

# UNDERSTANDING OUR FOOTPRINT OUTCOMES OF RSB'S MONITORING & EVALUATION SYSTEM IN 2019



**RSB**  
Roundtable on  
Sustainable Biomaterials  
[www.rsb.org](http://www.rsb.org)

RSB is committed to continuous monitoring, evaluation, and improvement of our standards and certification system. Since 2016, we have compiled our short and medium-term assessments into a public report – helping our stakeholders to engage with our work and understand how it contributes to the sustainable development of the bio-based and circular economy in communities worldwide. This year's report is the fourth of its kind, and continues to build upon a much-improved data collection process which ensures the accuracy of our reporting.

## Executive Summary

*RSB saw strong growth in the volume of certified products (fuels and advanced products) produced in 2019 - from 368,776 metric tons in 2018 to 432,620 metric tons. This is a reflection of the continued maturation of the alternative fuels market and its certification. While certificate numbers stayed the same year on year, several new operators were added to the RSB certification system – mainly from the certification of Advanced Products. The number of certified sites grew from 44 in 2018 to 52 in 2019.*

The volume of fuel produced in 2019 contributed to an emissions saving of **582,202.86 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>eq**. Cumulatively, RSB-certified fuels have contributed to a total saving of 2,196,016 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>eq emissions since 2012! These figures demonstrate that fuels can be produced both sustainably and with a significant positive impact on climate.

With 56% of operators using waste and residues in their supply chains, RSB-certified products are significantly reducing pressure on agricultural land. Focusing only on fuels produced from wastes and residues, RSB-certified fuels **reduced pressure on a total of over 244,679 hectares of agricultural land** (if the same volume of fuel had been produced from a dedicated crop) in 2019. This figure is comparable to almost the same area of total arable land available in Costa Rica!<sup>1</sup>

The RSB Standard for Advanced Products, launched at the end of 2018, was implemented during 2019. Two major new certifications for the RSB Standard for Advanced Products were issued in 2019 and three were underway – with the market showing considerable interest and enthusiasm for the new standard.

Within the RSB Principles & Criteria, we found that 21% of all non-conformities among operators were related to social aspects, and 44.7% to environmental aspects. By requiring that all non-conformities are dealt with within defined timeframes, RSB has a tangible impact on the social and environmental performance of biomass and industrial producers.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2016, the arable land of Costa Rica was 247,500 ha (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.ARBL.HA>)

Looking at our overall impact, it is important to highlight RSB's activities beyond certification. Our Advisory Services are being used worldwide to embed best practice in projects, supply chains and legislation – often at the project design or pilot level. This is particularly meaningful, as we are able to support improved practices in many different sectors and regions in order to assist operators achieve RSB certification in the future.

Overall, 2019 saw a varied year for the RSB system, with an increase in the number of sites, as well as growth in certified volumes. The outlook is broadly positive, with a maturing market in the fuels sector and continued commitment and recognition from the aviation sector in particular. Emerging interest from the non-fuel sectors – who are increasingly seeking solutions for their sustainability commitment – should enable RSB to continue to grow its certification system.

RSB's certification system continues to be recognised by global and national organisations – including governments, NGOs, and companies – as a best-in-class sustainability standard for the bio-based and circular economy.

*Key Indicators: Changes on 2018 Results:*

Indicators	2018	2019
<i>% of operators using waste and residue materials</i>	55.5	55.5
<i>Total amount of products (fuel and advanced products) produced by the certified operators</i>	368,776	432,620
<i>Amount of alternative fuel produced by certified operators (metric tons)</i>	273,224	322,375
<i>Savings on CO2 emissions from fuel (metric tonnes)</i>	477,152	582,202
<i>Workers protected</i>	5680	4841 <sub>2</sub>
<i>Certified cultivated area (hectares)</i>	18,100	16,841

*Key Indicators: Cumulative Totals:*

<i>Number of certificates since 2012</i>	39
<i>Number of countries since 2012</i>	24
<i>Number of feedstocks since 2012</i>	18

<sup>2</sup> Much of this drop can be attributed to the changing profile of the Participating Operators in the RSB system, with an increasing number of operations using waste and residue materials and requiring fewer workers in the production of the feedstock.

