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RSB Standard for Operators Taking Part in RSB Certification Systems (Participating Operators)

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Introduction

This standard sets out the conditions operators shall meet when taking part in RSB *certification systems*. Operators taking part in RSB certification systems are referred to as 'Participating Operators' (POs).

You will have control over, and take full responsibility for, all operations, processes, activities and sites in connection with putting RSB standards in place at all times.

This standard also describes the role of the RSB Secretariat.

Main changes from the previous version (Version 2.0)

- a. This standard was entirely re-written using the "plain English" approach, which aims to make the content clearer and unambiguous to a broad audience
- b. The requirements under Section F were re-ordered to better reflect the chronology of the application, audit and certification processes.
- c. Where possible, duplications were removed.
- d. The definition of 'Participating Operator' was moved to Section B.
- e. Additional information is required under the certification scope (e.g. geographic coordinates and surface/volume under certification).
- f. Clarifications are added with regards to the definition of the certification scope, e.g. the impossibility to split contiguous operational sites or fields into smaller units.
- g. The description of how the application acceptance process and audit process are conducted by the RSB Secretariat and the certification body (Evaluation) is now added as an informative note (not as requirements), as they do not relate to requirement for the operators undertaking the certification process. See the notes on page 7 and page 8.
- h. The numbering was updated.

Main changes between version 3.0 and 3.1

- a. Requirement to provide a written declaration signed by the Executive Management was changed into the requirement to accept the Terms and Conditions through the RSB website.
- b. Process step *evaluation of your application* by the SOE has been aligned with current practices.

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A. The aim of this standard

This standard aims to set out the general requirements for acquiring, handling and forwarding RSB-compliant biomass or biomaterials (or both) in RSB certification systems.

The standard also aims to make sure that, as an operator taking part in RSB certification systems (a 'Participating Operator'), you:

- confirm you are committed to putting in place and keeping to RSB standards and procedures;
- define your certification scope of operation (as required under point 3.2); and
- take full responsibility and liability for fully and consistently complying with RSB standards and procedures under the certification scope of your operation.

B. What this standard covers

This standard is an international standard and is valid worldwide. It sets out the general requirements for operations producing, converting, processing, trading and using biomass or biomaterials in RSB certification systems.

This standard applies to all operators taking part in RSB certification systems ('Participating Operators').

Participating Operators are legal organizations or natural persons producing, converting, processing, blending, trading, using or otherwise handling biomass or biomaterials (or both) and are responsible for putting in place RSB standards, and procedures. A Participating Operator may be an individual (e.g. an individual farm) or a group of economic operators (e.g. a group of farmers).

C. Version and date

Version 3.1 of this standard came into effect on May 1, 2016 (the 'effective date').

D. Note on using this standard

All parts of this standard are considered to be normative, including its aim, scope, effective date, notes on its use, references, terms and definitions, requirements and annexes, unless we say otherwise. When putting this standard in place you shall make sure that you meet all of the requirements specified in this standard, and any other measures necessary to achieve its aim.

E. Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this standard, the terms and definitions given in RSB-STD-01-002 RSB Glossary of Terms shall apply.

F. Requirements

1. Applying for Certification

The following section describes the documents you shall provide to the RSB Secretariat to apply for the certification process.

1. 1. You shall accept the Terms and Conditions on the RSB website (Participating Operator Agreement) which include the following elements:
 1. 1. 1. A confirmation that your activities have not been suspended as a result of administrative or legal action taken by a public authority or any other group or individual.
 1. 1. 2. A confirmation that you support the RSB, RSB standards and RSB procedures.
 1. 1. 3. A commitment to fully comply with all of RSB standards and RSB procedures that apply, as specified in your certification scope (See 1.3).
 1. 1. 4. Information about any parts of your operations which may put at risk how RSB standards and procedures are met and put in place, or which may reflect badly on or affect RSB good name, or which go against the RSB vision and mission. This includes information about any social or environmental dispute or conflict, and about legal or criminal proceedings.
 1. 1. 5. Circumstances under which RSB may suspend or terminate the Participating Operator Agreement.
1. 2. You shall provide and keep updated a documented profile of all activities and operations under your control and certification scope (See 1.3) which are affecting, or could affect, how RSB standards are put in place.

