

# Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels

An initiative of the EPFL Energy Center



*Founding Steering Board members:*

- Claude Martin (chair)  
*Former Director-General,  
WWF International*
- Lucas Assunção  
*UNCTAD*
- Paloma Berenguer  
*Shell*
- Barbara Bramble  
*National Wildlife Federation*
- Jean-Philippe Denruyter  
*WWF International*
- Alex Farrell  
*University of California at  
Berkeley*
- Christoph Frei  
*World Economic Forum*
- Lukas Gutzwiller  
*Swiss Energy Ministry*
- Rolf Hartl  
*Fed. of Swiss Oil Companies*
- Rebecca Heaton  
*BP*
- Stephan Herbst  
*Toyota Motor Europe*
- Hisashi Ishitani  
*Keio University*
- Melinda Kimble  
*UN Foundation*
- Heiko Liedeker  
*Forest Stewardship Council*
- Teddy Püttgen  
*Energy Center, EPFL*
- Ibrahim Rehman  
*TERI India*
- Henri Rieux  
*Bunge*
- Ildo Sauer  
*Petrobras*
- Roberto Smeraldi  
*Brazilian environmentalist*
- Achim Steiner  
*UN Environment Programme*
- Ibrahim Togola  
*Mali Folkecenter*
- Steven Wonink  
*Dutch Ministry of Housing and  
the Environment*

*Ensuring that biofuels deliver on their promise of sustainability*



With their potential to reduce carbon emissions, help solve global warming, and create economic opportunities for rural areas, biofuels can be an important part of the energy mix of the future. But growing crops for biofuels can have negative impacts, including clearing forests

for cropland, depleting and polluting soil and water resources, and reducing the amount of land available for food production. How can we ensure that these fuels are truly a friend to the environment and society, and not a foe?

The Energy Center at the Swiss Federal Technical Institute in Lausanne (EPFL) is coordinating a multi-stakeholder effort, the **Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels**, to develop draft global standards for sustainable biofuels production and processing. By early 2008, we aim to have draft standards developed in conjunction with non-governmental organizations, companies, governments and inter-governmental groups from all over the world. Our hope is to create a tool that consumers, policy-makers, companies, banks, and other actors can use to ensure that biofuels deliver on their promise of sustainability.

There is important work already going on in sustainable biofuels standards development, and our aim is to build on this work and create standards that are:

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| <b>Simple</b>    | The standards should be accessible by small producers, inexpensive to measure, and easy to explain.  |
| <b>Generic</b>   | The standards should be applicable to any crop in any country, and allow comparisons across crops and production systems.                              |
| <b>Adaptable</b> | The standards should be easy to revise to take into account new technologies and their impacts on relative performance of different biofuels.          |
| <b>Efficient</b> | We aim to incorporate other standards and certifications to eliminate duplicative reporting and reduce inspection burdens on producers and processors. |

All Steering Board members serve as individuals, and do not represent their organizations or sector.

All standards development work will be done in an open and transparent way, with ample comment periods according to the ISEAL code of good practice. The Roundtable will gather opinions and feedback through online technology such as the BioEnergy wiki ([www.bioenergywiki.net](http://www.bioenergywiki.net)), conference calls, and regional meetings, to ensure that developing countries and disadvantaged groups have a meaningful opportunity to contribute to the elaboration of the standards.

The standards will be developed through four Working Groups, which will be open to any interested stakeholder. The Working Groups will focus on the following areas:

GHG - greenhouse gas lifecycle efficiency analysis. This group will recommend methodologies to use to calculate the efficiency of particular production and processing techniques in terms of replacing greenhouse gas emissions as compared to fossil fuels.

ENV - environmental impacts. This group will draft minimum criteria for sustainable biofuels regarding their impact on biodiversity, soil and water resources, air pollution, and other environmental issues.

SOC - social impacts. This group will outline the criteria for labor rights, food security, poverty alleviation, land rights, and other social elements of sustainable biofuels production.

IMP - implementation. This group will review the recommendations of the other working groups to ensure that the standards are easy to implement and measure so that they are accessible by small-scale and other low-income farmers. They will also make recommendations on future steps for the Roundtable, such as the potential value of independent third party certification.

We encourage any interested party to sign up for one or more Working Groups, and to get involved in this process!

For more information, please visit:  
<http://EnergyCenter.epfl.ch/Biofuels>,  
or write to [Sebastien.Haye@epfl.ch](mailto:Sebastien.Haye@epfl.ch).



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