## Introduction

*The regular monitoring and evaluation of RSB certification outcomes enables us to continuously work on improving our standards and certification system.*

The RSB Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) System is designed to measure RSB's success in ensuring sustainable practices in bio-based and circular supply chains. RSB monitors its performance by analysing data collected from its certified operators and other stakeholders – through a set of indicators which cover environmental, social, and economic issues, along with the context in which operators work.

Covering the 2019 calendar year and employing continuous data collection methods, this report evaluated actual data on volumes produced, GHG emissions reduced, hectares covered, and workers protected in the scope of certification – as well as data about areas in which non-conformities have been identified. In recording and evaluating non-conformities, RSB is able to identify measurable improvements in operators' sustainability and management practices.

RSB also examines the cumulative totals of several indicators since measurement began. These cumulative totals demonstrate both the broad applicability of the RSB Standard by region and the diversity of feedstock and products.



## About RSB's M&E System

*The RSB Certification System is applicable globally, to all types of bio-based or advanced fuels and products from bio-based feedstocks, as well as end-of-life products and production residues – including fossil waste.*

RSB's M&E System not only collects actual data on volumes produced, hectares covered, and workers protected in the scope of certification, but also data about where non-conformities have been issued during the certification process. This information helps RSB to draw conclusions about the areas of change and the impacts of the RSB certification system. The results of this M&E reporting period feed into the organisational learning process and help RSB to analyse its evolving footprint in greater depth.

The impacts achieved by RSB-certified operators and other stakeholders implementing the RSB Standard are expected to bring social, environmental, and economic improvements with the certification cycle.

Results from the M&E System feed into the continuous improvement of the RSB Standard, including the policies, guidance, and tools of the certification system, as well as RSB's strategies and activities. Committed to transparency, RSB prepares M&E outcome reports annually and circulates these amongst RSB stakeholders for comments and further improvements to the system.

### Methodology

#### Data Collected

The RSB monitors its performance by processing data collected among its certified operators & RSB records through a set of outcome indicators, which cover environmental, social and economic issues.

#### Methods to Collect

The data points required for the RSB M&E System are collected through ongoing certification processes. This data collection method allows the RSB Secretariat to continuously collect actual and third party verified data.

#### Interpretation and Evaluation

The results obtained through the aggregation of data from certified operators and RSB activities are interpreted and evaluated considering the expected outcomes.

## Evaluation Objectives and Scope

### Objectives

This report aims to evaluate the results obtained by the RSB and evaluate them against the **outcome indicators**, as defined in RSB's Monitoring & Evaluation System.

Specific objectives of this report are to:

- Aggregate data from certified operators and RSB records in order to analyse it and draw conclusions.
- Evaluate achieved outcomes of the RSB.
- Feed findings into general strategic discussions at the RSB.
- Comply with the ISEAL Impact Code.

### Scope

This evaluation includes all operators certified by the RSB, as well as all RSB activities during 2019. It was conducted internally by the RSB Secretariat staff, and is based on data collected by independent third party auditors. Production volumes were calculated for the period of 1 January 2019 - 31 December 2019

### Outcome Indicators

The outcome indicators that guide this report are made up of different data points, which guide our data collection and analysis. These indicators cover each of our Principles and help RSB to ensure that every aspect of the Standard is continuously measured and evaluated.

View the outcome indicators [here](#).

