

# Understanding the impacts of RSPO: exploring the options

Dr. Kristin Komives, Director – Impacts, ISEAL Alliance



A Renewed Commitment to  
Achieving Market Transformation



What do we  
mean by  
impacts?



## ‘Impacts’ means different things to different people

### USERS (certified entities, businesses, public procurers)

- Demonstrable change over time in certified entity
- Research on geographic hot spots and key risks
- Business case, ROI
- Information for sustainability reporting, due diligence requirements

### NON-USERS

- *How do standards work?*
- *What issues do they address?*
- *What type of assurance or governance do they have?*
- Is certified really different from non-certified?
- Verification of theory of change, conditions of success

### OTHER STAKEHOLDERS (NGOs, governments, media...)

- Measurable, attributable impact of standards
- Demonstrable change over time in certified entity
- Comparisons of effectiveness across standards and between standards and other tools
- Credible synthesis of evidence

ISEAL Global Impacts Platform scoping interviews 2017-2018



Palm seeds © Malaysian Palm Oil Council for RSPO

What type of research or evidence is needed to meet stakeholders evidence needs?

## Today



Cost/benefit

Practices applied

Status of sustainability outcomes of interest

On-site data

Business process data

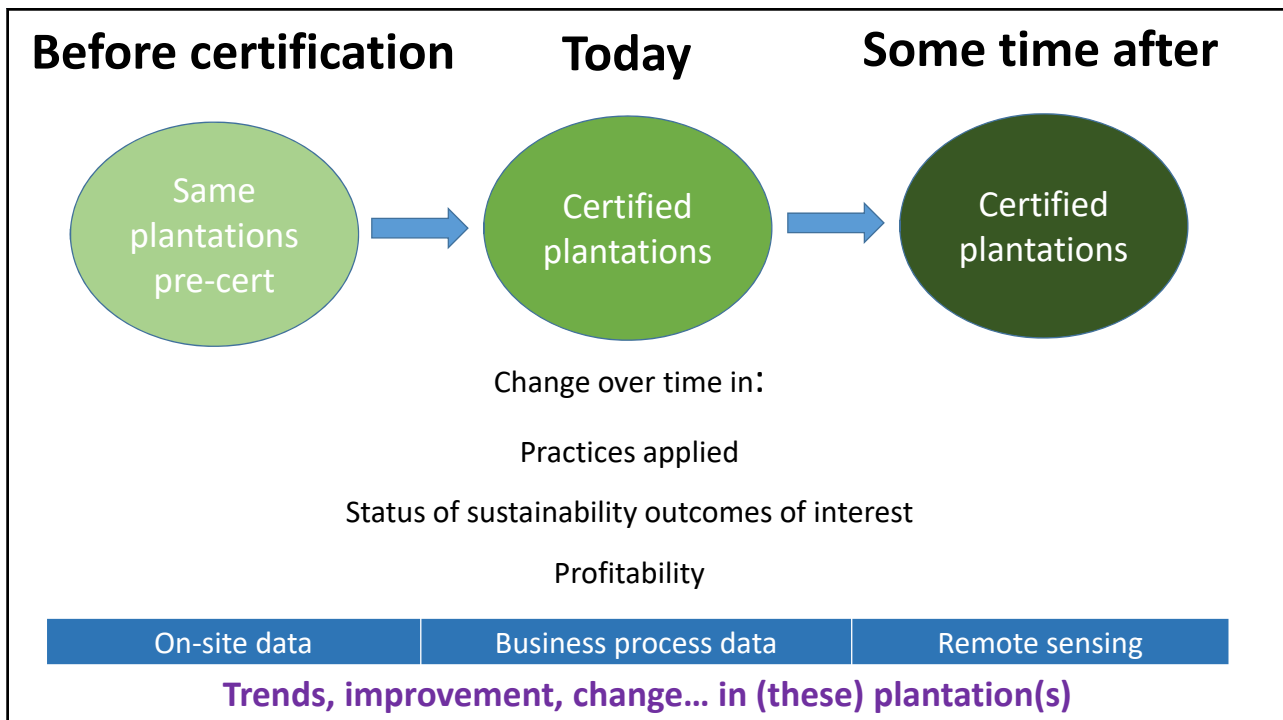
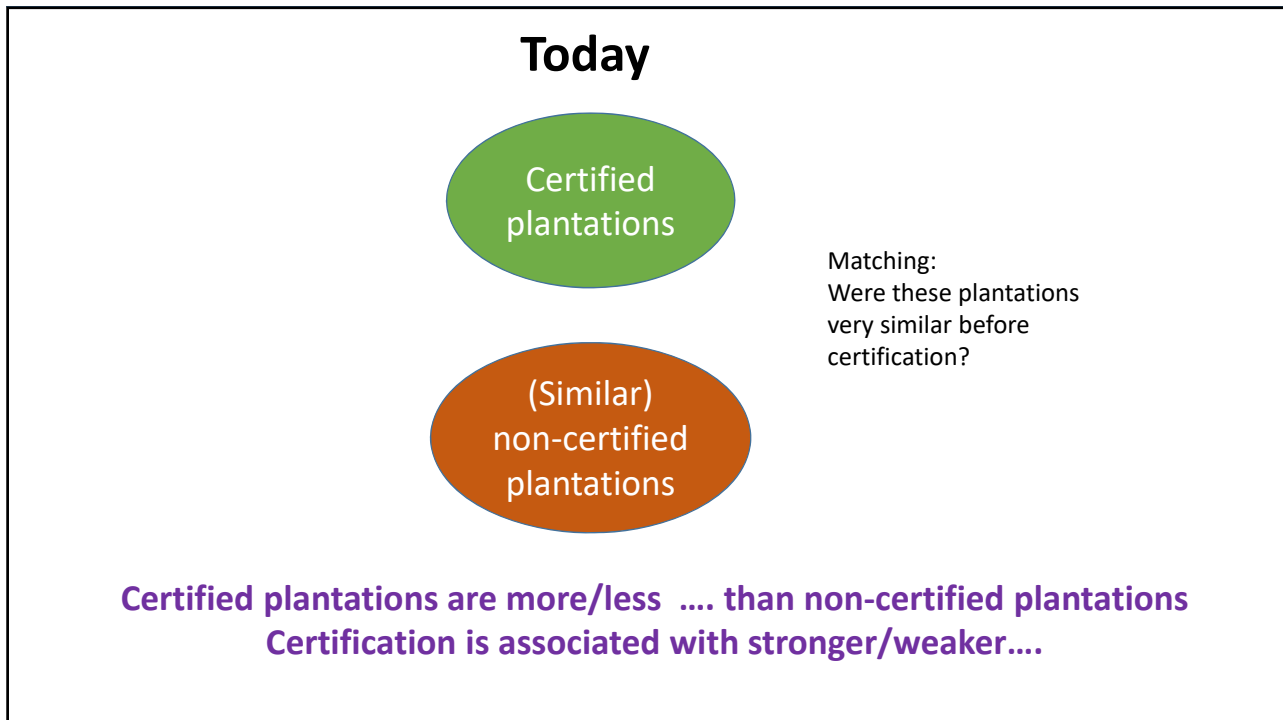
Remote sensing

