

## FRAMING OF THE CERTIFICATION OF ROUNDTABLE ON SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL (RSOP) FARMER'S ASSISTANCE PROGRAM STRATEGY IN SOUTH TAPANULI WITH ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH (Study Case of Unilever Assisted Farmer Groups)

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### Abstract

The agricultural sector is one of the crucial sectors in Indonesia, which is the primary source of food and economic growth. The role of this sector can still be increased if appropriately managed. In today's international trade, sustainability is one of the most important things to maintain, embodied in the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) certification. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies can be used as one of the strategies carried out by companies in community empowerment. The Asset-Based Community Development approach can create an effective and sustainable program. This is done with the stages of discovery, dream, design, define, and compare. As a result, all assets owned are mapped for human, financial, social, physical, and natural assets. The targets expected by the farmer group community are to build the commitment and independence of farmer groups in program sustainability, increase the income of independent smallholders who have obtained RSPO certificates, and increase the number of independent smallholders certified each year. The strategy is prepared based on the derivatives of the expected targets for each farmer group actor, Unilever, academics, and local government.

**Keywords:** *Roundtable Sustainability Palm Oil, Corporate Social Responsibility, Asset Based Community Development, Palm Farmers*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's international trade, sustainability is one of the most important things to maintain. Therefore, many countries require the existence of these sustainability principles in various products that can be imported, one of which is the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) certification. A group of palm oil-producing countries carries out this certification to ensure the sustainability of the production of this product in the future without damaging the environment or increasing carbon emissions (Antonio, 2020). To support this, it is necessary to have an appropriate empowerment strategy. The government can carry out community empowerment strategies as policymakers, the community as actors/actors who run it, and social institutions supporting activities through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies (Pratama, 2019). Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies can be used as one of the strategies carried out by companies in community empowerment. This empowerment policy will be carried out to achieve sustainable community development (Disemadi, 2020). The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) certification assistance program is a form of Corporate Social Responsibility policy carried out by Unilever to empower communities around the company's production areas.

Unilever is a multinational company that trades many products internationally. Many of Unilever's products use palm oil derivatives in their production activities. Unilever obtains many Kernel Oil raw materials through state plantations and private plantations. This company is also a member of the RSPO, which has the responsibility to ensure that the raw materials obtained come from sustainable plantations and empower the surrounding community, which is stated in the

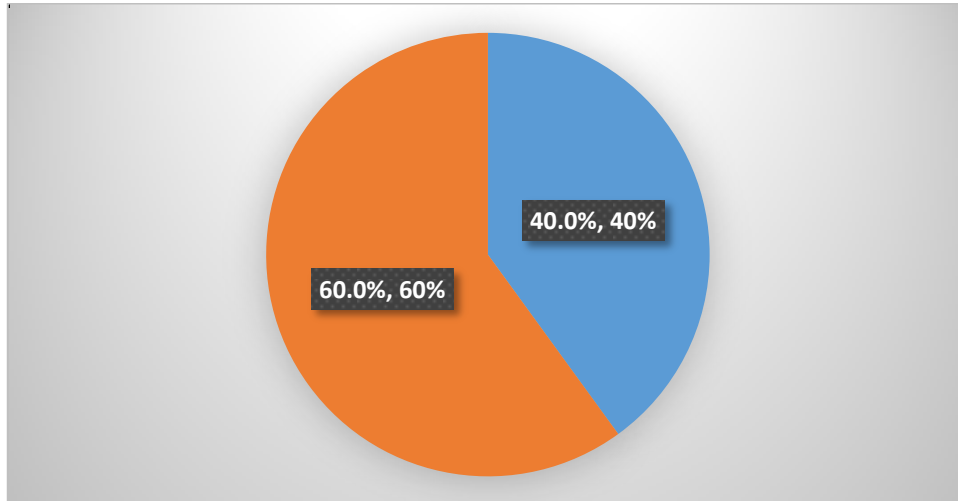
indicators contained in the RSPO Principles and Criteria Indicator regarding Smallholders. To fulfill this responsibility, Unilever has collaborated with various companies, especially for Empowering Oil Palm Independent Smallholders. This program is essential to ensure the traceability of materials obtained freely from areas whose designation is not illegal land clearing. The collaboration that started in 2016 with State plantations has started this empowerment program in North Sumatra, Indra Pura Regency with UD. Lestari, as a Farmers Group with 63 farmers, was successfully certified from the target of 150 independent smallholders to be certified. The program has been running, and to date, it is estimated that 4,000 independent smallholders spread across Sumatra have been successfully certified under this empowerment program. This Farmer Empowerment Program targets 100,000 independent smallholders certified by 2030. This program will be said to be successful if it provides benefits and is felt by independent smallholders. One of the indicators that can be used is if the empowerment program is carried out, it will be able to increase the production of Fresh Fruit Bunches by independent smallholders. Based on data collected in 2021 (before RSPO certification) and 2022 (after RSPO certification), production for farmer groups belonging to the old members has experienced a decline. For new members, there has been a pretty good increase in production. Besides obtaining RSPO certification, Unilever is also looking for alternatives so that independent smallholders can obtain additional income after certification. This is one of the considerations in the strategy developed for the community empowerment program. For training programs to be effective, the training programs provided need to be adjusted to the competencies possessed by farmers (Sela, 2018). Thus, increased production after the RSPO certification process can be achieved.