### Complying with the ISEAL Alliance Impact Code

The International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling (ISEAL) Alliance lays out an Impact Code which all members of the alliance must comply with. This code specifies the requirements for the development and implementation of a Monitoring and Evaluation system by member Standards. The Impact Code is underpinned by five Credibility Principles, which are the foundation of our Monitoring & Evaluation System:

1. Sustainability
2. Improvement
3. Rigour
4. Transparency
5. Truthfulness

## Uptake of the RSB Standard

### Diversity

RSB is a feedstock-agnostic standard which can certify complete supply chains, as well as novel biomass and bio-based or advanced material technologies, including fossil-based waste and end-of-life materials. As such, RSB's system can include oil and sugar-based biofuels, cellulosic ethanol and chemicals, renewable diesel and alternative fuels for aviation, bio-based and advanced plastics, lubricants, and other chemicals. In 2019, fifteen types of feedstocks were covered by current certificates – an increase from the 13 registered in 2018.

The total number of feedstocks that have been certified by RSB since 2012 is 18. This diversity highlights RSB's applicability for a wide range of feedstocks and means that operators with a variety of feedstocks, processes, and products can demonstrate their sustainability within a single certification system.

Feedstocks that have been certified by RSB since 2012 include:

- Camelina
- Carinata
- Coconut
- Gliricidia
- Hybrid poplar
- *Jatropha curcas*
- Macaúba (*Acrocomia aculeata*)
- Sugar cane
- Solaris (tobacco)
- CO feed gases
- Glycerin
- Starch from industrial wastewater
- Tall oil
- Tallow and other animal fat residues
- Used cooking oil
- Grease trap oil
- Renewable naphtha (both a feedstock and a product)
- Ethylene (both a feedstock and a product)

### Certification Types

In 2019, 56% of all RSB's certifications were to the EU RED Standard, while 44% of certifications were to the Global Standard.



RSB's EU RED certification consists of a set of RSB standards documents recognised by the European Commission for certifying biomass and biofuels as compliant with the requirements of the EU RED (European Renewable Energy Directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources).

The RSB Global Standard includes fuels for the non-EU market, as well as non-fuel products.

### Waste & Residues

Due to the important role of wastes and residues in the circular economy, in 2018 RSB began to monitor the specific volume of these feedstocks amongst our operators. In 2019 we found that 56% of certified operators are using end-of-life products and/or production residues in some stage(s) of their supply chains.

By producing fuels from wastes and residues, certified operators are able to significantly reduce pressure on agricultural land and natural resources. The 284,807 metric tons of RSB certified fuels produced from wastes in 2019 would have required the equivalent of 244,679.55 hectares of agricultural land if the same volume been produced from a dedicated crop (e.g. biodiesel from rapeseed plantations).

RSB has defined a credible approach for using waste and residue material for fuels and products and is supporting participating operators to enter this developing market with clear sustainability and traceability objectives.

### Diversity of Product Types

The diverse feedstocks in the RSB certification system in 2019 were used to produce a variety of products to be used across industry sectors – from aviation to road transport, food and chemicals.

- Epichlorohydrin
- Renewable naphtha
- Ethanol
- Biodiesel
- Sustainable aviation fuel (SAF)
- Ethylene
- Propylene
- Butadiene
- Benzene
- Toluene
- LDPE (low density polyethylene)
- PVC (polyvinyl chloride)
- Steam/heat (utilities for other industry)

