



ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE  
FÉDÉRALE DE LAUSANNE

## Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels

An initiative of the EPFL Energy Center

*Ensuring that biofuels deliver on their promise of sustainability*

*In this issue:* A word from [Claude Martin, Stakeholder Outreaches](#), New [Governance Structure](#), Noteworthy Changes [from Version Zero to Version 0.5](#), Towards [Version One and Implementation](#)

Dear colleagues, associates and friends,  
Welcome to the August 09 RSB newsletter.

It has been an exciting and busy six months for the Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels and its associates:

- ❖ In March we concluded a 7 month public consultation period for Version Zero of the RSB standard. We held numerous [regional consultations](#) across the globe and many of you would have attended one of more of these. In total around 900 people participated in more than 15 regional outreaches.
- ❖ Also during this time, we developed a [new governance structure](#) which was finalised in May at our Board meeting in Lausanne. The meeting also elected the new Steering Board. It is a balanced composition of founding Steering Board members and new members, so that the transformation could proceed seamlessly. The new Steering Board approved an interim Version 0.5 of the RSB standard, while setting a clear path towards Version One.
- ❖ In the midst of all this ,we said goodbye to our original Head of the Secretariat, Charlotte Opal, as she left to pursue a new career as the doting mother of Chet Marteen. And we welcomed our new Head, [Alwin Kopse-Scholberg](#), into the RSB family.

In spite of all we have accomplished so far in 2009, there's still a lot to do over the next six months to get the RSB standard up and running by early 2010 and we are continuing to do our utmost to keep afloat! We are busy appointing experts to help us with certain outstanding issues on some of the Principles & Criteria. At the same time, we have been developing a conceptual framework for benchmarking other sustainability initiatives against our Principles & Criteria. We continue to recruit more participants and are particularly

### EVENTS CALENDAR

#### Upcoming RSB Meetings

September 2009  
First round of Chamber and Steering Board calls

October 2009  
Second round of Chamber and Steering Board calls

November 2009  
Steering Board. Lausanne. Switzerland

#### Upcoming Conferences with participation of RSB staff

20-22 September 2009  
EuropaBio's Forum for Industrial Biotechnology (EFIB), Lisbon, Portugal

October 7, 2009  
Biofuels Markets, Mexico City

October 8-9, 2009  
UNIDO Global Energy Forum, Leon, Mexico

November 15-17, 2009  
2<sup>nd</sup> International Congress on Biodiesel, Munich, Germany

November 22-23, 2009  
16<sup>th</sup> PAPSAC, HBS, Cambridge, USA

eager to attract those from small scale farming sectors in developing countries and from trade unions. Do let us know if you would like to join us or if you are aware of others who could add even more value to our process!

We hope you enjoy reading about these events in more detail and look forward to any feedback you would like to contribute.

The RSB Team

### ***A word from Claude Martin, Founding Chair of the RSB Steering Board***

At the beginning of the 21st century, mankind seemed to remember that the most ancient and widespread way to produce energy was to use one of mother Earth's treasures: plants! But after a few years of unconditional hype, the myth of a bioenergy-based society bumped into another reality, that of global environmental disasters and human tragedies. Although the sustainability of biofuels is not straightforward, I still believed it was worth giving it a chance, at least for part of a solution to the difficult energy-environment-society equation we are facing. Sustainability always needs sorting out issues, and ideology for or against leads nowhere. This is how I ended up chairing a promising, yet uncertain, initiative led by the EPFL: the Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels. It was early 2007. ...

The past two years working with an incredibly interesting group of experts from all sectors and regions have proven a success on many aspects, the most outstanding being: 1) convincing all the parties concerned to join the Roundtable, 2) reaching a consensus on the vision that sustainable biofuels could be a reality and 3) getting a broad agreement on a set of principles and criteria for sustainable biofuel production.

The road ahead, until verifiably sustainable biofuels can be sold, is still an arduous one, but the first milestones have been reached. The success with the Roundtable would never have been possible without the invaluable competence and commitment of Charlotte Opal. She headed the RSB Secretariat from April 2007 to June 2009 and recently decided to dedicate all her time to the fascination of maternity. The energy and determination that she devoted to the RSB project, combined with her generous nature, intelligence and open-mindedness are just a few of the reasons why the RSB community will miss her. The Steering Board and her colleagues from the Secretariat wish her all the best for the next steps of her life as a mother. They also warmly welcome her successor, Alwin Kopse, whose bio is included in this newsletter.