**Table 1. Production Of Fresh Fruit Bunches Per Hectare Per Year for UD Samin Farmer Groups**

No	Sub Group	Average Production (kg/ year/ Ha) 2021 (Before certification) and 2022 (After Certification)			
		Old Member		New members	
		Before Certification	After Certification	Before Certification	After certification
1	Subgroup A	14.939,61	9.188,24	7.868,83	10.878,54
2	Subgroup B	23.350,31	15.476,46	6.792,81	10.605,98
3	Subgroup C	20.106,28	13.978,93	9.092,59	11.084,29
4	Subgroup D	21.705,58	14.448,72	-	-
5	Subgroup E	20.438,05	13.446,84	-	-
6	Subgroup F	18.437,73	11.979,15	-	-
7	Subgroup G	12.229,15	10.683,90	9.018,95	11.378,95
8	Subgroup H	18.281,13	13.785,84	7.092,51	8.927,55
9	Subgroup I	19.819,48	12.692,61	-	-
10	Subgroup J	20.580,99	15.772,59	-	-
11	Subgroup K	18.412,72	12.536,63	8.782,53	12.839,97
12	Subgroup L	11.153,53	7.777,45	-	-

Another indicator that needs attention is sustainability after the program has been completed. Based on interviews conducted with certified independent smallholders, on average, they still need assistance from company programs to maintain their production. This cannot be said

to be sustainable. A good empowerment program must be able to make its participants independent after the program is completed (Beardmore, 2022).

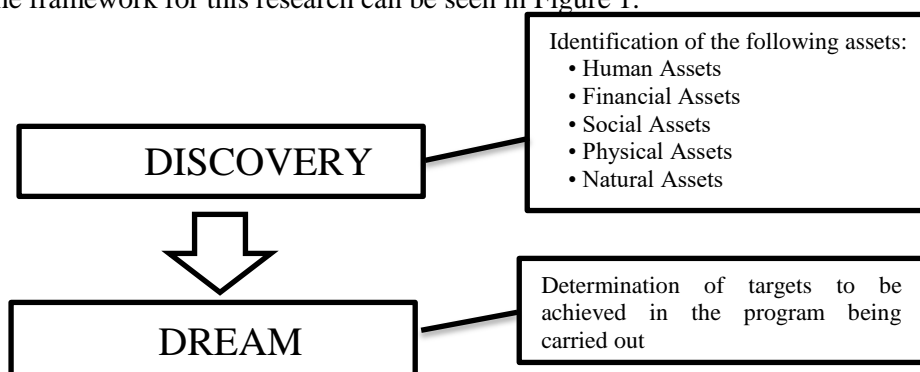


**Figure 1.** Independence After Program

Research on strategies that need to be developed in community empowerment programs using the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) method has been carried out in the preparation of public reading rooms (Miller, 2016), facilities for seniors (Beardmore, 2022), unique community rooms (Best, 2014) the tourism community (Maulana, 2019; Qiyami, 2021), and the CSR program (Fisher, 2009). The research made program recipients use the ABCD method produce a strategy that made it possible to connect existing assets in the community environment to synergize with assets in the community in achieving the goals expected by the community (Miller, 2016). Using the ABCD method also allows companies to develop sustainable communities, even in communities with special treatment (Best, 2014), solving existing problems independently by the community (Fisher, 2009). Based on the research that has been done, to be able to create an effective and sustainable program, the Asset Based Community Development method approach can be carried out. With this research, it is hoped that after the program has been implemented, it will be possible for the communities that are recipients of the program to be sustainable without the need for support from external parties on an ongoing basis.

