumar, Head of the South Asia Programme at Climate Bonds Initiative, provided strategic insights during the Expert Speak session. Additionally, discussions were held on the I-SPOC Action Plan for July 2024 to December 2024. To read the summary report, please click [here](#).



- I-SPOC has held five Founders meetings; on March 1, April 25, June 27, September 10 and December 11 2024. Discussions and inputs from these meetings have been important in shaping I-SPOC's Annual Activity Clander 2025 and the 5 Year Action Plan of I-SPOC.

2. Capacity Building Activities of I-SPOC

- **Capacity Building on EUDR:** On April 30, 2024, I-SPOC hosted the 'Exploring EUDR: Building Awareness' event, attracting over 100 participants. The event featured a panel discussion on the global value chain of palm oil, highlighting risks and opportunities for India. Chaired by Rajeev Kher, Sr. Advisor, WWF-India, and former Commerce Secretary, Government of India, the panel included: Sandeep Bhan, CEO, Sime Darby Oils Trading Pte Ltd; Rob McWilliam, Director, Technical Services, Earthworm Foundation; Ashwin Selvaraj, Deputy Director, Market Transformation, RSPO; and Nimish Shah, Global Sustainable Business & Innovations Leader, HUL. Topics covered included EUDR compliance challenges, strategies for the Indian supply chain, and the impact on smallholder farmers. Presentations by Aadarsh Mohandas from Preferred by Nature, Bhavit Pant from Rainforest Alliance, and Lisa King from WWF-France provided

insights into EUDR and its compliance across various commodities and sectors. A summary report of the event is available [here](#).

Rectifying	Stopping the product	Withdrawing / recalling	Cleaning	Dispose of
• rectifying any formal non-compliance	• preventing the relevant product from being placed on, or exported from, the EU market	• withdrawing or recalling the relevant product immediately	• donating the relevant product to charitable or public interest purposes	• disposing of the product in line with the EU rules on waste management
Fines	Confiscation	Confiscation of revenues	Exclusion public procurement	Prohibition to trade
• fines proportionate to the environmental damage and the value of the relevant products or commodities concerned	• confiscation of the relevant products concerned from the operator and/or trader;	• confiscation of revenues gained by the operator and/or trader from a transaction with the relevant products concerned	• temporary exclusion from public procurement processes (up to 12 months)	• temporary prohibition to placing on EU market or exporting products

- Capacity Building Activities in States Under NMEO-OP:** Capacity Building Workshops on Sustainable Palm Oil Production in Arunachal Pradesh, in Roing on August 30th and in Itanagar on September 3rd, 2024 - were organized in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, and I-SPOC, with support from WWF-India. The workshops were held in Roing on August 30th and in Itanagar on September 3rd, 2024, aimed at raising awareness and building capacity among farmers, FPOs, industry representatives, and state agriculture officials on integrating sustainability into oil palm production.



Key attendees in Roing included Shri Bidol Tayeng, Commissioner and Secretary of the State Agriculture Department, and Idar Noyar, Assistant Nodal Officer for Palm Oil, with 95 participants present. In Itanagar, the workshop was honored by the presence of Shri Gabriel Denwang Wangsu, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture and Allied Sectors, along with senior government officials such as Shri Dani Yubbe,

Director of Agriculture, and Shri T. D. Neckhom, Director of Marketing and State Nodal Officer for Palm Oil. A total of 126 stakeholders attended the workshop.

Both workshops addressed the environmental, economic, and social dimensions of sustainability, and Good Agricultural Practices and managing human-animal conflicts, with expert-led presentations from CRB, RSPO, and WWF-India.

Moving forward, I-SPOC plans to engage further with other states under the NMEO-OP to raise awareness and build capacity for sustainability in oil palm production. To read the comprehensive summary report of both the workshops, please click [here](#).

3. Activities at Policy Level

- Over the years, I-SPOC's working group on Government Policy and Domestic Production has discussed the role of policy in promoting sustainable palm oil practices in India. To advance these efforts, I-SPOC formed the Policy Engagement Working Group in the year 2024, comprising 16 experts from various sectors, including former government secretaries, representatives from research organizations, major FMCGs, producer associations, civil society organizations, and NGOs. The group aims to develop policy recommendations and identify elements for a robust policy framework. The first meeting of the group was held on May 20, 2024 and the subsequent meetings were held on 15 October and 11 December 2024.