Your profile shall include at least the following information:

1. 2. 1. A description of your legal status.
1. 2. 2. A list of your governing bodies and a description of their role and responsibilities within your organization.
1. 2. 3. Names, details, descriptions, organizational charts and any other relevant information about subsidiaries, branch offices, connected organizations, other organizations or individuals contracted or otherwise involved, operational structures, sites, facilities, processing and production units, supply chain structures, authorities, functions, roles and responsibilities, and if it applies, management systems including policies, procedures, and controlling systems and risk-management systems.
1. 2. 4. A description of your experience of putting in place social, environmental, economic and management standards and procedures, including a list of:
 1. 2. 4. 1. Standards and certification systems you currently have in place and their status;

1. 2. 4. 2. The certification bodies you are involved with;
1. 2. 4. 3. Consultants you have appointed to advise on how to put standards and certification systems in place; and
1. 2. 4. 4. Certifications withdrawn, suspended or terminated.

1. 3. You shall define the certification scope, including at least the following information:
 1. 3. 1. The name and details of the management representative who has overall responsibility for compliance with all of RSB standards that apply.
 1. 3. 2. The details of all the operation sites, subsidiaries, branch offices, individuals and supply chain structures where RSB-compliant products are produced, processed, acquired, handled or forwarded, including:
 1. 3. 2. 1. Name and location
 1. 3. 2. 2. Geographic coordinates (latitude and longitude)
 1. 3. 2. 3. Position in the supply chain and legal status within your organization
 1. 3. 2. 4. Name and details of the local management representative who has the responsibility for compliance with all of RSB standards that apply
 1. 3. 2. 5. Total surface (Hectares) or production volumes (Metric Tons)
 1. 3. 2. 6. Description of the production/processing steps, including conversion factors and product characteristics
 1. 3. 2. 7. Types of RSB-compliant product produced, processed, acquired, handled or forwarded. This will include relevant product characteristics, product classification, product documentation, product groups and product types.
 1. 3. 2. 8. The RSB standards and procedures that apply
 1. 3. 2. 9. The 'chain of custody' tracking models which apply
 1. 3. 3. If you are carrying out more than one consecutive stage of production or processing along the value chain, you shall include in your certification scope (See 1.3) all the consecutive stages of production or processing along the value chain under your control.
 1. 3. 4. Operation sites with continuous boundaries cannot be divided into smaller certification units. Example: you cannot divide a contiguous plantation or a field into smaller units and exclude some of these smaller units from the certification scope. Non-contiguous fields or operational sites under common ownership may be excluded from the certification scope.

1. 4. You shall have contracts with all the groups, people and structures listed in 1.3.2:
 1. 4. 1. These contracts shall specifically refer to the commitment of the groups, people and structures listed in 1.3.2 above to put in place and comply with RSB standards and procedures.
 1. 4. 2. The commitment to put in place and comply with RSB standards and procedures shall include a commitment to provide unrestricted access to any

of the groups, people and places listed in 1.3.2 above.

1. 5. You shall make sure you have, and maintain, the necessary knowledge, competencies, skills and systems for complying with RSB standards and procedures. In particular, the management representative with overall responsibility for putting your standards and procedures in place shall be knowledgeable and competent to do so.
1. 6. You shall carry out a self-risk assessment of your operations as defined in the certification scope (See 1.3), in conformity with the RSB Standard for Risk Management (RSB-STD-60-001)¹.

Note: RSB Secretariat will publish your application on their website for two weeks to get external comments. Any comment will be sent to the CB with whom you have a contract to carry out the RSB audit. You will be given a Participating Operator Number.

