

Investigating the palm oil supply chain at Oxford Brookes University's Headington Campus in order to examine the geographies of sustainable palm oil production

This research has highlighted the lack of transparency and traceability in the palm oil supply chain. It has located where palm oil is present on the campus and has assessed the sustainability of the palm oil used by each company and the sustainability of the campus as a whole. The multifaceted scorecard created for this research can be applied to other companies and establishments in the future.

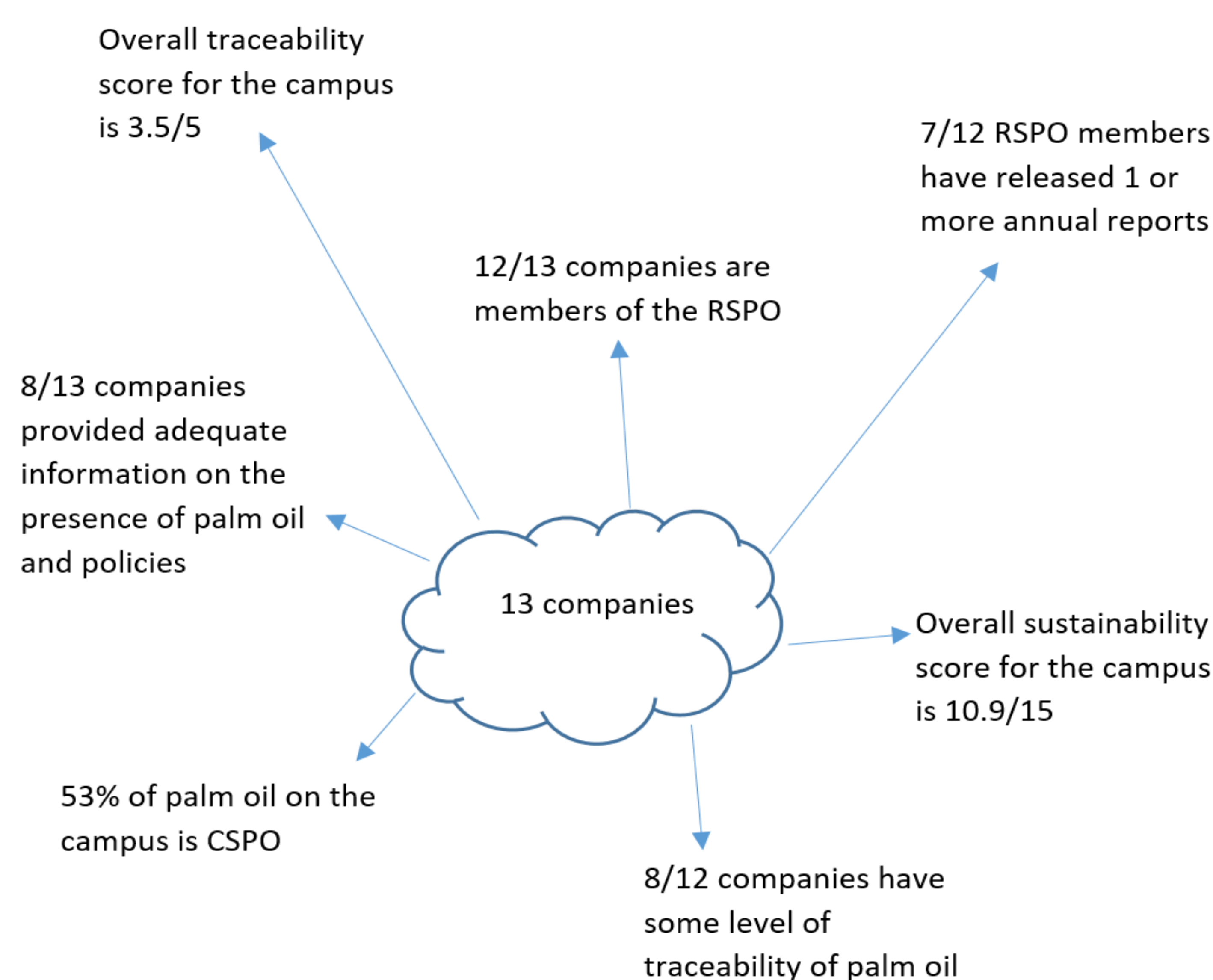


Figure 1: A summary of key findings from the sustainable palm oil scorecard, which assessed the 13 companies used for catering supplies.

A scorecard was created to rate the sustainability of a company's palm oil, and an overall score for the campus was calculated at **10.9 out of 15**.

