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RSB Bulletin May 2012

Dear members and friends of the RSB,

Welcome to this new issue of our bulletin, which aims to keep you informed about the latest activities of the RSB Secretariat.

The RSB Secretariat is investing a lot of time and energy to support RSB Services in implementing and promoting the RSB certification system. At the same time, we are coordinating several projects aimed at making the RSB standards more in line with the needs of our users. A new policy for the use of by-products (e.g. agricultural by-products, animal fats, industrial residues, etc.) as biofuel feedstock is being developed and collaborations with other standards and legal authorities are on their way to establish equivalences with RSB requirements. These will ultimately increase the range of opportunities for RSB certified operators and simplify the certification process whenever possible.

Meanwhile, the time has come to collect your knowledge and opinions on the issue of indirect impacts of biofuels. After two years of very interesting and constructive discussions with the Indirect Impact Expert Group, the RSB Secretariat is now inviting its constituencies and the wider public to tell us whether, according to them, the RSB Standard should address this issue and if so, how this could be done. The RSB Steering Board will decide on a way forward on the basis of this consultation.

Finally, please make a note of the upcoming training courses for auditors (Europe: June 25-27, 2012; USA: July 11-13, 2012) and the new [RSS Feed](#), which will update you on new applications for certification and let you contribute to the public comment period.

Happy reading!
The RSB Secretariat

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Projects

Towards sustainable biofuels in Ethiopia

The Secretariat has been supporting the development of sustainable biofuels policies in Ethiopia since mid-2011 thanks to the financial support of the Sustainable Biomass Consortium. Fuel imports account for over 90% of Ethiopian foreign earnings. Looking at alternative fuels is therefore a priority for the current government, which is in the process of implementing an ambitious national biofuels strategy adopted in 2007.

A newly published report analyses the Ethiopian regulatory framework against the RSB Principles and Criteria and provides an initial insight on priority areas for action. The report also describes the stakeholder engagement process, which was a fundamental part of the work carried out during the development of the study. The report can be downloaded on the RSB website soon.

An analysis of Canadian law

The RSB Secretariat is currently working to identify equivalences between social and environmental regulations in Canada and the RSB Principles and Criteria, in partnership with the Canadian International Grains Institute. These equivalences are based on the existence of related laws and their appropriate enforcement. The outcomes of this project will be used to develop a guidance tool for auditors and operators. The project is expected to be completed within the next three months.

Benchmarking with Rainforest Alliance

The RSB Secretariat, RSB Services and the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN), which is coordinated by the Rainforest Alliance, are currently collaborating to benchmark the RSB Standard against the SAN Standard. The ultimate goal of this collaboration is to seek equivalences between the two systems and recognize SAN certified operators. This would allow them to enter the RSB Chain of Custody and, in turn, increase opportunities for RSB certified operators.

Development of policy for by-products and residues

Following the policy on end-of-life products (Municipal Solid Waste and Used Cooking Oil) and wastewater, which was published end of 2011, the RSB Secretariat is currently developing a policy for biofuel feedstock based on by-products and residues produced out of agriculture, forestry and industrial processes, including meat production. A proposal will be presented at the in-person Steering Board meeting in June, during which a decision is expected.

GHG Tool

The [RSB GHG Tool](#), which is freely available, is a lifecycle GHG calculator for biofuels developed by the RSB Secretariat at EPFL, in collaboration with the Swiss Federal Institute for Materials Testing (EMPA). We have worked on the tool since early 2010 and it now incorporates several features that make it more user-friendly. For example, users are now able to export inputs and results into a spreadsheet.

A [User's Manual](#) is available online, which provides a step-by-step guide to the tool. Your

feedback is welcome! For any questions please contact [victoria.junquera\[at\]epfl.ch](mailto:victoria.junquera[at]epfl.ch)

Latest news on RSB Certification

We are happy to announce that two more applicants are about to complete the due diligence process: **SkyNRG** and **Piedmont Biofuels**. If you want to be notified of new applicants, you can now subscribe to the [RSB Services RSS news feed](#).

RSB Services and AB Training have launched the RSB Training Program for Auditors and Lead Auditors. The training program combines a series of online courses with a short face-to-face training to provide RSB auditors with the necessary knowledge and practical skills. The first two face-to-face training sessions will take place on June 25-27, 2012 in Europe and on July 11-13, 2012 in Washington D.C. For more information please see the [news page](#) of RSB Services.