### Research Thinking Framework

The thinking framework describes each stage to be achieved from the research activity. The framework for this research can be seen in Figure 1.



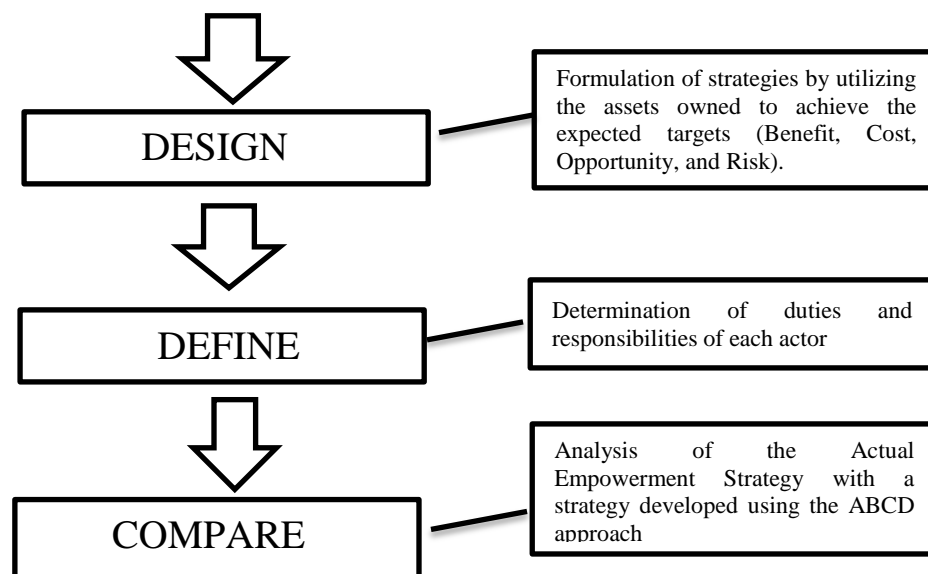


Figure 1. Research Thinking Framework

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This research was conducted in the independent smallholder empowerment program under Unilever. This research is included in exploratory, descriptive research because in this research, researchers are trying to explore determining strategies in community empowerment programs using the Asset Based Community Development approach, and the results are described in depth (Sugiyono, 2019). The data taken from this research is perceptual, so it can be categorized in this type of research. The research object taken in this study was the UD Farmer Group—Samin, which is in South Tapanuli Regency. The selection of this farmer group was carried out because the target of independence, increasing the economy of independent smallholders, and the productivity of the harvest of Oil Palm Fresh Fruit Bunches obtained were not all achieved based on preliminary research that had been carried out previously. Farmers Group UD. Samin has 279 members of independent smallholders who are members of 10 subgroups of farmers.

The research was conducted from September 2022 to January 2023. Data was collected using the Phased Asset Based Community Development approach developed by McKnight (2010), and the results were compared to the existing program empowerment strategy. The method used in analyzing this research is the Asset Based Community Development method approach. This method collects the information obtained and develops strategies for empowering farmer groups. The developed strategy is then analyzed in comparison with the current empowerment strategy. The result will be obtained on the advantages and disadvantages of each method between ABCD and Existing.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Asset Data Collection

The first and most crucial stage in the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) method is the collection of asset data owned by each actor. This Asset Data comprises human, financial, social, physical, and natural assets. The following will describe each of the assets owned.