This scorecard took inspiration from the WWF 'Palm Oil Buyer Scorecard' (WWF, 2016), however included the following scoring areas:

- Whether the company provided adequate information on palm oil either through the internet or via email and telephone when they were contacted for this research
- The composition of the palm oil and the overall CSPO percentage
- The traceability of the palm oil supply chain

The term '**flex-invisibility**' was coined for this research as palm oil is used in foods due to its diverse chemical properties rather than for taste of frying qualities. 83% of Palm oil found on the campus was an ingredient within an ingredient- requiring additional research to uncover its presence. Figure 2 shows that palm oil was the most common vegetable oil, accounting for 35% of all instances.

Figure 3 shows that the campus sources quite sustainable palm oil overall. This figure is highly visible and accessible, increasing the transparency of the University campus' palm oil sources. making this a very visual and accessible scorecard.

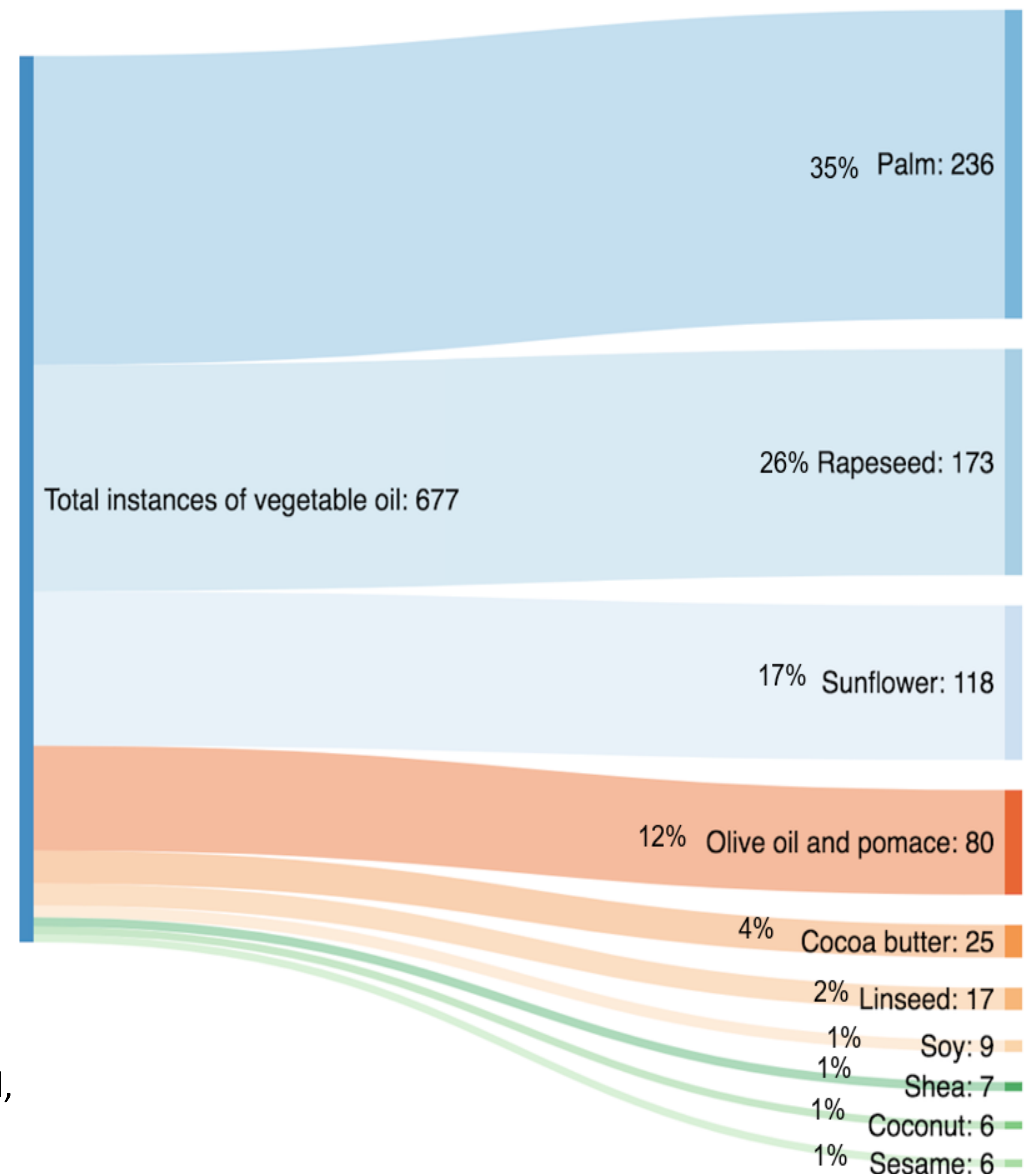


Figure 2: The composition of vegetable oils used at Brookes' Headington Campus.