2. Preparing the Audit

To prepare for your audit, you shall do the following:

2. 1. Enter into an agreement with an RSB-recognized certification body ('the certification body') for evaluation against RSB standards through an official audit process.
2. 2. Make sure the audit process starts within six months of your application, and that the first audit is a field audit.
2. 3. Make sure that you keep your management representative fully informed about putting in place RSB standards and procedures. You shall also make complete and up-to-date records covering all parts of complying with RSB standards and systems, and keep these records for at least five years.
2. 4. Make sure that your management representative has all the systems and methods they need to fully comply with RSB standards and procedures.
2. 5. Inform the RSB Secretariat and the certification body immediately about any changes to your ownership and legal structure, business scope, organizational structure and management responsibilities as well as any changes to your documented profile (as required under point 1.2) and your certification scope (as required under point 1.3).
2. 6. Have systems in place for fair, equal and open management, and for settling disputes and complaints about your performance raised by staff or other people or organizations, in line with the RSB Grievance Procedure (RSB-PRO-65-001). You shall record how you have managed and settled all disputes and complaints.
2. 7. You shall keep updated your self-risk assessment (See 1.6), in conformity with the RSB standard for risk management (RSB-STD-60-001) and inform the RSB Secretariat and the certification body immediately about any changes to the results of your self-risk assessment.

¹ You may use the online tool for Self-Risk Assessment. More information at www.rsb.org

2. 8. You shall carry out and keep updated a self-evaluation of your operations as defined in the certification scope (See 1.3), to comply with RSB standards and procedures.

You shall include in your self-evaluation all the requirements we ask for in the applicable standards and procedures. Where available, you should use RSB indicators and checklists to demonstrate that you are complying with RSB standards and procedures. If necessary, you may introduce further indicators and checkpoints.

You shall clearly indicate any extra indicators and checkpoints in your self-evaluation.

3. During the Audit Process

When the audit process ('the evaluation') is being conducted by the certification body, you shall do the following:

3. 1. Produce documented evidences that you comply with all the requirements listed in this standard and all other applicable RSB standards and procedures.
3. 2. Inform the certification body and the RSB Secretariat immediately about any part of your operation which may put at risk how RSB standards and procedures are met and put in place.
3. 3. Deal immediately with any issue relating to not complying with RSB standards and procedures ('Non-Compliances') which may be identified during evaluation, and tell the certification body what action you have taken to deal with this (that is, whether you have corrected the problem to bring it into line with RSB standards and procedures). Major non-compliances shall be corrected within 90 days of the evaluation, otherwise you will have to undertake the entire audit process over again.

Note on the result of the audit process

The certification body will evaluate your compliance (conformity) with relevant RSB standards and procedures, following the audit procedures defined by the RSB.

The certification body will issue a certificate of compliance, unless major non-compliances are found in your operations, which cannot be corrected within 90 days.

The RSB certificate and a summary of the audit outcomes will be posted on the RSB website.

In case you disagree with the results of the evaluation by the certification body, you may file a grievance, following RSB Grievance Procedure (RSB-PRO-65-001).

4. After the Audit Process

4. 1. If you failed to achieve a valid certificate, you shall make sure you are evaluated again by the certification body within six months otherwise you will lose your participating operator number.
4. 2. Upon issuance of a valid certificate by the certification body, you shall do the following:
 4. 2. 1. Use RSB trademarks according to the requirements described in RSB-PRO-50-001 (RSB Procedures on Communications and Claims).
 4. 2. 2. Make sure further audits are carried out with the certification body, in accordance with the agreed audit schedule and before the valid certificate runs out.
 4. 2. 3. Forward requests for further audits to the certification body, together with your updated certification scope, self-risk assessment and self-evaluation.
 4. 2. 4. Do not carry out or take part in any activity which could damage the RSB good name or go against the RSB vision and mission.
 4. 2. 5. Tell the certification body and the RSB Secretariat immediately if you know that RSB trademarks, standards and procedures are being misused. Misuse includes if RSB standards and procedures are not being met, or are at risk of not being met. This applies to all operations, whether or not they are within your certification scope, and whether or not they are formally engaged with the RSB Secretariat or any other part of our organization or certification systems.