## Human Asset Data

Data on human assets is collected by collecting data on each member of the farmer group regarding their formal education and expertise. Based on this, data was collected and recapitulated to obtain data, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Collection of Information on Human Aspects**

No	Aspect	Number of independent Farmers
1	<b>Education/Knowledge</b>	
	a. No School	112
	b. Elementary school	96
	c. Junior/Senior High School	158
	d. Diploma	10
	e. Bachelor	39
2	<b>Skill</b>	
	a. Agriculture and farming	36
	b. Engineering	15
	c. Management	4
	d. Health	20
	e. Education	20
	f. Farm	25

Based on these data, it was found that there is potential for utilizing the human assets in these farmer groups to develop them further, such as trainers, health workers, and teachers in schools, to better and professional program management.

## Financial Asset Data

Data on financial assets is collected related to the sources of income for members of farmer groups, especially those directly related to the oil palm plantations they operate. Financial asset data can be seen in Table 3.

**Table 3. Collection of Information on Financial Aspects**

No	Aspect	Number of Independent Farmers	Production Capacity (kg/ year)
1	<b>Agriculture and farming</b>		
	a. Fresh fruit bunches	415	8.415.092
	b. Collectors	7	2.319.945
2	<b>Farm</b>		
	a. Cattle	20	-
	b. Goat livestock	5	-
3	<b>Capital distribution agency</b>		
	a. Lenders Private / government	317	-
	b. Credit Channels from Third Parties	3	-



Financial assets are collected to see the availability of capital resources to run businesses or farmer development programs. With farmer development programs, farmers can earn higher incomes.

**Social Asset Data**

Direct interviews with farmer groups collect social asset data. The farmer groups that are the research object describe their social networks and the access they can use to social institutions, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. Collection of Information on Social Aspects**

No	Social Assets	Amount
1	Owned Social Networks	Four networks, namely mosques, schools, health clinics, and banking
2	Access to owned Social Institutions	Two institutions, namely: 1. District Agriculture Service 2. Office of Cooperatives and SMEs

Social assets are collected to see these social aspects' adequacy in supporting the social activities of independent smallholders and their families.

**Physical Asset Data**

Physical asset data is collected by direct interviews with farmer groups, as well as by direct observation. The physical assets in the farmer group area are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5. Collection of Information on Physical Aspects**

No	Physical Assets	Amount
1	Road	Provincial Roads (Cross Sumatra) and Regency/City Roads. Also, several roads were repaired with village funds.
2	Bridge	Quite a lot and connect with the surrounding area
3	Clinic/hospital	Three clinics are located adjacent to the farmer group area
4	School	14 schools, both private and public, around the Farmer Group area
5	Transport Truck	Nine transport trucks
6	Warehouse	Seven buildings/ Temporary Stockpiling Locations
7	Center for Training/Higher Education	One training center and one lecture building

Physical assets are recapitulated to ensure that programs aimed at the community/independent smallholders will be sustainable, not temporary. These physical assets can also be used to develop farmer groups further.

## Natural Asset Data

Direct interviews with farmer groups collect natural asset data. The farmer groups that are the object of research describe land and water resources that they can use to increase plantation productivity, as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6. Collection of Information on Natural Aspects**

No	Natural Assets	Amount/ Area
1	Total land owned	670,54 Ha
2	Lake/ River/ ditch as a source of water	63,31 Ha

Natural assets are collected to ensure that sustainable plantations following RSPO standards can continue without being hindered by existing natural resources, especially land and water sources, which are essential for plant growth and the daily activities of independent smallholders and their families.

## Determination of Empowerment Program Targets

The target of this empowerment program is for independent smallholders to meet RSPO standards and obtain RSPO certificates which indicate that products come from sustainable plantation processes and methods. Some of the long-term goals of the RSPO itself are:

1. People: sustainable living and poverty reduction, as well as safeguarding, respecting, and managing human rights
2. Prosperity: Become a competitive, resilient, and sustainable sector
3. Planet: Ecosystems that are conserved, protected, and enhanced for future generations

The sub-objectives to be achieved from the RSPO standard are:

1. As agents and perpetrators
2. Inclusive access to benefits
3. Harmonization of communities and companies
4. A challenging and sustainable business
5. Tiered upgrades
6. Biodiversity protection
7. Improvement of services to the ecosystem
8. Neutrality of land degradation
9. Sustainable land use planning

To support the RSPO's goals, Unilever is committed to maintaining and assisting in achieving these goals. In addition to RSPO certification, Unilever hopes to improve the welfare of independent smallholders through alternative income. Therefore, the commitments and objectives set out in this empowerment program are as follows:

1. Building commitment and independence of farmer groups in program sustainability
2. Increased income of independent smallholders who have obtained RSPO certificates
3. Increasing the number of independent smallholders certified each year

The objectives of each program are then identified as benefits, costs, opportunities, and risks so that Unilever and farmer groups understand the ultimate goal to be achieved from the program.

