ISCC Certification for Independent Smallholder at a Glance

The International Sustainability and Carbon Certification Scheme (ISCC) is a sustainability certification scheme covering environmental, social and economic criteria.

ISCC certification can help you to increase your long-term income by helping you to set up good agricultural practices and thus increase your productivity, by raising attention at potential customers and thus, increase market access especially on international markets and by direct funds & price premium contributions. Participating in ISCC is quite easy. ISCC has set up six Principles for sustainability, including the protection of important areas such as primary forests, peat- and wetlands; good agricultural practices to protect soil, water and air; healthy and safe working conditions; good labor conditions and relations to communities; compliance with applicable laws and regulations; and good management practices.

Independent smallholders can receive ISCC certification if they comply with the following:

1. Your palm is produced with good agricultural practices and in an environmentally responsible manner, including natural watercourses, ground water and irrigation, soil conservation, prevention of erosion and preservation of organic matter and soil structure.

2. You do not store plant protection products or other chemicals at home or apply it yourself. Your group manager (Central Office) is responsible for it. Inform him whenever you need assistance.

3. If you employ migrant workers or relatives, you ensure save and fair working conditions. You pay sufficient salary and respect their rights. Children in the age under 15 years are not doing any work on the plantation and get quality primary school education.

4. You comply with laws and regulations.

The following pictures show examples of good management practices that you could install in order to ensure compliance with ISCC criteria:

- Soils that are prone to sliding and erosion should be terraced or excluded in order to avoid soil or water erosion and thus, a loss of soil fertility. Phans stacking or leaving natural vegetation helps to avoid water erosion or to channel the water in the right direction. Stop to further drain peatland.

- Organic fertilizers should be distributed evenly in order to ensure an equal release of macro- and micronutrients. During rain seasons or flooding, you should take into account weather conditions for correct timing so that fertilizers do not end up in water streams. Buffer zones should also be kept.

- From incorrect disposal of waste, spillages and thus safety & health hazards are possible. Do not spill your waste everywhere but dispose it in designated areas, which do have a low risk of spillage or flooding. Avoid to burn hazardous wastes like certain plastics or solvents as they can pose health risks.

Under the ISH group certification of ISCC, the Central Office is responsible to store and apply any plant protection products or chemicals. However, in order to reduce the need for chemicals, it would be helpful to set up integrated pest management such as planting species that attract natural enemies of palm pests or the proper shredding and decomposition of old trees, the use of biological control and cover crops or the encourage of barn owls.
If you employ relatives or other workers, you should ensure that they have access to basic services such as clean food storage areas, hand washing facilities, drinking water and habitable housing. Kids should have access to at least primary school. Any form of forced or child labor (age < 15) is strictly forbidden under ISCC. Dangerous work should not be done by young workers, pregnant or disabled workers.

Even though you do not apply plant protection products yourself, you should take care to keep safe during work. For certain work on your farm like harvest, you or the responsible should wear protective clothing such as proper shoes. There should be also some protective equipment like first aid kits.

In order to receive an ISCC certificate the following steps are required for Independent Smallholders:

1. Participate in ISCC training
2. Provide self-declaration to group manager (Central Office)
3. Prepare for audit
4. Get audited

For Independent Smallholders a specific certification process is available. The concept is based on a group certification, whereby the group manager (Central Office) is responsible for registration at ISCC, the determination of compliant smallholders according to ISCC Principle 1 and the fulfillment of ISCC requirements at the smallholders. After participating in the ISCC training, you need to sign the ISCC self-declaration and provide it to the Central Office. Furthermore, you can add information on your fields via the Smallholder App. All relevant data will be included in the ISH Data Management System.

The Smallholder App:
1. Log In via Smallholder ID in the Smallholder App
2. Provide data on e.g. ID, name, polygons and sustainability data
3. You can also take photos. This will ease audit preparation and conduction

A sample of smallholders will be checked by an auditor. Therefore, you need to grant access to your premises. If there is any non-compliance detected during the audit, you need to close them within 40 days. After that, you can sell your material as ISCC certified and sustainable.

For further information you can always contact your Central Office.