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RSB Bulletin December 2011

Dear members and friends of the RSB,

Welcome to the last bulletin of the year!

Excitement has been growing as the first field audits for RSB certification were recently conducted. We look forward to the announcement of the first RSB certification very soon!

In addition, we have numerous other on-going activities. During their last teleconference (November 25), the RSB Steering Board approved the specific RSB certification regime for end-of-life products (Municipal Solid Waste and Used Cooking Oil) and wastewater, which simplifies the audit process for operators using these products to produce biofuels.

A key outcome of the Steering Board teleconference was the approval from the RSB Steering Board to formally begin a transition process towards the creation of a new legal entity, independent from the EPFL, which will take over the management and development of the RSB Standard. Such transition is expected to be completed during 2012.

We warmly thank all our members and supporters for their contributions to the progress of the RSB. All this would not have been possible without you!

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Happy holidays!

The RSB Secretariat

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Decisions of RSB Steering Board teleconference (Nov. 25, 2011)

On November 25, the Steering Board held an important teleconference, during which the policy for biofuels produced out of end-of-life products (Municipal Solid Waste and Used Cooking Oil) and wastewater was approved. The policy requires biofuel operators using Municipal Solid Waste to ensure that the material has a minimum of 50% biogenic content, and to be presorted so that recyclables and hazardous components are removed. For Municipal Solid Wastes, Used Cooking Oil and wastewater, certification audits will start at the level of the economic operators who process these raw materials to produce biofuels onwards. Other types of byproducts, co-products and residues will be addressed through a separate policy.

The Steering Board teleconference was also the occasion to give an update about the recent establishment of RSB Services (See RSB Bulletin – Oct. 11).

Additionally, the Steering Board recognized that the time has come for the RSB to become independent from the EPFL, and approved the launch of a transition process to incorporate a

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development of the RSB Standard. The transition period will be used to establish a legal entity, develop an appropriate business plan, find donors and look for staff. Upon completion of such process, EPFL will keep some R&D activities related to sustainability of biomass and bioenergy through the Sustainable Biomass Consortium and EU Projects for example. Regular updates about the transition process will be sent to RSB Members over the next months.

Finally, the Steering Board acknowledged the reelection of Ms. Barbara Bramble (National Wildlife Federation) and Mr. Khoo Hock Aun (Cosmo Biofuels) as the respective Chair and Vice-Chair of the RSB. Four new Steering Board Members were also participating to their first teleconference Ms. Susan Sanchez (on behalf of Mr. Harrison Dillon, Solazyme), Ms. Elizabeth Cushion (Inter-American Development Bank), Mr. Mitch Hawkins (Biojet Corporation), and Mr. Maarten van Dijk (SkyNRG). Per the Terms of Reference and the specific rotating regime in Chamber 3, Elizabeth Cushion became a Steering Board member, while Thomas Rötger (IATA) rotated off and became alternate.

Latest News on RSB Certification

- Since the last RSB Bulletin, two more companies have successfully completed the due diligence process: Sao Martinho and Maple.
- RSB and RSB Services are currently engaged in a discussion process involving the German authorities, ISEAL, GIZ, Bonsucro and the RTRS about the requirements for EU-recognized schemes regarding the access into the German market.

Update on the Sustainability Standards Transparency Initiative (SSTI)

The Sustainability Standards Transparency Initiative (SSTI) is developing a methodology to conduct objective, in-depth comparisons allowing companies, governments and standards schemes to compare, through the use of online software, the sustainability requirements embedded in certification systems and possibly in national regulations.

The technical committee of the SSTI is composed of representatives from ISEAL, GIZ, RSB and Rainforest Alliance. The technical committee is supported in its work by a number of international experts. The last meeting of the technical committee took place at the GIZ

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Trade for Sustainable Development (T4SD) initiative of the International Trade Centre (ITC). The workshop led to a decision to base any further development of the SSTI tool on the T4SD database, although the database may need to be adapted for the SSTI tool to be able to draw the necessary data from it.

Currently the technical committee is focusing on the development of a mutual recognition methodology for standards comparisons and the structuring of the SSTI tool. A public consultation on the needs to be addressed by SSTI will be conducted by ISEAL in December 2011/January 2012. The next meeting of the technical committee will be held in Lausanne in January 2012. A Steering Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 2012.

