

RSB – ROUNDTABLE ON SUSTAINABLE BIOMATERIALS

**RSB Proactive guidance on
RSB-STD-01-001 Principles & Criteria:**

Implementation of Principles 4 and 12

4 February 2019

Published by the Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials. This publication or any part thereof may only be reproduced with the written permission of the RSB, the publisher. Any reproduction in full or in part of this publication must mention the title and reference code and credit the publisher as the copyright owner.

Contact details: RSB - Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials
Impact Hub Geneva
Rue Fendt 1
1201 Geneva
Switzerland
web: <http://www.rsb.org>
email: info@rsb.org

1. Objective

The objective of this document is to provide guidance to RSB participating operators, auditors, certification bodies and other interested stakeholders on how to verify compliance with RSB Principles 4 (Human and Labour Rights) and 12 (Land Rights).

2. Background

The *RSB Principles & Criteria* (RSB-STD-01-001) consist of 12 sustainability principles with underlying criteria and minimum requirements and that are applicable to biomass cultivation and industrial processing.

Over the past two years, RSB has developed regional indicators to improve audit and implementation efficiencies and which are expected to result in decreased audit and implementation costs. Regional indicators aim to identify which RSB compliance criteria and indicators are already covered by national law and to what extent these requirements are satisfactorily enforced by local authorities. Benchmarking existing requirements with the RSB Standard helps to define regionally available evidence documents for demonstrating compliance (for example a water permit might demonstrate compliance with the RSB minimum requirements if the water laws of the country cover all elements of the RSB's Principle 9 on Water).

To date, RSB has developed regional indicators for the United States, Queensland (Australia) and South Africa which have been reviewed and approved by the RSB Board of Directors. Regional indicators for Mexico and Ethiopia are currently under development.

To verify compliance with Principles 4 on human and labour rights and 12 on land rights, a simplified approach for implementation and auditing was developed and discussed with regional stakeholders as part of the development of regional indicators. Stakeholders in the US, Queensland and South Africa agreed that this new approach - as presented below - is a reasonable way to verify compliance with the requirements in Principles 4 and 12.

Based on the results of the various regional stakeholder consultations, the approach to verify compliance with Principles 4 and 12 presented in this document can now be applied globally for RSB implementation and certification.

3. Compliance with Principle 4 (Human & Labour Rights)

Auditors can assume that operators comply with a minimum requirement in Principle 4 if the following requirements are met:

- a. There is no indication that this requirement of the RSB Standard is violated within the scope of certification (an example of an indication of violation could be a grievance or a comment brought forward in the stakeholder consultation, or an observation of the auditor made during the on-site audit);
- b. There is a law on the books of the country of operation that fully covers the minimum requirement of Principle 4; and
- c. The *Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI)* published by the World Bank¹ show that in the most recent assessment year the country of operation achieved at least an 80th percentile ranking for the following categories:
 - Rule of Law;
 - Regulatory Quality; and
 - Government effectiveness.

If the above requirements are not fulfilled, auditors will be required to verify that the minimum requirement is met.

4. Compliance with Principle 12 (Land Rights)

Auditors can assume that operators comply with the minimum requirements in Principle 12 if the following requirements are met:

- a. There is no indication that this requirement of the RSB Standard is violated within the scope of certification (an example of an indication of violation could be a grievance or a comment brought forward in the stakeholder consultation, or an observation of the auditor made during the on-site audit);
- b. There is a law on the books of the country of operation that fully covers the minimum requirement of Principle 12; and
- c. The country of operation achieves at least a score of 6.8 in the *International Property Rights Index*.²

If the above requirements are not fulfilled, auditors will be required to verify that the minimum requirement is met.

¹ <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#reports>

² <https://www.internationalpropertyrightsindex.org/countries>