

RSB – ROUNDTABLE ON SUSTAINABLE BIOMATERIALS

**Procedure for Development and Modification of Guidance on RSB Standards
and Procedures**

Version 1.1

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Objective and summary

The objective of **RSB-PRO-35-001** is to describe how guidance documents on RSB standards and procedures are developed and modified.

The ultimate authority for approving development and modification of proactive guidance is the RSB’s multi-stakeholder Board of Directors. The RSB Secretariat is empowered to handle reactive guidance documents.

Comments on and review of this document

Any party can make comments on the procedures described in this document by writing to the RSB Secretariat (info@rsb.org). The Secretariat will undertake a regular review of this document every three years, or earlier if deemed necessary by the Secretariat or RSB Board of Directors. The review shall take into account any comments received, the actual working practices of the Secretariat, and any changes to the ISEAL Code of Good Practice.

Main changes from the previous version (RSB PRO-35-001 version 1.0)

- References to the RSB Services Foundation were either removed or replaced by “RSB Secretariat”, since the activities of the RSB Services Foundation were transferred to the RSB Secretariat as of February 1, 2014

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A. Scope

In order to avoid misinterpretation and misuse of RSB standards and procedures, RSB issues guidance documents for auditors, certification bodies, operators and other key stakeholders.

RSB guidance may be issued to turn complex issues into a more accessible language for non-expert stakeholders and enhance clarity and understanding of the RSB Standard. Guidance may also be issued to interpret generic requirements in a specific context, or to provide examples of good practices.

Two types of guidance exist: *reactive guidance* and *proactive guidance*.

Reactive guidance is issued punctually in response to a request for clarification, or interpretation, by a participating operator, or an auditor. Proactive guidance is developed continuously to enhance the understanding and proper implementation of standards and procedures.

Guidance, in whatever format, is non-binding and not normative. Compliance of operators with the RSB Standard shall not be evaluated using guidance documents.

B. Development of guidance

1. Reactive Guidance

Reactive Guidance is generated punctually in response to a request by an operator, auditor, or certification bodies to get rapid clarification on interpreting and/or applying a particular element of a standard or a procedure.

Requests should be addressed to the RSB Secretariat who shall determine if it is a clarification, or an interpretation issue.

Clarification consists of providing references, facts or specific quotes from existing RSB documents.

Interpretation consists of explaining the meaning or the intent of a particular requirement, for which the language used in the corresponding standard or procedure is not sufficiently clear.

For clarification requests, the RSB Secretariat shall answer the question within two business days, using the existing standards guidance documents as the basis for their answer.

For interpretation requests, the RSB Secretariat shall answer the question within five working days. The Secretariat may escalate the request to the Board of Directors (BoD), which shall give an answer within five days. If timing is urgent, the Chair of the BoD can decide on the answer.

2. Proactive Guidance

Proactive Guidance is provided in full explanatory documents which are developed on a longer timescale. The Secretariat should decide on what guidance documents need to be updated, or developed based upon inquiries that come from operators, auditors and certification bodies, as well as areas where the Secretariat feels that further direction is needed. The Secretariat



shall create an annual work plan for creating and modifying guidance documents. The work plan shall be updated and presented to the BoD or Standards Working Group every six months.

Proactive guidance documents shall be drafted by the RSB Secretariat and approved by the BoD. The RSB Secretariat can consult the Standards Working Group for feedback throughout the drafting process. The RSB Secretariat may also create Technical Committees with specific knowledge or expertise of a particular issue, in order to provide advice on the guidance to be developed.

C. Record-keeping

RSB Secretariat shall maintain a log of all requests for guidance and how they have been answered.

The Standards Working Group shall receive an annual summary of the inquiries received by the RSB Secretariat.

Any research conducted by the Secretariat in determining guidance shall be archived in order to inform future guidance and standard-setting decisions.