**Table 7. Benefit, Cost, Opportunity, and Risk in Each Program Objective**

<b>Purpose</b>	Building Commitment and Independence of farmer groups in program sustainability	Increased income of independent smallholders who have obtained RSPO certificates	Increasing the number of independent smallholders certified each year
<b>Benefits for</b>	Unilever: Financial support can be extended to new groups Farmer Groups: independent and able to earn additional income	Unilever: Improving the image of empowering independent smallholders Farmer Groups: Business Diversification, Sustainable, and Increasing Members' Income	Unilever: exponentially increasing the number of independent smallholders certified Farmer Groups: Increasing the bargaining position of farmer groups to consumers
<b>Cost</b>	Unilever: finance and provision of trainers. Farmer Group: provision of trainers (after becoming independent).	Unilever: Finance for empowerment Farmers Group: venture capital	Unilever: little financial support Farmer Groups: Independence in providing funds
<b>Opportunity</b>	There is financial and technical support from Unilever for RSPO certification.	Opportunity for business diversification because income from palm oil fluctuates depending on market prices	There are funding opportunities for assistance to independent smallholders.
<b>Risk</b>	Provision of independent funds for the certification process	The risk is negligible because empowerment is accompanied by trainers who accompany the practice.	Independent smallholders certified through Farmer Groups may be less tied to Unilever.

As for achieving these goals, each actor needs to contribute. The contributions that need to be made by each actor and the benefits obtained by these actors can be seen in Table 8.

**Table 8. Results of Give and Gain for Each Actor**

No	<i>Give</i>	<i>Gain</i>
<b>Actor: Unilever</b>		
1	Modules and training mechanisms for RSPO certification	Independent smallholders obtain RSPO certificates
2	Financial Support	To procure the required assets
3	RSPO Trainers and Supporters	New trainer in the scope of farmer groups
4	Socialization of the importance of RSPO certificates	Independent smallholder commitment to maintaining RSPO certification
5	The best farmer race	Increase motivation to live up to RSPO criteria.



**Table 8. Results of Give and Gain for Each Actor**

No	<i>Give</i>	<i>Gain</i>
<b>Actor: Farmer Group</b>		
1	Human Assets	Increase in the number of internal trainers.
2	Social Assets	Increased retention of independent smallholders in the area
3	Financial Assets	Increased income from palm oil waste processing
4	Physical Assets	The distribution process can be carried out smoothly
5	Natural Assets	Oil palm productivity is maintained.
<b>Actor: Local Government</b>		
1	Maintained physical facilities	Increased productivity in the region
2	Easy regulation	Regional Income Increase
3	Information on Uncertified Farmers	Increasing Regional Revenue in the Future
<b>Actors: Academics</b>		
1	Palm operational knowledge	Applicability of the tested model, image enhancement
2	Knowledge of business and waste treatment	Form of community service, image enhancement
3	Social and managerial knowledge	Program sustainability

Strategy formulation can be carried out with the assets provided by each related actor. The preparation of the strategy is done collaboratively because the strategy must be supported together so that the final goal can be achieved.

### Comparison to Existing Strategy

To be able to find out the difference between the goals set in the ABCD method and those in the existing conditions can be seen in Table 9. below.