### Operator Coverage

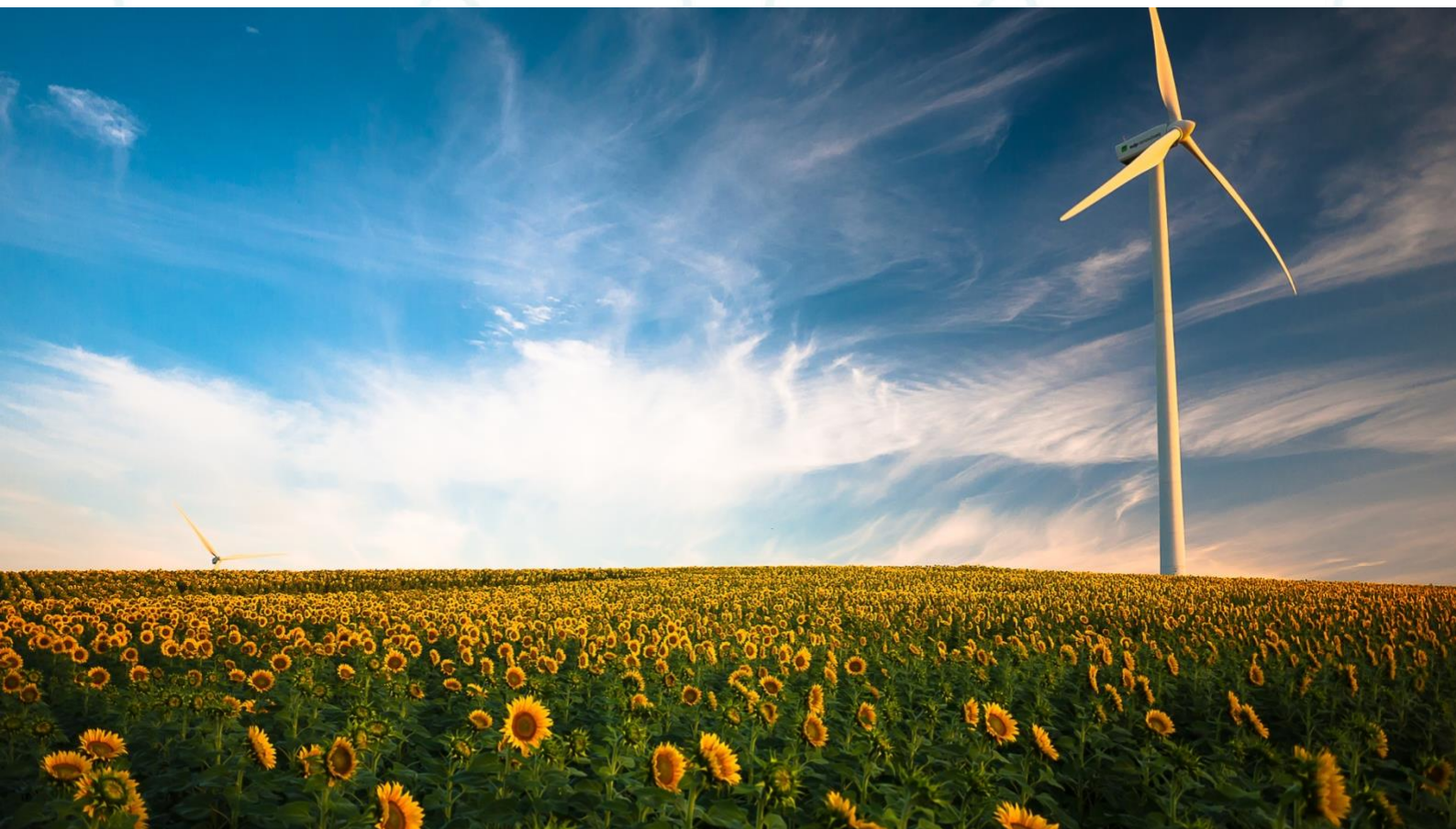
The RSB M&E System measures certified operators, operational sites included in the scope of certification, and countries of operation. RSB saw an increase in the number of industrial sites and trade offices covered by the certification system from new certifications during 2019 – with much of this attributed to uptake of the RSB Advanced Product Standard by industrial operators. The number of farms dropped due to the termination of a large certificate holder in the Philippines.

	Certificates	Industrial Sites & Trade Offices	Farms	Countries
<i>October 2014</i>	17	23	166	14
<i>December 2016</i>	20	49	472	18
<i>December 2017</i>	23	58	464	19
<i>December 2018</i>	18	44	291	20
<i>December 2019</i>	18	52	101	20

### Understanding Uptake of the Standard

While there has been a drop in the number of farms, much of this drop can be attributed to the trend of using wastes and residues instead of dedicated crops.

*Since 2012, RSB has issued 39 certifications in 24 countries for 18 different feedstocks and 16 different products.*



### GHG Emissions

In 2019, RSB-certified operators produced **322,375.40 metric tonnes of alternative fuels**.