Although I have not had to deal with diapers for a long time, I have nevertheless taken the decision to step down from my role at the RSB and to dedicate all my time to the other sustainability initiatives I have been involved in over the past few years. I leave the role of chairing the RSB in the capable hands of my colleague and friend, Barbara Bramble, who was involved in the RSB from the very beginning. She will be deputized by Richard Sykes, whose wisdom and experience will also help bring the RSB towards its objectives.

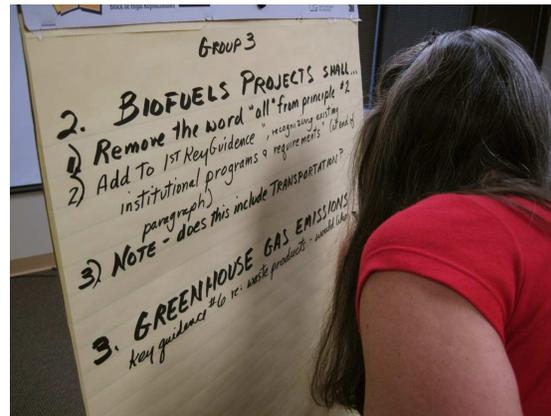
The past two years with the RSB were an inestimable experience for me, and working with the Steering Board and the other stakeholders a delight. I warmly thank the RSB community and all its well-wishers for their contribution, and hope to stay in touch in the years ahead.

Claude Martin

### ***Stakeholder Outreaches***

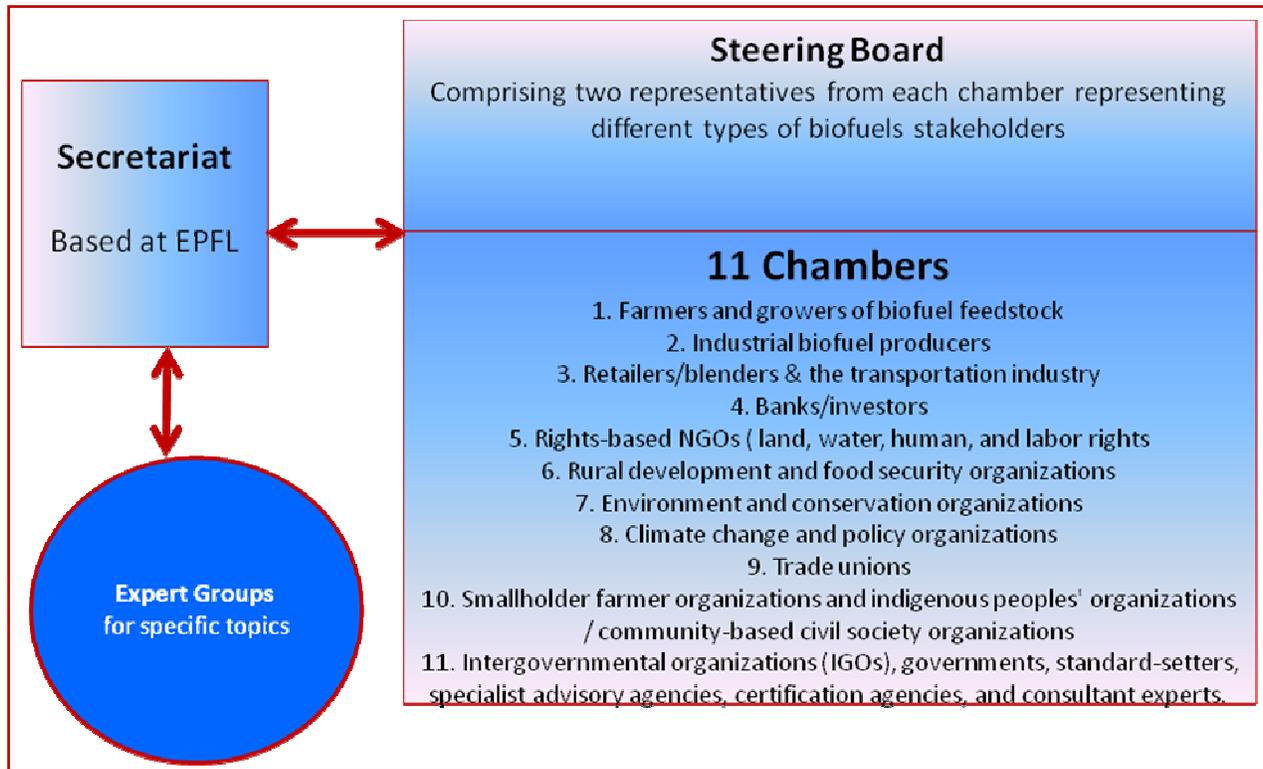
Between October 2007 and March 2009, 15 stakeholder outreach events were organized throughout the world, providing an opportunity for nearly 900 participants to provide feedback on the ongoing work of the Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels. These meetings were held in Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, India, Kenya, Mali, Malaysia, Mozambique, South Africa, and United States.