In addition, the RSB Services Foundation is pleased to announce that it has added two team members. **Dr. Melanie Williams** joins RSB Services Foundation as Regional Director for Europe, Middle East and Africa. She previously worked at SERCO leading the Environmental Measurements Group at the National Physical Laboratory (NPL) in the UK for over seven years. **Helena Tavares Kennedy** joins RSB Services Foundation as Director of Marketing and Communications. She has over 14 years of experience and will manage RSB Services Foundation's marketing and communications activities, including advertising, business development strategy, content management, communications, events, and website. For further details please see [the news page](#) of RSB Services.

Public consultation: Indirect Impacts, the RSB Standard and way forward

The RSB Secretariat is conducting a **Public Consultation on the topic of Indirect Impacts** to receive the opinion of the general public on whether the RSB Standard should try to address the indirect impacts of biofuels, and, if so, which option(s) would be preferable as a credible and practical way forward. All interested stakeholders are invited to participate in the consultation, which ends on May 15. The Secretariat will summarize the responses and publicize them on the [consultation webpage](#).

During the past three years, the RSB Secretariat has collected a considerable volume of information, data and knowledge about the indirect impacts of biofuel production. The contribution of the RSB indirect impacts expert group (IIEG) was instrumental in this process. In parallel, the EPFL (host of the RSB Secretariat) has been working on a methodology for Low Indirect Impacts Biofuels.

This has culminated in the ongoing consultation, which is based on a [Background Paper](#) meant to be a neutral and objective representation of opinions on indirect impacts, state of knowledge and options to address them in the Standard. The paper presents a comparative analysis of the different options, including the possibility of not addressing them.

The public consultation will be followed by the consultation of RSB Members (end of May), which will in turn prepare the ground for a Steering Board decision during the in-person meeting in June. We look forward to these discussions! For any questions please contact [victoria.junquera \[at\]epfl.ch](mailto:victoria.junquera[at]epfl.ch)

Revision of the RSB social guidelines

The revision of the RSB social guidelines has now entered its final stage. The group of experts which has been supporting the RSB Secretariat since mid-2011 held its final

workshop in February 2012 in Lausanne. The group reviewed the feedback from the six initial field evaluations and discussed the necessary amendments to the guidelines. The workshop was also instrumental to identify priority revisions for the current system and areas for improvement in the medium term. The new guidelines include the RSB Guideline on Rural and Social Development (Principle 5), on Food Security (Principle 6), on Water Rights and Social Impacts (Principle 9a) and on Land Rights (Principle 12) and they can now be downloaded from our website at following link: <http://rsb.epfl.ch/page-24929-en.html>

The seventh and last field evaluation was successfully completed in March 2012 at a large state owned sugar factory in Ethiopia. It provided one final opportunity to review the guidelines in a country which is currently investing heavily in biofuel production while still struggling with a number of social challenges, including food security, water rights and land rights.

Latest Outreach Activities

- *World Water Forum*: The RSB Secretariat is coordinating a working group on water issues related to biofuel production, in collaboration with the **International Energy Agency** and the **UN Environment Programme**. This working group compiled existing and innovative solutions to be implemented at different levels, including technology and policy, to reduce potential impacts of biofuel production on water resources. This work was presented during the 6th World Water Forum, held in Marseille, France from March 12 to 16, 2012. For more information, please visit <http://www.worldwaterforum6.org>
- *Sustainable Biomass for Electricity Conference* (Güssing (Austria), 2-4 May 2012): The RSB Secretariat participated in this conference organized by **UNIDO**, in partnership with the **Global Bioenergy Partnership** and **FAO** on the use of biomass for electricity production. The RSB fed into the discussion through its experience on sustainability issues and the applicability of the RSB standards to solid biomass.
- *Brazil*: **Boeing**, **Embraer** and **FAPESP** have launched the Sustainable Aviation Biofuels for Brazil (SABB) Roadmap. The first meeting took place in Sao Paulo in April. The aim of the roadmap is to undertake a comprehensive national assessment of the opportunities and challenges for enabling a sustainable aviation biofuels industry in Brazil. It will also recommend action plans for technology-based, socio-economic and environmental initiatives. The RSB Secretariat will provide support and feedback on issues related to sustainability.

Forthcoming events

The RSB staff will be attending the following conference:

- [ISEAL Conference 2012](#): 29-30 May 2012, Bonn, Germany
- [ISEAL Research & Impacts Pre-Conference Workshop](#): 29 May 2012, Bonn, Germany
- [In-person RSB Steering Board Meeting](#): June 12-13 2012, Lausanne
- [ARA Conference on Biofuels \(Biofuels for Africa\)](#): June 14-15 2012, Luanda, Angola
- [Face-to-face RSB auditor trainings](#): June 25-27, 2012 in Europe and July 11-13, 2012 in Washington D.C.

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