



The independent, global coalition working to promote the sustainability of biomaterials

a guide to  
**RSB Certification**  
How to get your operation certified

## WHY GET CERTIFIED?

If you produce biomass or are involved with biomaterials, then you should be certified to RSB's standards.

Certification will:

- give your operation international credibility,
- increase your opportunities, and give you access to discerning global markets,
- place you in the forefront of sustainability, and
- help identify and reduce your risks.



## WHY CHOOSE RSB?

RSB certification demonstrates your commitment to the future of ethical, sustainable and credibly-sourced biomaterials.

RSB's certification scheme is:

- user-friendly,
- recognised as the strongest and most trusted of its kind by WWF, IUCN and NRDC,
- comprehensive, ensuring credibility in diverse contexts, and
- widely recognised by regulatory authorities in Europe, the US and elsewhere, allowing RSB-certified products swift approval, and preferential market access.

RSB is growing rapidly as advanced biofuel and biomaterial technologies reach commercial scale. Now is a key time to engage with RSB, and the companies we work with. As markets grow for bio-based products, RSB certification can build trust and credibility in the sector and promote the sustainability of biomaterials.



Aurea Nardelli, RSB

RSB is a full member of ISEAL, a global alliance conferring the highest credibility on sustainability standards.

# WHAT CAN BE CERTIFIED?

RSB's user-friendly certification scheme is a little different from other schemes. Rather than being devised for specific commodities or markets, RSB's scheme is global and applicable to diverse and multiple feedstocks.

Certification to RSB standards doesn't cover just biofuels. Any bio-based feedstock, biomass, derived bio-products or by-products can be certified. In addition to biofuels, certification is available for products including the following:

## Biomass

- Perennial Grasses
- Annual Crops
- Algae
- Oilseeds
- Short Rotation Coppice Woody Biomass
- Crop Residues
- Municipal Solid Waste
- Industrial Wastes and Residues

## Bio-products

- Traditional Biofuels: Biodiesel and Ethanol
- Cellulosic Ethanol
- Drop-In Biofuels
- Bioplastics
- Biolubricants
- Renewable Base Oils
- Plant Oils and Animal Fats
- Starches and Sugars
- Feed and Nutritionals
- Energy Pellets and Chips
- Bio-Chemicals
- Cosmetics
- Pharmaceuticals

RSB can also certify a complete supply chain, as well as novel biomass and biomaterial technologies such as oil and sugar based biofuels, cellulosic ethanol and chemicals, renewable diesel and biojet, bioplastics, biolubricants, and other bio-based chemicals.

RSB-certified biomaterials are already in use in aviation, and downstream customers are increasingly likely to request certification for biofuels in the sector.

# HOW DOES IT WORK?

There are three steps to certification.

Once you've successfully completed these steps, described below, you can start using your certification to promote and grow your business.

To learn more about how certification to RSB standards works you could also take a look at our online procedure at <http://rsb.org/certification/apply-for-certification/>.

You don't have to complete the online procedure the first time and it's a good way to understand what it's all about.



# 1. APPLICATION

To start your RSB application, register on the [RSB website](#), and accept the terms and conditions.

Upon receipt of the application, RSB will acknowledge and confirm receipt by email.

You then contact an [RSB approved auditor](#) and arrange your audit. You choose which you work with, and make arrangements with your particular auditor. Your audit must have started within six

months of your application being accepted by RSB, but you are encouraged to reach out to an auditing body as early as possible. The auditor will need time to prepare for the audit and carry out a stakeholder consultation. In the meantime, you can complete your audit preparation as outlined below.

All applications are posted on RSB's website for 14 days for public comment.