Latest Outreach Activities

Brazil Outreach

Last September, 4 Cantos do Mundo (a Brazilian NGO) and the RSB Secretariat carried out an outreach on Biofuels, Sustainability and Certification in the state of Minas Gerais in Brazil. Minas Gerais is where a lot of new sugarcane and ethanol development are taking place.

The outreach was sponsored by the Dutch development and implementation agency NL Agency. The outreach consisted mainly in a workshop on certification and sustainability in Uberlândia/Minas Gerais, which was attended by about 36 participants from 15 different sectors, including the sugar cane producers' representative, labor union representatives, environmental NGOs, civil society organizations, certification bodies, and sustainability certification schemes. Both the RSB and Bonsucro were presented as sustainability schemes. The main outcome was a better understanding on all sides of the benefits and limitations of certification, as well as the recognition of the urge to increase awareness and allow the creation of a participatory and multi-sectorial process towards sustainability of biofuels.

After the workshop, the RSB met with the Department of the Environment of the State Government of Minas Gerais (in Belo Horizonte). The representatives demonstrated interest in the potential of certification to achieve compliance with Brazilian law and showed particularly interest in following up with a broad multi-stakeholder and multi-sectorial process involving the sugarcane and ethanol industry, agriculture and cattle, as well as government and NGOs to continue the discussion that was started as part of this outreach; such a process could take place next year and it would explore the opportunities and

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general in Minas Gerais.

West Africa

During the 3rd meeting of the EU-Global Biopact project (Bamako, Mali) and the 3rd International Conference on Biofuels for West Africa (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso), the RSB Secretariat has established promising contacts with the governments of Mali and Burkina Faso, with regards to the development of national sustainability schemes in these countries. Mali has established some requirements for domestic production, which are based on the RSB Standard. The RSB will discuss with the authorities about credible and context-specific options for the verification of compliance, given the fact that 3rd party audits would not be adapted. Similarly, the government of Burkina Faso is considering the development of similar policies and will collaborate with the RSB in this regards.

China

In the most populated country in the world, the development of a sustainability policy is high on the agenda of the authorities. The Chinese government is keen to develop a policy that is adapted to their geographic and economic context. Thanks to our partners in that region, the RSB Standard will likely be used as the basis for the development of such a policy.

New CIFOR publication evaluates the social sustainability of EU-approved voluntary schemes for biofuels: RSB comes off well

A new working paper by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) titled "Social sustainability of EU-approved voluntary schemes for biofuels" has undertaken a comparative analysis of the substantive content or 'scope' of the certification schemes, which were approved by the European Commission in July 2011. The study praises the RSB as the "most far-reaching standard in terms of the scope of treatment of social indicators". At the same time the authors point out three aspects that could undermine the realization of social sustainability: "poor coverage of some critical social sustainability components, the presence of schemes lacking any social sustainability requirements and gaps in procedural rules."

You can download the paper (Laura German, L. and Schoneveld, G. 2011 Social sustainability of EU-approved voluntary schemes for biofuels: Implications for rural livelihoods. Working Paper 75. CIFOR, Bogor, Indonesia) here http://www.cifor.org/publications/pdf_files/WPapers/WP75German.pdf

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ISEAL Consultation on Assurance Code

Only a few days remain before the end of the [ISEAL Consultation](#) on its forthcoming Assurance Code (31 December). The term assurance describes any process that assesses compliance with a standard, including the processes of verification, certification and accreditation. The need for an Assurance Code has arisen following a number of years of discussion on the issue, and the realization that in order for standards organizations to scale up, their assurance systems need to accommodate the changing needs of this growing sector. The members of the [Assurance Code Steering and Technical committees](#) envisage an assurance instrument that embodies innovative practices in assurance, such as risk management, participatory guarantee systems, and other benefits to stakeholders, including knowledge sharing and data gathering. The [draft Assurance Code](#) will set minimum requirements for credible assurance for the social and environmental standards movement.

Forthcoming events

The RSB staff will be attending the following conference:

[World Biofuels Market 2012](#): RSB is a partner of WBM 2011 and encourages you to attend this major event. RSB Members receive a 20% discount on their registration fees.

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