All operators comply fully with RSB’s Principle 3 on Greenhouse Gas Emissions, meaning the produced amount of RSB-certified alternative fuels corresponds to **an emissions reduction of 582,202.86 metric tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>eq**.

The greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions avoided through fuel produced by RSB-certified operators in 2019 are equivalent to the emissions of almost 2300 flights between London & Tokyo – up from 1880 in 2018!



Since 2012, RSB-certified operators have produced GHG emissions savings of 2,198,016 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>eq – equivalent to a large container ship making 64 trips around the equator<sup>3</sup>!



<sup>3</sup> Based on a large container ship (average cargo capacity = 68,600 tonnes) with a CO<sub>2</sub> efficiency of 12.5 gCO<sub>2</sub>/tonne-km (Source: 2nd IMO GHG study: <http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Environment/PollutionPrevention/AirPollution/Documents/SecondIMOGHGStudy2009.pdf>)

### Environmental and Social Aspects

**16,841 hectares of cultivated land is protected by RSB certification** – a decrease from 2018's 18,100 hectares.<sup>4</sup>

On this land, responsible and sustainable practices, as per RSB's Principles & Criteria, are implemented:

- Soil erosion reduction and soil conservation practices
- Improvement of soil quality
- Water management
- Protection of conservation values

RSB Certification ensures that **4841 workers are protected by our requirements** for human and labour rights, including:

- Freedom of association
- No slave labour or forced labour
- No child labour
- No discrimination
- Minimum wage
- Safety and health
- Grievance mechanisms for workers

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<sup>4</sup> A note on calculations: in previous years the number has indicated the total area of the farmland within the operation (including non-farmed areas). Since 2018, this calculation is based only upon cultivated lands where the RSB Principles have been implemented.

## Non-Conformities

A non-conformity can be raised during an RSB assessment when the auditors find that an operator is not conforming with an RSB requirement. Once identified, the operator is given time to correct the issue. Depending on the severity of the non-conformity, the operator will be allowed between three and twelve months in which to reach conformity.

The requirement that all non-conformities must be closed by certified operators in the defined timeframes means that RSB has a direct impact on improving the social and environmental performance of these operators and driving the implementation of good practices at farms and industrial facilities.

An analysis of valid certificates in 2019 found the following regarding non-conformities raised during RSB audits against the RSB Principles & Criteria:

- 45% of the non-conformities were related to Environmental requirements (GHG Reduction, Conservation, Soil, Water and Air)
- 21% of the non-conformities were related to Social requirements (Labour and human rights, rural development, food security and land rights.)
- 18% of the non-conformities were related to RSB's requirement for Planning, Monitoring & Continuous Improvement under Principle 2.
- The remaining non-conformities were related to legal, technical and other requirements.

This distribution of the types of non-conformities remains much the same as in 2018 and indicates the key areas where RSB continues to have a tangible impact in ensuring improvement.

## Planning, Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

*RSB is committed to achieving positive impacts across the entire bio-based and circular supply chain. By supporting operators and auditors with tools and guidance to identify risks and non-conformities, RSB is helping to deliver measurable improvements in sustainability.*

RSB's Principle 2 on Planning, Monitoring and Continuous Improvement has been specifically developed to support operators in making ongoing improvements to their operations. Principle 2 requires that: "Sustainable operations are planned, implemented, and continuously improved through an open, transparent, and consultative impact assessment and management process and an economic viability analysis".

RSB observed that 18% of total non-conformities in the RSB system were related to Principle 2.

By supporting operators in continuously measuring and improving their sustainability performance, through our unique sustainability management system that helps operators to achieve and maintain their certifications, RSB is able to ensure a measurably positive impact for our operators – and to reduce risks for brands, investors and the rest of the value chain.

This management system ensures that operators:

- undertake an impact assessment process regarding their social and environmental impacts and risks and ensure sustainability through the development of effective and efficient implementation, mitigation, monitoring and evaluation plans;
- implement good practices for stakeholder engagement and consultation;
- implement and maintain a transparent and easily accessible grievance mechanism for directly affected local communities; and
- make adequate resources available to ensure compliance with the RSB Standard.