# 2. PREPARING FOR YOUR AUDIT

RSB will provide you with all the online tools and information you need to prepare for your audit:

1. [Getting Ready for your RSB Audit](#) – provides helpful information on how to best prepare for your audit.
2. [Self-Risk Assessment](#) – This online questionnaire gives you an initial risk class, which will determine your audit frequency. The results will be helpful for your ESMP, described below.
3. [Screening Exercise](#) – This downloadable tool helps you decide what documentation you need to show compliance with RSB's criteria.
4. [Greenhouse Gas Calculation](#) – Biofuels are required to demonstrate a minimum 50% reduction on GHG from fossil fuels. This GHG value should be included in the ESMP, described below. RSB has a [free online calculator](#) to obtain your GHG value. Alternatively, you can use other options [as described on our website](#).
5. [ESMP](#) – The ESMP (Environmental and Social Management Plan) is a central document that describes how you will adhere to the environmental and social objectives of the [RSB Principles & Criteria](#) and all activities currently being undertaken to ensure such compliance. We also have an [ESMP guidelines document](#) to help you with your ESMP.
6. [Chain of Custody Outline of Procedure](#) – A chain of custody procedure describes how you track material through your facilities. To help you develop this procedure, RSB has an outline that you can adapt to your needs.
7. [RSB Claims Outline of Procedure](#) – When you have received your RSB certificate, you can make claims about your product being compliant, based on an RSB claims procedure. RSB developed an outline of a procedure that you can adapt, or fit into your existing product labeling/dispatch procedure to describe how you will do this.
8. [Stakeholder Lists](#) – We offer a list of generic types of stakeholders to consult depending on your situation.

The tools described above have been created by RSB to facilitate your audit preparation and help you gather documentation and evidence needed for certification. They are meant to help you if you don't already have equivalent tools to gather documentation and evidence through your own business systems. This includes information to demonstrate compliance that auditors typically ask for, but it is not exhaustive as the auditor may ask for additional evidence. Please consult your auditor or RSB contact person with any questions regarding these tools.

For more details on the standards themselves refer to the [Standards Guide](#) and the [RSB website](#).

# 3. AUDIT

As soon as your certificate is issued, you can start using your certification to promote and grow your business.

Subsequent audits will need to be carried out periodically, at a frequency determined by your risk score.

If a major non-compliance is indicated, your auditor will work with you to set a schedule to resolve the issue so that your certificate can be issued. Minor non-compliances do not prevent the certificate from being issued but need to be addressed before your next audit.

## Certification Process

### 1. Application

- Register with RSB
- Contact Auditor
- Set Audit Date
- Pay Application Fee
- Public Comment Period

### 2. Preparation for Audit

- Getting Ready for Your Audit document
- Self-Risk Assessment
- Screening Exercise
- ESMP
- GHG Calculation
- Chain of Custody Procedure
- RSB Claims Procedure

### 3. Audit

- Documents Review
- Site Visits
- Stakeholder Consultation

### Certification

- Certificate Issued
- Make off-product and on-product certification claims

# CHAIN OF CUSTODY

Certified materials are often transformed and travel great distances before reaching consumers, and that's certainly the case with biomaterials. So RSB's standards have to ensure that good practices certified at production can still be accounted for right along the supply chain from primary production through conversion, processing, and trade to end use.

This is done by RSB's 'chain of custody' system. There are actually five different systems, but the two most important are **Mass Balance** and **Book and Claim**.

- **Identity Preserved** ensures that there is no mixing of RSB-compliant biomaterial batches whatsoever. Biofuel tracked under this model can be traced back to its origin.
- **Product Segregation** ensures that RSB-compliant biofuel is not mixed with other types of compliant biofuel (it can only contain a mixture of RSB-compliant biofuel).
- **Mass Balance** allows for compliant and non-compliant fuel to be mixed, but to keep track of the compliant fuel, the documentation for each remains separate.
- **Content Ratio Accounting** is like a Mass Balance system but allowing averaging over time.

- **Book and Claim**, also called 'certificate trading', allows certified upstream operators to sell credits to downstream operators for the right to make sustainability claims.

The requirements for each of these systems are set out in RSB's Chain of Custody Standard.

Any RSB participating operator making RSB Sustainability Claims about their product must have their Chain of Custody systems verified by an independent audit.

For EU RED, the chain of custody has to be a **Mass Balance** system - but you may choose to go a step or two further and use **Product Segregation** or **Identity Preserved**.