Outreach meetings often began with a series of presentations by local experts addressing aspects of the issues in the RSB standard. After this 'setting the scene', participants were split into working groups of 10-15 people and asked to review the RSB standard principle by principle. Reports were prepared detailing the proceedings and comments received from the participants. Any specific individual attributions were not included in published documents. All comments received were later assembled, grouped by principle and [posted on the RSB website](#).



### ***New RSB Governance structure***

During its first two years, 4 Working Groups under the leadership of the founding Steering Board devoted their time to the development of the Principles & Criteria. Since the beginning of this year, a new governance structure has been in place comprising a Steering Board and 11 Chambers.



RSB Governance (June 2009)

After the founding Steering Board's approval of the new governance system, a call for participation was released by the RSB Secretariat in January 2009. Over the following five months, around 100 participants from 27 countries had already signed up, including one-third from "the global South" (i.e. the emerging and developing countries).

While some chambers are already well populated – biofuel producers and environmental NGOs for example - the RSB is still actively recruiting new members from trade unions, indigenous people's organizations and rights based NGOs, especially from developing and emerging countries. **Please spread the word!**

View the [current members of the RSB Chambers](#).

The RSB Chambers continue to work mainly on a **virtual basis**, in line with the RSB commitment to low carbon functioning. We continue to use technology to drive the process, accessing blogs and email as well as telecalls. This technology approach worked well in the lead up to the production of Version 0.5, which was thus able to integrate intense contributions from many Chamber members.

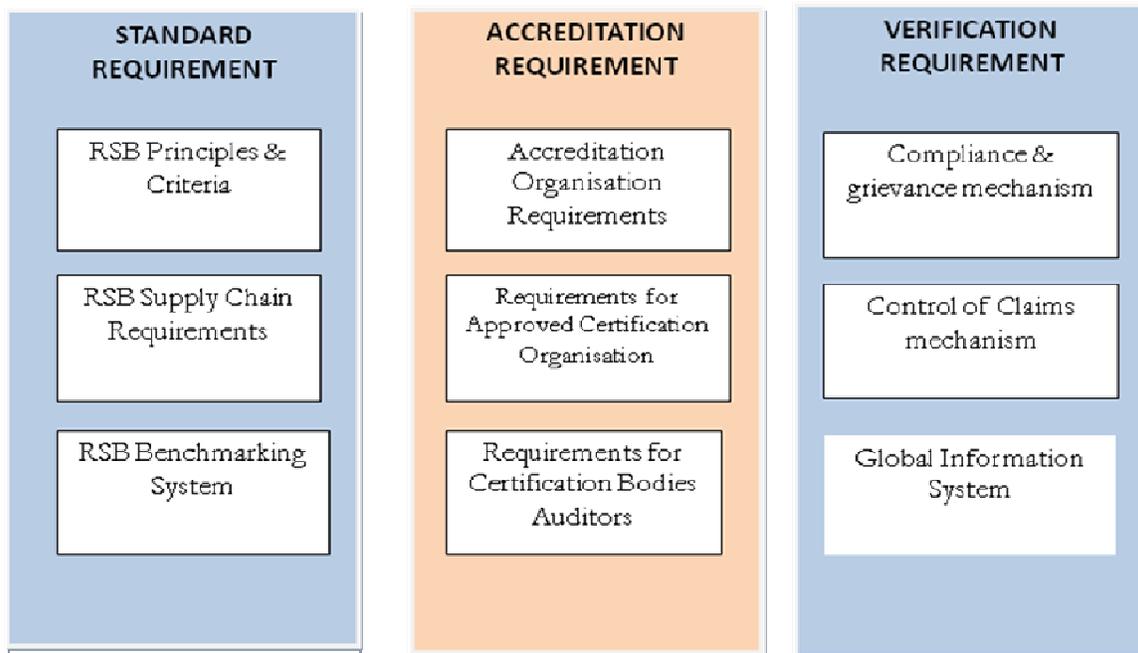
**NOTEWORTHY CHANGES FROM VERSION ZERO TO VERSION 0.5**