**Table 9. Comparison of the Objectives of the ABCD Strategy with the Existing Strategy**

No	ABCD Strategy Objectives	Existing Strategy Objectives
1	Building Commitment and Independence of farmer groups in program sustainability	Providing Welfare for Independent Farmers
2	Increased income of independent smallholders who have obtained RSPO certificates	Increase Traceability of Fruit Origin

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3	Increasing the number of independent smallholders certified each year	Increasing the yield of certified kernel oil received by Unilever's supplier palm oil mills through certified fruit from farmers
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As shown in Table 9, the main differences between the objectives of the two strategies are different. The existing strategy is more focused on the goals that Unilever must achieve to achieve the RSPO certification target and conduct pilot projects to increase income for independent smallholders. On the other hand, with the ABCD method, the goals set are more toward the goals to be achieved by Farmer Groups. In order to ensure that the goals of the farmer groups can support the goals expected by Unilever in setting these goals, an agreement is required from both parties. The strategies drawn up will also differ because the goals to be achieved differ. The differences in the strategy compiled in the ABCD method with the existing strategy can be seen in Table 10 below.

**Table 10. Comparison of the ABCD Strategy with the Existing Strategy**

No	ABCD Strategy	Existing Strategy
	(Unilever)	(Unilever)
1	Competency enhancement to support the sustainability of the RSPO program	Provision of local partners as companions for the RSPO certification program (farmers' champion)
2	A premium price is given for certified fresh fruit bunches.	A premium price is given for certified fresh fruit bunches.
3	Provision of venture capital support	-
4	Effective outreach related to venture capital assistance schemes is decreasing as the independence of farmer groups increases.	.-
5	Program expansion to other farmer groups	Program expansion to other farmer groups
6	Facilitators assisting in the consistency evaluation carry out the RSPO criteria.	Facilitators assisting in the consistency evaluation carry out the RSPO criteria.
	(Farmers)	-
7	Increasing the level of independence from the assets owned	Formation of a cooperative legal entity
8	Business collaboration with independent smallholders for processing by-products (by utilizing owned assets)	-
9	Leading member competency development in the RSPO certification program	Increase in the number of RSPO-certified smallholders
	(Academics)	-
10	Increasing managerial competence and entrepreneurship of independent smallholders	-
11	Increased competency in preparing a good business plan, as well as market access for products	-
12	Increasing competency in processing palm oil waste into valuable products	-

**Table 10. Comparison of the ABCD Strategy with the Existing Strategy**

No	ABCD Strategy	Existing Strategy
13	Managerial assistance to farmer groups so that self-management runs effectively	-
14	Increasing the effectiveness of socialization carried out (Local government)	-
15	Maintenance of public facilities, as well as the issuance of regulations that support sustainable plantations	Maintenance of public facilities such as roads, bridges
16	Maintenance of public facilities, as well as relaxation in issuing business/product licenses	-
17	Briefing on areas lagging in RSPO certification	Mapping of potential training participants and assistance with RSPO certification

With the difference in the focus of the goals set between the goals in the ABCD Method and the goals in the Existing Strategy, it can also be seen in the existing strategy that the focus of the strategy lies in achieving targets. Meanwhile, in the ABCD strategy, there are many strategies aimed at increasing the independence of farmer groups in developing the RSPO certification program and increasing the welfare of independent smallholders in their environment. In the ABCD method, each actor is also responsible for managing the program.

### Compilation of Work Programs

The Work Program is compiled from each of the strategies drawn up. Each working program contains a Work program description, Performance Measure, Responsible, and Realization Year. Table 11 is a work program prepared for Strategy 1, namely Competency enhancement to support the sustainability of the RSPO program. This strategy focuses on developing the competence of Farmer Groups so that by the end of 2025, it is hoped that Farmer Groups will be independent in carrying out the RSPO certification program.

**Table 11. Formulation of Strategic Work Program 1**

Strategy Competency enhancement to support the sustainability of the RSPO program

Actor Unilever

No	Work program	Performance Measures	Person in Charge	Realizati on year
1	Development of training standards in the RSPO certification process	Standard training book, PDCA Mechanism	Kompasia	2023
2	Trainers Training	30% of trainees who are trained can become Farmer Group trainers	Kompasia	2023-2025
3	RSPO Certification Standard Training for Trainers	30% of trainees who are trained can become consultants for Farmer Groups	Kompasia	2023-2025

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4	Preparation of mechanisms and procedures for mapping plantation areas	There is a communication SOP for requests for the mapping of farmer areas to be certified	Unilever, Meridia Land, Kelompok Tani	2023
5	Technical training related to plantation area mapping from the mechanism that has been prepared	Two trainees are capable of technically mapping plantation areas	Unilever	2024

The work programs that have been prepared are directed at transferring knowledge and skills in executing the processes that have been carried out to farmer groups.

