The Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels
Table Ronde sur les Biocarburants Durables

Ensuring that biofuels deliver on their promise of sustainability

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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?

- One **Steering Board** composed of international stakeholders from WWF, Petrobras, UNEP, Swiss and Dutch governments, UNICA – Brazilian sugarcane ethanol producers' union, National Wildlife Federation, Shell, Toyota, TERI India, Mali Folkecenter, and others.
- One **secretariat** based at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne, EPFL.
- Four **Working Groups (GHG, Environment, Social, and Implementation)** + smaller **Expert Advisory Groups** to make recommendations to the Steering Board. 270 participants from international organisations, NGOs, private sector and academic institutions, from 38 countries.

Stakeholder-driven

- Innovative **transparent standard-setting using www.BioenergyWiki.net**, to share background information and comments with other participants.
- Four **regional meetings** held already in Brazil, South Africa, China and India. New partnership with Inter-American Development Bank plans for 3-4 more over the next six months. Mozambique, Mali, Bali, South America

Version Zero RSB Standard

	Direct	Indirect
National Law (esp. re. land, labor, water rights)	✓	
Community Consultation (esp. 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 (positive balance over lifecycle)	✓	✓
Environmental – conserve and protect soil, water, air	✓	
conserve and protect high conservation values	✓	✓
Technology –appropriate technologies should be applied, others used responsibly and transparently	✓	

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 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.

'Better' biofuels – the scorecard concept

- **Minimum social and environmental criteria for sustainable agriculture**
  - Low-cost verification system, accessible to smallholders
  - Global multi-stakeholder governance
- **Incentivise 'better' biofuels, i.e. those with:**
  - Good GHG reduction potential, including sequestering carbon in soil
  - Rural development potential
- **Reduce pressure to use new lands:**
  - Encourage use of degraded/marginal lands (but these need defining and identification)
  - Use waste materials as feedstocks
  - Improve yields on existing lands (whilst minimizing environmental impacts)

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 ecolog./ 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 /marginal land	Best-practice wages and working conditions
Small or no reduction on ecolog./ 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	food security of project area protected	Seasonal job creation
No or negative impact on ecolog./ social footprint	High N2O emissions from fertilizers, conversion of high carbon-stock land	Deforestation, habitat encroachmt.	soil erosion expected	Air quality impacts	Water pollution, significant reduction in water availability	Food security of project area jeopardised	Hazardous or illegal working conditions

Certification

- Indirect impacts hard to measure or protect against at the present time as our understanding and tools are not yet developed
- The standard will be most effective if supported by strong government legislation, macro-economic policies, national safeguards, international action
- The standard recognises the need to find ways to help small scale farmers to comply
- The Standard is aimed at gradual and balanced improvements over a period of time, hence the need for base line studies, improvement plans
- The standard does not attempt to quantify an amount of biofuel production that is sustainable – it recognises to change consumption patterns

Timeline

- Draft principles and criteria approved by Steering Board mid August – Version Zero
- Global stakeholder feedback gathered through beginning of 2008, via regional meetings in Mozambique, Mali, Latin America (in partnership with IADB), USA, Europe, and West Africa.
- Coordinate pilot testing of draft standards in real supply chains
- 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