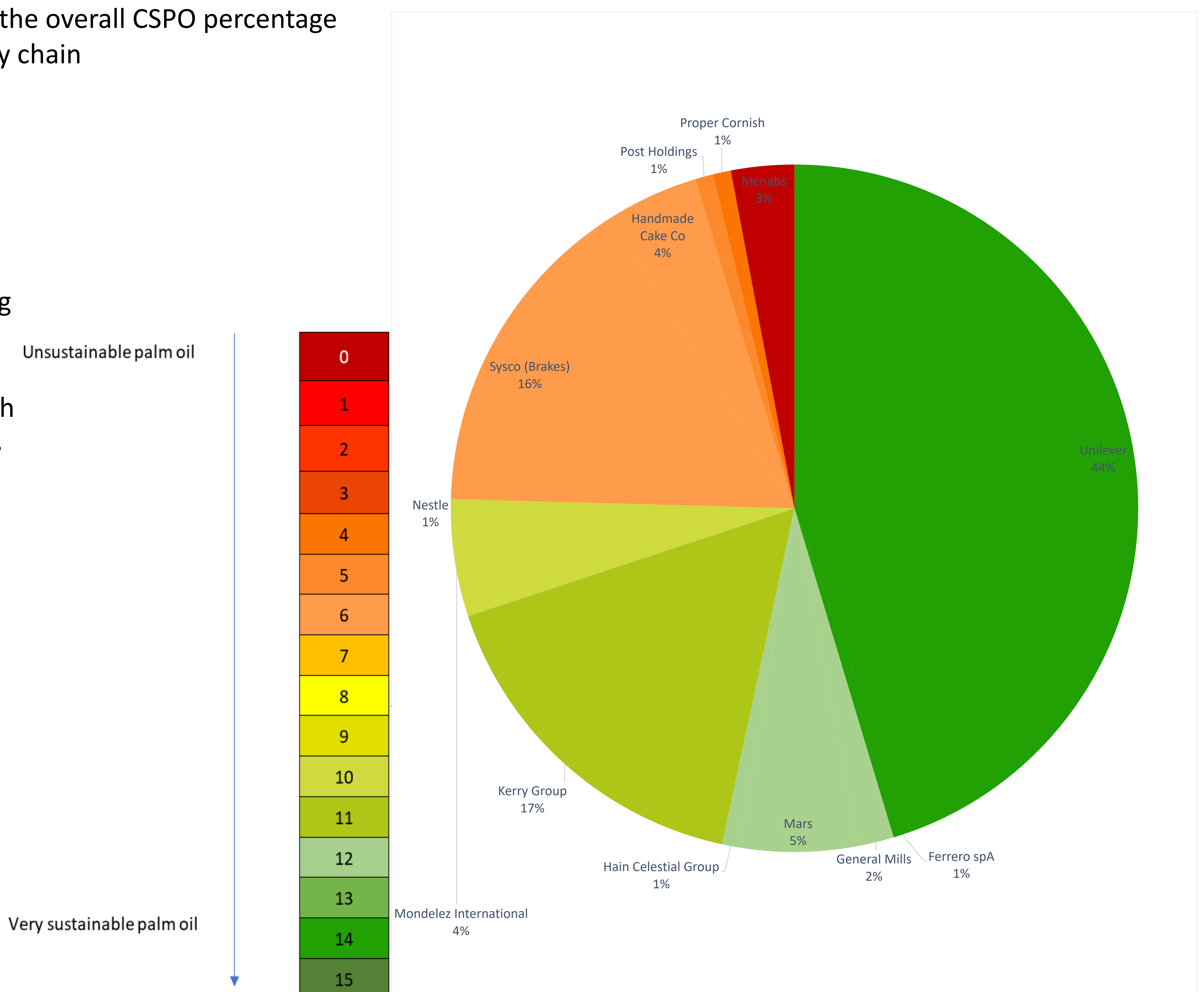


Figure 3: Scale of scorecard and corresponding colour coded composition of palm oil at Headington Campus by company .

The future: It is likely sustainable palm oil policies and practice will continue to diffuse down from large companies to smaller ones, data of RSPO membership in India and China also suggests this diffusion around the world, particularly in newly industrialized countries. (Padfield et al, 2016; Schleifer and Sun, 2018). This highly visual scorecard may encourage companies and establishments to review their palm oil sources in the future.

References

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