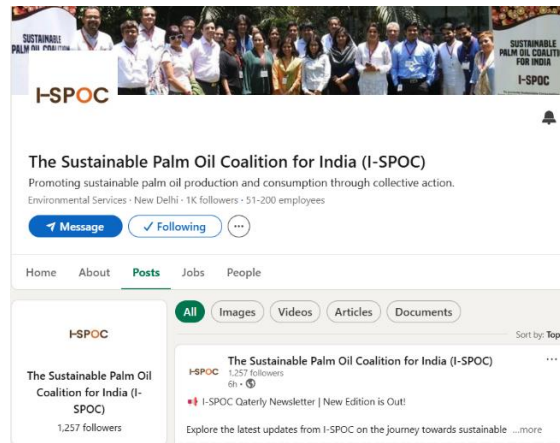


4. Outreach and Visibility

- Visibility on other media platforms:** Capacity Building Workshops on Sustainable Palm Oil Production in Arunachal Pradesh garnered media coverage in [Northeast Today](#), [Eastern Sentinel](#), [Echo of Arunachal](#), and [The Arunachal Times](#), amplifying I-SPOC's advocacy for sustainable palm oil production.



- **Social media outreach:** I-SPOC’s LinkedIn followers increased by about 40% in the year and have reached 1257 at present.



- **Engagement with Government:** WWF-India held a meeting with the Joint Secretary of Oilseeds, Government of India, in April, where they presented their work on the sustainability of palm oil. They were invited to engage with the government to support sustainability-related aspects of palm oil and to become a member of a nodal group for palm oil sustainability when it is formed.

- **Deliberation with State Agriculture Department of Arunachal Pradesh:** On 9 May 2024, a delegation from I-SPOC, including Rijit Sengupta (CRB), Kalyan Verma (WWF – India), and Hiten Baisya (WWF Landscape Team – Assam), met with Shri Bidol Tayeng IAS (Commissioner and Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Government of Arunachal Pradesh) at the Civil Secretariat in Itanagar. This meeting was a result of several exchanges and constant follow-up by the I-SPOC Secretariat since June 2023. Shri Tayeng was accompanied by Shri T D Neckhom, Joint Director and Nodal Officer on Palm Oil, and Mr Idar, Officer handling Palm Oil in the Department.



This discussion resulted in I-SPOC organizing the two Capacity Building Workshops on Sustainable Palm Oil Production in Arunachal Pradesh, in Roing on August 30th and in Itanagar on September 3rd, 2024.

- **I-SPOC booth at Vegoils Vision 2030: Opportunities and Challenges (IVPA) -** I-SPOC participated in Indian Vegetable Oil Producers Association (IVPA) event- held on 18-19 July 2024. The event 'Vegoils



Vision 2030: Opportunities and Challenges,' brought together a diverse group of experts, researchers, technologists, government officials, and industry stakeholders.

WWF-India participated in the session on Sustainability in the Vegetable Oil Sector at the IVPA event, alongside representatives from Gabungan Pengusaha Kelapa Sawit Indonesia (GAPKI), Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), IDH, smallholders from Andhra Pradesh, and National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP). During the session, WWF-India presented insights on the opportunities and challenges associated with the sustainable supply chain of vegetable oils in India.



- **Oil Palm Plantation Visit** - In August 2024, the WWF-India team visited oil palm plantations in Goalpara district, one of the first areas to establish oil palm cultivation in Assam, which is currently facing challenges related to human-elephant conflict. During the visit, the team met with district implementation officers of the NMEO-OP scheme and observed several human-elephant conflict mitigation techniques, such as the use of trenches.



- **GlobOil 2024** - WWF-India participated in the GlobOil event 2024, held in Mumbai from 18-20 September. The event attracted over 1,500 delegates and 100 exhibitors from more than 60 countries, bringing together numerous industry experts to discuss the future of edible oils under the theme 'Navigating the Future of Edible Oils: Innovation, Sustainability, and Market Dynamics.'