**Preparation of Key Performance Indicators (KPI)**

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are prepared based on the expected performance of the programs being implemented. KPI is a measure of the success of the strategy that has been prepared using the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) method and as a control for achieving the goals of the Farmer Group.

**Discussion**

**Community Owned Assets**

Based on human, financial, social, physical, and natural assets, it is sufficient to be independent in managing the RSPO program. This study focuses more on the RSPO than the ISPO because the RSPO aims to achieve sustainability. At the same time, the ISPO is more concerned with formal requirements in operations, even though it has included criteria related to the environment. This can be seen from the human aspect, where 39 people had a bachelor's degree, meaning that 39 independent smallholders could apply the methods learned. Regarding expertise, there are sufficient human resources in various fields, including agriculture and plantations, animal husbandry, management, engineering, health, and education. Management skills are especially needed in managerial activities, techniques for managing activities that require technical skills, while health and education are needed in health clinic facilities and schools.

Owned financial assets are also good. Most oil palm-independent smallholders are also active as credit distributors, while a few are in cattle farming. Based on this, there are indications that independent smallholders have been unable to utilize palm oil waste to obtain additional income other than oil palm. Social assets also appear to be sufficient, such as schools, mosques, health clinics, banking, and access to institutions directly related to plantation activities. For physical assets, the conditions are sufficient to ensure a smooth product supply process to consumers/ palm oil mills. The same thing can also be seen from water availability in the area, which is sufficient for plantation activities.

**Targets that the Community Wants to Achieve**

Targets to be achieved by farmer groups are set through an agreement with Unilever. Once agreed upon, there are three objectives to be achieved, namely building commitment and independence of farmer groups in program sustainability, increasing the income of independent smallholders who have obtained RSPO certificates (alternative income after RSPO certification), and increasing the number of independent smallholders who are certified every year. These targets can maintain the required RSPO achievement performance from the side of farmer groups and can create independence from farmer groups. The independence of farmer groups will lead to Unilever's expansion to other farmer groups. This is because farmer groups have been able to play

an active role in continuing the RSPO certification programs and post-RSPO certification income in the future.

### Developed Strategy

The strategy is prepared based on the derivatives of each goal to be achieved. A good strategy needs to use the concept of ABG (Academic, Business, and Government). By using visualization, achieving each goal takes each actor's contribution to achieving the goal. The division of responsibilities for carrying out a strategy like this can also train independence from the side of farmer groups. At this stage, as a facilitator, Unilever must slowly provide more and more space for farmer groups so that the farmer groups' independence can be achieved. The developed strategy consists of 17 strategies as follows:

1. Competency enhancement to support the sustainability of the RSPO program
2. Premium Price to encourage independent smallholders' interest in carrying out RSPO certification so that independent smallholders' income increases
3. Development of oil palm-supporting businesses through venture capital assistance
4. Effective dissemination related to venture capital assistance schemes which are decreasing along with the increase in the independence of farmer groups
5. Program expansion to other farmer groups
6. The facilitator in the consistency evaluation applies the RSPO criteria
7. Increasing the level of independence from owned assets
8. Business collaboration with independent smallholders for the processing of by-products (by utilizing owned assets)
9. Lead the competency improvement of members in the RSPO certification program
10. Increasing the managerial competence and entrepreneurship of independent smallholders
11. Improved competency in preparing a good business plan, as well as market access for products
12. Increased competency in processing palm oil waste into valuable products
13. Managerial assistance to farmer groups so that self-management runs effectively
14. Improving the effectiveness of socialization carried out
15. Maintenance of public facilities, as well as the issuance of regulations that support sustainable plantations
16. Maintenance of public facilities, as well as relaxation in issuing business/product licenses
17. Briefing on areas lagging in RSPO certification

### Actor Duties and Responsibilities

Each actor's tasks and responsibilities are divided based on availability, responsibilities, and competencies. This is related to the give and gain of each actor to achieve the goals set. The strategies that have been developed are grouped based on the responsible actor, namely: Unilever/Business, responsible for achieving strategy 1 to strategy 6; Farmer/Business Group, responsible for achieving strategy 7 to strategy 9; Academics, responsible for achieving strategy 10 to strategy 14; Local government is responsible for achieving strategy 15 to strategy 17.