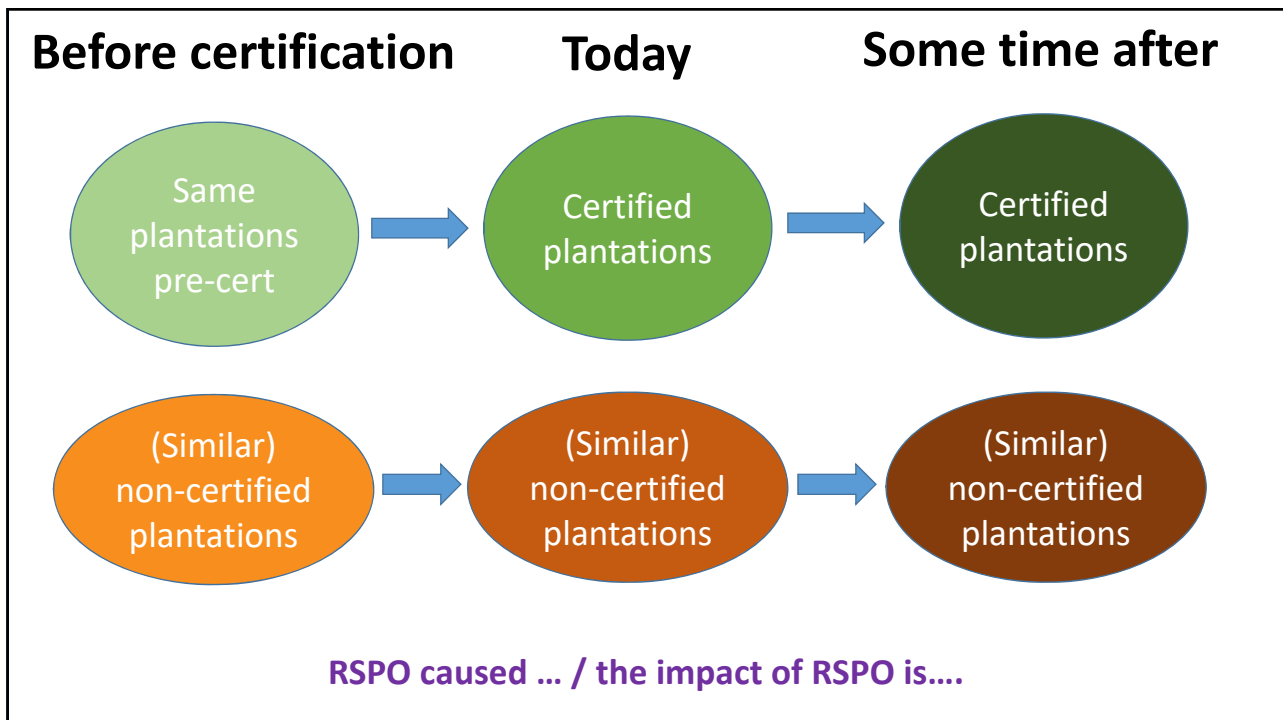
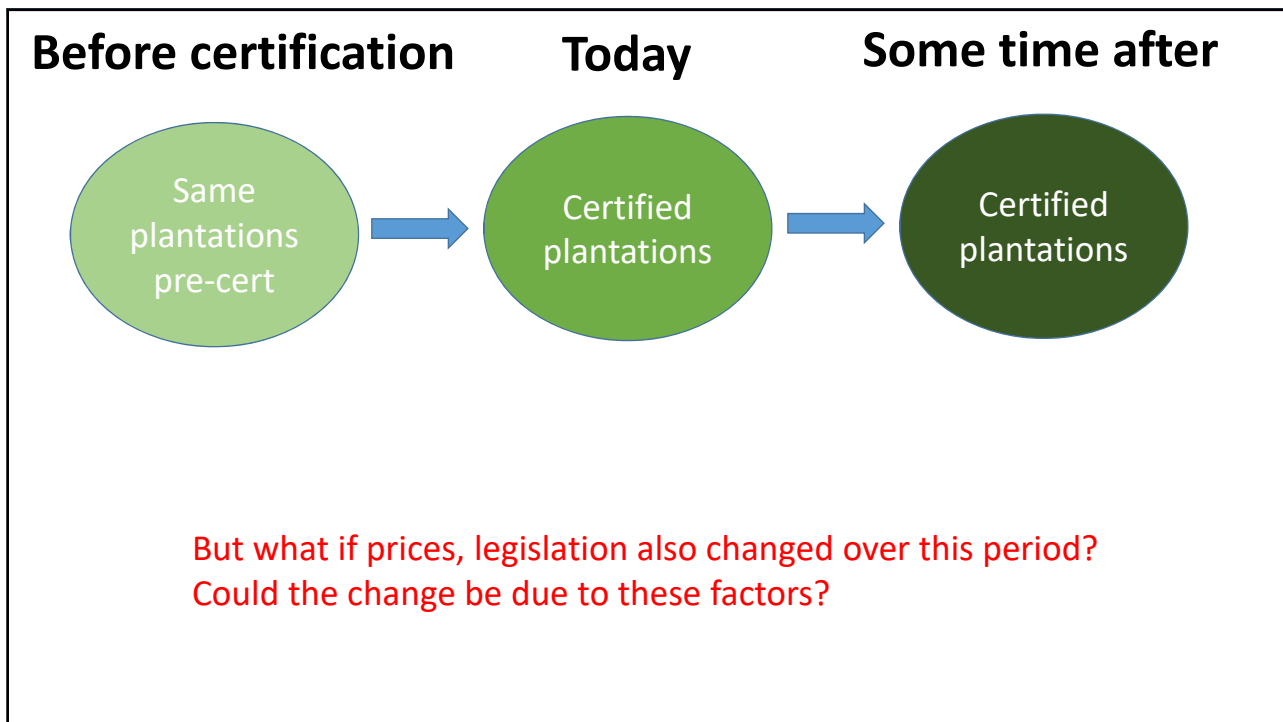
**In (these) certified plantation(s), x is true....**

## Today



*But how do I know if the performance in certified plantations is good or better than average?*





Research design	Covers one period in time	Tracks change over time	Compares pre-cert to post-certification
	Examines certified only	Examines certified versus non-certified	
Data	On-site data	Business process data	Remote sensing
Researcher	Independent researcher	RSPO commissioned, independent researcher	RSPO produced

Match approach to purpose and need!  
Match communications to approach!



## What evidence is now available?

Much more on ISEAL member standards than other market based mechanisms.

Steady growth in studies and monitoring reports.

Most rigorous evidence on coffee and forestry, in limited number of countries.

Most rigorous studies compare certified versus non-certified – without change over time.

New technologies and better business process information are opening new options.



CONSERVATION	PRACTICE ADOPTION	BUSINESS BENEFITS	SOCIAL IMPACTS
 <p>Photo © Forest Stewardship Council</p>	 <p>Photo © Jonathan Peruga for Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil</p>	 <p>Coffee Uganda © UTZ</p>	 <p>Community training session, Uganda © UTZ</p>

Impacts, outcome, benefits

# Thank You

