



Erik Meijaard

### **Mission statement**

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The Oil Palm Task Force (OPTF) aims to inform the debate on the sustainability of palm oil, using the latest research and scientific information, and give guidance to, for example, IUCN about its policies and strategies that affect or are affected by palm oil. We aim to make use of IUCN's extensive knowledge networks on biodiversity and environmental issues, social, economic and cultural issues, and policy to comprehensively guide thinking on the complex issues of agro-industrial and small-holder oil palm in the world's tropical regions. The OPTF will act as an authoritative advisory body on oil palm and how this relates to global sustainability objectives, and an intermediary between the oil palm industry, the IUCN network, and the other stakeholders in the oil palm discussions.

### **Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium**

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Oil palm threatens tropical wildlife when plantations are developed in forested areas. We seek to minimise impacts on tropical wildlife by helping promote palm oil production practices that avoid negative impacts on threatened wildlife species, such as orangutans, while maximising socio-economic benefits from palm oil production. The broader sustainability context of vegetable oil production requires that the task force also looks at other oil producing crops to ensure that reductions in palm oil production and concomitant reductions in

conservation threats do not lead to disproportionate increases of production of other vegetable oil crops and even larger negative conservation impacts elsewhere.

### **Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium**

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#### **Assess**

Research activities: coordinate the IUCN review process of the draft Situation Analysis (with support from the SSC Chair's Office), incorporate the comments and suggested edits into the final Situation Analysis.

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#### **Location/Affiliation**

Brunei Darussalam

#### **Number of members**

20

#### **Social networks**

Website:

<https://www.iucn-optf.org/>

## **Activities and results 2018**

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### **Assess**

#### Research activities

**i.** We received nearly 600 comments from 40 external reviewers indicating major interest in the draft Situation Analysis. Comments were incorporated into the final version, which was published in June 2018. The English version of the study had been downloaded 6,637 times in the 6 months of 2018 following its publication, making it the 8th most downloaded IUCN report ever. The French version had been downloaded 2,536 times in 2018, showing major interest in the topics from Francophone countries. There was major media attention to the publication of the report and its findings appear to have changed to global debate on palm oil, and especially the consequences of a palm oil ban on the production of other vegetable oil crops. (KSR #32)

### **Network**

#### Membership

**i.** Membership increased by five.

#### Synergy

**i.** Third workshop for discussing situation analysis and developing OPTF strategies 2018-2020 accomplished in London in June 2018. The workshop discussed the process of the Situation Analysis development and formulated strategies for going forward. A decision was made to focus the work of the Task Force on oil palm in high forest cover regions and to look into the socio-economic impacts of palm oil.

**ii.** Following the London meeting, we conducted a number of conference calls and a meeting organised by IUCN-NL in Amsterdam to fine-tune Task Force strategies and determine how follow up work could be funded.

No follow-up funding was identified, however,

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