

The Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels

Ensuring that biofuels deliver on their promise of sustainability



The Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels

We are an international multi-stakeholder initiative developing principles and criteria for sustainable biofuels production that will be:

- **Simple, accessible** and implemented worldwide
- **Generic** to all crops
- **Adaptable** to new information
- **Efficient and cheap** to measure
- **In line with WTO rules**
(use ISEAL code)



How is the RSB organized?

- Founding **Steering Board** composed of international stakeholders from WWF, UNEP, Swiss and Dutch governments, Shell, BP, Toyota, TERI India, Mali Folkecenter, Petrobras, UNICA, and others.
- **New governance structure** and open membership starting in 2009, with ‘chambers’ divided along the following lines: trade unions, small and large farmers, producers, financial institutions, petroleum and transportation industry, food security NGOs, indigenous people’s groups, conservation NGOs, etc. Two members (one North, one South) from each chamber elected to a new Executive Standards Board.
- One **Secretariat** based at EPFL. Part-time staff in South Africa, full-time Americas Coordinator in the US.
- **Working Groups** by subject (GHG, ENV, SOC, etc.) open to any interested participant; they help develop content to present to the Board.

Stakeholder-driven

- Innovative **transparent standard-setting** using **BioenergyWiki.net**, to share background information and comments with other participants.
- 270 participants from international organisations, NGOs, private sector and academic institutions from 38 countries helped draft ‘Version Zero’.
- **Regional stakeholder meetings** held already in Brazil, South Africa, China, India, Mali, and Mozambique. Further outreach in Europe and North and South America planned for early 2009.



Version Zero - RSB Standard

	Direct	Indirect
National Law (especially land, labor, water rights)	✓	
Community Consultation (especially to determine land rights, social & environmental impact, idle land, resolve grievances)	✓	
Social – biofuels should benefit rural communities and workers	✓	
should not contribute to food insecurity	✓	✓
GHG - significantly better over lifecycle than fossil fuel	✓	✓
Environmental – conserve and protect soil, water, air	✓	
conserve and protect high conservation values	✓	✓
Technology – (esp. biotech) should be used responsibly and transparently, contribute to income or sustainability	✓	
Economic Efficiency - economically viable, continuous improvement		

Meta-standard concept



- Many certifications already exist or are under development for biofuel crops (palm, sugar, soy).
- Most standards were created for the food industry, so they focus on on-farm sustainable agriculture, and not climate change or ‘macro’ effects (e.g. land use change and food security).

- To minimize verification burden, aim is to recognize other certifications as covering most elements of the RSB meta-standard, then add on information about GHG emissions and macro effects.

Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels - Draft Scorecard Concept

Overall Energy and Greenhouse Gas Efficiency	Conservation of Natural Resources				Social Concerns		
Total score for product life-cycle (well-to-wheel)	biodiversity	soil health	air quality	water use	Food security	Working conditions	
Considerable reduction of ecol./ social footprint	Low GHG emissions, maximize carbon sequestration (e.g. low-till)	Biodiversity corridors	Restore degraded land	No sig. impact on air quality on farm or at processing facility	No sig. impact on local water quality or quantity	Use of degraded or idle land	Best-practice wages and working conditions
Small or no reduction on ecol./ social footprint	10-90% GHG emissions as compared to fossil fuel	Buffer zones	Erosion protection	Moderate impact on air quality	Moderate impact on local water quality, quality		
No or negative impact on ecol./ social footprint	High N2O emissions from fertilizers, conversion of high carbon-stock land	Deforestation., habitat encroachmt.			Water pollution, significant reduction in water availability		Hazardous or illegal working conditions

'Better' biofuels – the scorecard concept

- **Red line: Minimum social and environmental criteria for sustainable agriculture that all biofuels must meet**
- **Use a scorecard system to incent 'better' biofuels, i.e. those with:**
 - Good GHG reduction potential, including sequestering carbon in soil
 - Rural development potential
 - Less likely to have indirect impacts:
 - ✓ Encourage use of degraded/idle lands (but these need identification)
 - ✓ Use waste materials as feedstocks
 - ✓ Improve yields on existing lands (whilst minimizing environmental impacts)

Timeline

- ‘Version Zero’ published August, 2008
- Global stakeholder feedback gathered through spring of 2008, via regional meetings in Mozambique, Latin America (in partnership with IADB), USA, Europe, East Asia , Mali and now East Africa
- Transition to new governance structures and approve Version One by June 2009
- Encourage/foster crop-specific better practice definitions (e.g. jatropha)
- Develop generic indicators, benchmark against existing standards
- Collaborate with other partners to measure & mitigate indirect effects
- Coordinate pilot testing of draft standards in real supply chains in 2009



Contact



Secretariat:

rsb@epfl.ch

<http://EnergyCenter.epfl.ch/Biofuels>

E25 Supporters