- While [indirect impacts](#) (commodity prices, indirect Land Use Change, etc.) are extremely important, it is difficult to address them through a standard that operates at the project level. Experts will thus advise us on how best to include these issues into the standard in the future.
- There is now a distinction between “**basic**” and “**progress**” requirements, where the latter is expected to be completed within a certain number of years following the initial certification.
- Principle 2 has been reworked to make it a planning, implementation and continuous improvement principle

**Please note that [Version 0.5](#) is temporary, as the Principles and Criteria are still under discussion!**

***Towards Version One and Implementation***

Defining the Principles & Criteria has been the main thrust of RSB since its inception. The Steering Board decided at the end of 2008 that RSB should provide the possibility to certify biofuel production. While RSB is working towards Version One of the Principles & Criteria, steps towards creating the certification system are already being taken. This means developing a set of additional requirements, classified in 3 main categories:



- Standard requirement, which includes the supply chain requirements or chain of custody: this is about how certified product is to be tracked through the chain and the benchmarking requirement; RSB can build on existing initiatives and avoid duplication.
- Accreditation requirement, which includes the requirements to be followed 1) by the accreditation body, 2) by the accreditation body to accredit certifying bodies, and 3) by certifying bodies to accredit auditors.
- Verification requirement, which covers the rules by which claims can be made on RSB certificates within the supply chain and by final users of certificates (implying the definition of a grievance mechanism). Finally, a global central information system will be set up to ensure a credible and reliable system.

While the certification system is being set-up, the RSB would welcome the opportunity for the standards to be tested in pilot projects. Let us know if your organization would be interested.

We hope to begin to deliver the initial RSB certificates in 2010!

### ***New Team Members***

#### *Alwin Kopse*



Alwin recently joined us as the new Head of the Secretariat of the Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels. Alwin comes from Harvard University where he worked as a research fellow at the Kennedy School of Government. His research focused mainly on the governance aspects of biodiversity. Previously, Alwin worked both in the private and public sectors on issues related to agriculture, biodiversity, intellectual property, biotechnology, trade and human rights. He is a specialist in international negotiations, especially around the Convention on Biological Diversity, and has extensive experience in negotiating agricultural agreements among industry, government, and NGO actors.

Alwin holds an MLaw from the University of Bern, Switzerland, and an MSc in Public Policy and Management from the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, UK. He speaks German, English and French. Alwin's email address is: [alwin.kopse@epfl.ch](mailto:alwin.kopse@epfl.ch).

Elisabeth Bato



Elisabeth is a Swiss Federal Certified Accountant. She has previously held positions in accounting and administration with private industries. She is currently responsible for all of the day-to-day administration for the RSB. Besides the numerous little things that keep an organization running, her job includes contact management, accounting, communications, stakeholder and Board meeting logistics. Elisabeth speaks fluent French and English. Her e-mail address is: [elisabeth.bato@epfl.ch](mailto:elisabeth.bato@epfl.ch)

### **Closing remarks on the future of the RSB from Barbara Bramble, Chair of the Steering Board**

I am writing to you for the first time as the new Chair of the Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels. August is a good time for taking stock, so I wanted to share some thoughts about where the RSB stands as of now and where we may be headed.

We have a very busy fall season ahead of us, and the Board meeting in November will be momentous. In addition to finalizing Version One of the Principles & Criteria, the Board will assess and approve a set of indicators to measure implementation of the P&Cs, and make decisions that would allow us to move ahead on establishment of the RSB certification system. So, by the beginning of 2010, we hope to be “ready for prime time”.

Some of you know that the Secretariat and several board members met with officials of the European Union transportation directorate in July, who encouraged the RSB to apply to be recognized as in compliance with the Renewable Energy Directive. The RSB may well be the first voluntary certification system to be so approved, and if successful, would give us a leading role in working out international rules for “better biofuels” production.

I look forward to working with all of you, who are interested in the future of the RSB, in making this exciting agenda come to fruition.

Barbara Bramble