- **I-SPOC at India Sustainability Standards (ISS) 2024:** November 15, 2024: I-SPOC hosted the session 'Driving the Pathway towards Sustainable Palm Oil Production in India: Checks and Balances' at ISS 2024. This engaging panel discussion brought together experts to explore strategies for balancing India's growing demand for palm oil with sustainability imperatives. Featuring prominent speakers like Rajeev Kher (WWF-India), Aadarsh Mohandas (Preferred by Nature), Bhavit Pant (Rainforest Alliance), and Shivnayan Aggarwal (RSPO), the session underscored actionable pathways for stakeholders across

industries. I-SPOC's new knowledge product –A Briefing paper titled '[Analyzing the Africa Palm Oil Initiative's Role in Responsible Palm Oil Production Sustainable Strategies and Lessons for India](#)' was also officially launched during the session.



- Dialogue on Traceability in the Palm Oil Value Chain:** On November 15, 2024 in a session at ISS 2024 titled 'Importance of Trade in Driving Traceability in Palm Oil Supply Chain'. The session focused on looking at the challenges and opportunities of having traceability integrated in the Palm Oil Supply Chain, exploring the impacts of legislations (like EUDR and others) in achieving traceability in the palm oil supply chain and the steps taken to adopt best practices to achieve traceability in the palm sector. A briefing paper titled 'Understanding and Applying 'Traceability' in the Context of the Indian Palm Oil Value Chain' was also released at the session.



5. New Members addition in the coalition

- Patanjali foods ltd (since July, 2024), Emami (since May, 2024) have joined the coalition as Members and are now a part of the I-SPOC family
- The Steering Committee of I-SPOC now has 2 new members (Kamal Prakash Seth, Climate & Sustainability and Global Palm Oil Director, WWF-Singapore; Harshal Thakare, Senior Manager of Sustainability and Business Process Excellence, Galaxy Surfactants Limited).

PUBLICATIONS

- [RSPO](#) and [CRB](#) finalized and launched the Policy Input Note on '[Towards a Policy Framework for Financing Sustainable Palm Oil in India](#)'. This paper outlines a proposed T-I-D-E policy framework to encourage financing of sustainable palm oil in India, aimed at reducing risks associated with conventional palm oil. It highlights key policies needed to strengthen India's financial ecosystem and promote sustainability in palm oil production.
- I-SPOC finalized and launched a briefing paper on [Aligning Sustainability Principles into Oil Palm Production Policy in India](#). The paper aims to offer recommendations to both central and state governments for aligning sustainability principles within the national palm oil production initiative. Additionally, it will serve as a tool to engage businesses and stakeholders involved in palm oil production and related activities across the country.
- I-SPOC officially launched the Labor [Policy Input Note \(PIN\): Respecting and Promoting Workers' Rights in Palm Oil Production Landscapes in India](#) at the 11th Members meeting of I-SPOC. This Policy Input Note (PIN) has been developed as a part of a CRB-RSPO partnership executed over the period 2021-22 entitled, 'Raising the Ambition on Sustainable Palm Oil in the Indian Market Post COVID19.'
- I-SPOC officially launched its new knowledge product –A Briefing paper titled '[Analyzing the Africa Palm Oil Initiative's Role in Responsible Palm Oil Production Sustainable Strategies and Lessons for India](#)' on November 15, 2024 at the I-SPOC hosted the session at India Sustainability Standards (ISS) 2024. The paper comprises an analytical view of the initiatives by African countries (APOI countries) on sustainable palm oil production. The paper also aims to have lessons and good practices from APOI initiatives, that could be incorporated into Indian palm oil production.
- I-SPOC traceability-based knowledge product: a briefing paper titled 'Understanding and Applying 'Traceability' in the Context of the Indian Palm Oil Value Chain' was also officially released at the session titled 'Importance of Trade in Driving Traceability in Palm Oil Supply Chain' at India Sustainability Standards (ISS) 2024. This paper aims to raise awareness among stakeholders, including industry actors, by presenting the frequent obstacles and potential remedies in achieving traceability within the palm oil value chain.

