



## RSB Bulletin January 2012

Dear members and friends of the RSB,

Welcome to the first bulletin of the year. We hope that 2012 brings you success and happiness!

This bulletin will take you through the most recent activities of the Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels. Perhaps our biggest news is the newly created RSB Services entity, which has been established in the United States and is working collaboratively with the RSB Secretariat to assist in the uptake of the RSB Standards. In addition, the RSB has a number of ongoing projects which are progressing well, including a field testing of our social guidelines in Indonesia, a benchmarking process with the Rainforest Alliance and the fine tuning of the RSB GHG Tool, among many other activities.

As the RSB transitions towards its fully operational phase, 2012 is likely to be one of the most critical years of its existence. Several challenges lie ahead and we look forward to working with our members and partners to turn each of them into a success.

Warm regards,  
The RSB Secretariat

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### **RSB Services & RSB: Setting the stage**

We are pleased to announce that RSB Services was incorporated in the State of Virginia, USA in October 2011. While its primary objective is the implementation of the RSB standards, RSB Services will also be directly involved in the RSB standards and certification system development, feeding the experience of RSB system users into process (economic operators and certification bodies).

The RSB Secretariat is already collaborating with RSB Services on the revision of guidelines related to the impact assessment process required in the RSB Principles & Criteria. RSB Services has specifically been working to make sure that all requirements and procedures are straightforward, implementable and auditable. While the decision to modify RSB standards stays with RSB Members and the Steering Board, the involvement of RSB Services helps the RSB Secretariat understand the financial and time constraints of companies that wish to become RSB certified.

RSB Services is currently in a rapid start-up phase, developing product tracking and accounting systems, hiring new staff, and setting up a fresh new website. The organization will make its first formal public appearance at the World Biofuels Market 2012 conference in Rotterdam (RSB is a partner of WBM 2012. RSB Members receive a 20% discount on registration fees. More details in the last section of this bulletin). You can follow their progress online at: [www.rsbervices.org](http://www.rsbervices.org)

## **Meeting of the SSTI Technical Committee in Lausanne**

From 11-13 January, 2012 the Technical Committee of the Sustainability Standards Transparency Initiative (SSTI) came together in Lausanne to continue the discussion on the framework and methodology of the SSTI Tool. The SSTI Tool will support evaluations of the sustainability, performance and comparisons of standards systems as well as support mutual recognition processes between standards systems. This tool will primarily focus on the content (sustainability requirements) of the standards, their assurance process (i.e. how operators get certified against standards), their governance and financial viability, and the accessibility of the scheme.

Experts from GIZ, ISEAL Alliance, the International Trade Centre, RSB, and a number of technical consultants attended the meeting the Technical Committee and further defined the criteria that are most likely to have an influence on the performance of standards systems.

## **Development of RSB Guidelines on Social Impacts**

Over the last months, field evaluations were successfully conducted in Brazil (a group of smallholders growing Jatropha for a large operator), Thailand (a group of independent smallholders growing palm oil) and Indonesia (a large palm oil plantation). The RSB Guidelines on Social Impacts (e.g. Land Rights, Food Security, etc.), which are being further improved by a group of experts, were field tested in these countries. The outcomes of the field visits will be discussed at an expert meeting at the end of February, followed by a final pilot testing in Ethiopia (March). The publication of the guidelines is expected by the middle of the year.

This project is kindly supported and sponsored by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

## **Latest Outreach Activities: Abu Dhabi**

The RSB attended the 2nd Annual EU-GCC Clean Energy Network Conference during the 2012 World Future Energy Summit in Abu Dhabi (January 17-20, 2012). The Clean Energy

Network is a group dedicated to the exchange of ideas and know-how between the EU and GCC (Gulf) countries. The RSB was given the opportunity to make a presentation during the biofuels session. There is a growing interest in biofuels in the region and it was therefore of crucial importance for the RSB to be present.

In addition, the RSB attended the 2nd Assembly of IRENA, the International Renewable Energy Agency, also based in Abu Dhabi. Aspects such as budget and the scope of work for 2012 were discussed. We had the chance to discuss directly with IRENA officials and look forward to potential collaborations with this important organization in the area of biofuel sustainability.

## **Relations to the Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (BLE) in Germany**

The RSB recently decided to withdraw the recognition it obtained through the national process implemented by Germany at a time when the European Commission was in the process of developing its own recognition process. Now that the RSB is recognized at the EU level and in all EU member states, there was no reason to keep the former recognition granted by Germany, as it imposed additional requirements and constraints without any clear benefit.

As an EU-recognized scheme, the RSB will continue to interact with the German authorities, which have developed a system for the monitoring and tracking of certified biofuels entering the German market. This system is called NABISY (<https://nabisy.ble.de/>) and requires all certified operators to be registered. Currently, the RSB and other EU-recognized schemes are in discussion with the Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (BLE) to fully understand the NABISY system. For more information, please contact the RSB Secretariat.

## **Forthcoming events**

The RSB staff will be attending the following conference:

- [6th World Water Forum](#) (12-17 March 2012, Marseille)
- [World Biofuels Market 2012](#) (13-15 March 2012, Rotterdam): RSB is a partner of WBM and encourages you to attend this major event. RSB Members receive a 20% discount on their registration fees.