With the GLOBAL system you can choose any of the five approaches offered by RSB, i.e. also **Content Ratio Accounting** or **Book and Claim**.

## RSB GLOBAL OR EU RED?

You may need to know that many of RSB's standards - including chain of custody - exist in two parallel versions: 'global' and 'EU RED'. They are very similar - the main differences are to do with land conversion, GHG calculation and Chain of Custody - but you'll need to use the EU RED system if you're trading biofuels with the European Union. Any product certified under the RSB's EU RED Standard is eligible for shipment to Europe.

The global standards are somewhat more flexible and apply to any type of feedstock worldwide. RSB can help you choose which is best for you

RSB also provides specific standards that may be of interest, e.g. for biomaterials, low Indirect Land Use Change, or for Smallholder Groups. A separate biomaterials standard also exists for non-energy products. The full set is on [RSB's website](#).

# SMALLHOLDER CERTIFICATION

RSB has a particular provision called ‘group certification’ to enable small-scale farmers (smallholders) to access certification.

This works by groups of farmers joining together to generate the necessary economies of scale to comply with the standard and system requirements. An appointed ‘management unit’ takes responsibility for managing the certification process and putting the necessary systems in place to ensure the compliance of the individual group members.

An external certification body assesses the functioning of the group management system on a regular basis as well as the compliance of individual group members on a sample basis. The appointed management unit carries out internal inspections of certified members to monitor their compliance with the standard.



Aurea Nardelli, RSB

A refined, streamlined version of RSB’s Principles and Criteria is also used for smallholders.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU’RE CERTIFIED?

Certified operators can demonstrate their compliance with RSB’s standards by using the RSB Certified logo.

Once a certificate has been issued, RSB will list you on its website, and start working with you to optimise publicity for your certification. Options include:

- Send a mass email to shareholders, employees, suppliers, buyers, vendors and partners.
- Include news of your RSB certification in your newsletters and social media.
- Highlight RSB certification in your annual report.
- Include the RSB Certified logo on certified shipped product.
- Add the RSB Certified logo to your website.



There are of course some requirements to meet when using RSB’s trademarks (and any on-product EU RED compliance claims). These are set out in a Communications and Claims procedure, as are all RSB’s standards documents.

To promote RSB’s continued work on sustainability, there are also nominal licensing fees for using the RSB Certified logo and RSB trademarks. Licensing fees are based on area certified for agricultural producers and certified mass output for industrial processing facilities, considering actual production volumes each calendar quarter.

Don’t forget you’ll need to have subsequent audits every year or two (depending on your risk rating) to keep your certificate valid. And as part of subsequent audits, you’ll be required to report on your use of claims.

You might well also want to consider becoming an RSB member.

### Membership has many benefits

1. Eligibility for 20% discount on licensing fees.
2. Ensuring your views are heard, engaging in dialogue, profiling your work and helping shape the future of sustainable biomaterials.
3. Expanding your network, meeting others committed to sustainability issues and keeping in touch with the latest developments for the industry, civil society and government. RSB members have already found common areas of interest and forged partnerships on policy, smallholders and technical issues.
4. Being part of a worldwide movement and demonstrating your commitment to sustainability. You can use your RSB membership to strengthen your social responsibility message to buyers, consumers, employees, and business partners.

More information on membership is on [RSB’s website](#).

The Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials (RSB) is a global movement to ensure the sustainability of biomaterials production through a comprehensive certification system. RSB brings together a diverse coalition of over 100 organizations around the world including large and small farmers, NGOs, companies, experts, governments, and UN agencies. RSB certification provides user-friendly tools for industry to demonstrate compliance and validates sustainable production including greenhouse gas emission reductions, respect for human rights, protection of biodiversity and water and maintenance of food security. RSB is a full member of the ISEAL Alliance and has been rated the best performing sustainability certification system in reports published by WWF, IUCN, and NRDC.

[www.rsb.org](http://www.rsb.org)

For more information:

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