### Strategy Strengths and Weaknesses

As can be seen in the comparison of the strategy prepared using the ABCD method with the existing strategy, there is a huge difference. One of these is the scope. The scope of the existing Strategy focuses on achieving RSPO certification targets, unlike the case with the ABCD strategy, which focuses primarily on farmer groups. This can be seen from the strategies, which, apart from achieving the RSPO certification target, also target achieving a level of independence within the group and developing independent smallholder businesses to increase income which can ultimately improve the welfare of RSPO-certified oil palm smallholders. In recent years, the focus of the existing strategy, aside from RSPO certification, has also been on increasing the income of the



community, especially farmer groups. However, this was not done systematically or procedurally and is still in the trial phase.

Meanwhile, cooperatives function to build and develop the presence and economic capabilities of members in society in general to improve their economic and social welfare (Law No. 25 of 1992 concerning Cooperatives). This encourages the utilization of assets owned by cooperatives or farmer groups for the benefit of their members. However, the facts are that cooperatives only often function as a place to borrow capital. With the ABCD method, group strategic objectives can be detailed into work programs that members of farmer groups can utilize. This certainly supports the initial goal of the formation of the cooperative itself. To apply it better, the work program that has been prepared needs to be confirmed by each actor responsible for achieving this. Thus, the synergy of the actors can be achieved and produce the performance expected by each. This needs to be done so that the goals and objectives are not off the mark. For example, Unilever and Farmer Groups expect independence for RSPO certification and increased income of independent smallholders after RSPO certification, Academics who expect involvement in community issues such as research and service, and local governments who expect income distribution and increased community income.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The conclusions from this study are as follows:

1. The assets owned by the farmer group community consist of human assets, financial assets, social assets, physical assets, and natural assets. It can be seen from the financial assets that waste utilization or activities other than oil palm plantations are only carried out by some independent smallholders.
2. The target expected by the farmer group community is to build commitment and independence of farmer groups in program sustainability, increase the income of independent smallholders who have obtained RSPO certificates, and increase the number of independent smallholders certified each year. In addition, independent smallholders will receive an increase in alternative incomes through the programs that have been prepared.
3. Appropriate strategies in achieving the targets expected by the community, namely: Increased competence to support the sustainability of the RSPO program, Appropriate business capital assistance schemes, Provision of business capital support, Effective socialization regarding business capital assistance schemes which are decreasing as the independence of farmer groups increases, Expansion of the program to other farmer groups, Facilitator in evaluating consistency in carrying out RSPO criteria, Increasing the level of independence from owned assets, Collaborating with independent smallholders for processing by-products (by utilizing assets owned), Leading the improvement of member competence in the RSPO certification program, Increased managerial competence and entrepreneurship of independent smallholders, Increased competency in preparing good business plans, as well as market access for products, Increased competency in processing palm oil waste into valuable products, Managerial assistance to farmer groups so that self-management runs effectively, Increased effectiveness of socialization carried out, Maintenance of public facilities, as well as issuance of regulations that support sustainable plantations, Maintenance of public facilities, and relaxation in issuing business/product licenses, Guidance on areas lagging behind in RSPO certification
4. The division of tasks and responsibilities of each actor in the ABCD-based empowerment program in the farmer group, namely Unilever/Business, is responsible for achieving Strategy 1 to Strategy 6; Farmer/Business Group is responsible for achieving Strategy 7 to Strategy 9; Academics, responsible for achieving strategy 10 to strategy 14; Local government is responsible for achieving strategy 15 to strategy 17.

- Weaknesses and strengths of the strategy developed using the ABCD method approach compared to the existing strategy, namely, the scope of the existing strategy focuses on achieving the target of RSPO certification, unlike the case with the ABCD strategy, which focuses primarily on farmer groups. This can be seen from the strategies, which, apart from achieving the RSPO certification target, also target achieving a level of independence within the group and developing independent smallholder businesses to increase income which can ultimately improve the welfare of RSPO-certified oil palm smallholders.

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