## Sustainability at Industrial Sites

In addition to Principle 2, RSB's other [sustainability principles](#) are applied at industrial sites. With the growing uptake of waste-based production (where primary production may not require sustainability certification), this is particularly important as RSB ensures working conditions, health and safety, and air quality – as well as GHG emission reductions – are assured **in the industrial setting**.

Non-conformities at industrial sites in 2019:

- 15% Principle 2 on Planning, Monitoring and Continuous Improvement
- 15% Principle 3 on Greenhouse Gases
- 35% Principle 4 on Human & Labour Rights<sup>5</sup>
- 12% Principle 10 on Air Quality

This indicates that in 2019 RSB's system was able to contribute to improving the implementation of Human and Labour Rights at industrial site level.

By supporting industrial sites in resolving issues related to these RSB Principles and encouraging industry to improve sustainability using the RSB framework, a tangible improvement is assured.



<sup>5</sup> Specifically, the main source of Human & Labour Rights non-conformities are related to training, use of protective equipment and the implementation of health & safety policy.

## Evolution of the RSB Standard

*RSB is committed to maintaining its position as the most innovative standard for operators looking to demonstrate their commitment to credible sustainability.*

Importantly, continuous improvement extends to RSB's own standards, which are evolving to best reflect the needs of operators around the world – in many different contexts and considering new sustainability challenges.

In 2019, the RSB Standard for Advanced Products was implemented by RSB's participating operators, resulting in new certificates and sustainable products being delivered to the market.





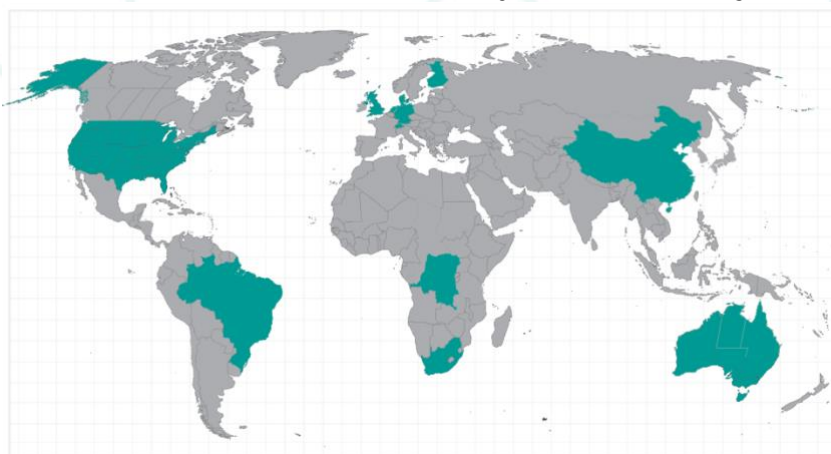
## Beyond Certification: Impact of the Standard

Amplifying the impact of the RSB Standard by assisting partners to prepare for certification and implementing certain aspects of the best practice described in the Standard, RSB has made a tangible impact in multiple areas.

Companies	Governments	Partners
<p>Growing and embedding real sustainability in operations by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assessing sustainability risks in operations and investment decisions;</li> <li>• assessing availability of sustainable feedstock and alternative fuels as a basis for alternative fuel strategies;</li> <li>• providing input on sustainability strategies; and</li> <li>• assisting with preparations for RSB certification.</li> </ul>	<p>Integrating sustainability into legislative approaches.</p>	<p>Developing platforms for stakeholders from across industry, civil society, and government to work together.</p>

Since 2016, through its advisory services, RSB has assisted 31 organisations – representing 7 sectors in 14 countries – to improve their practices on the ground. Some of these projects will lead to RSB certification, while others, like the development of RSB indicators in various regions, remove barriers for other operators.

### ● *Locations of RSB’s Advisory Services Projects*



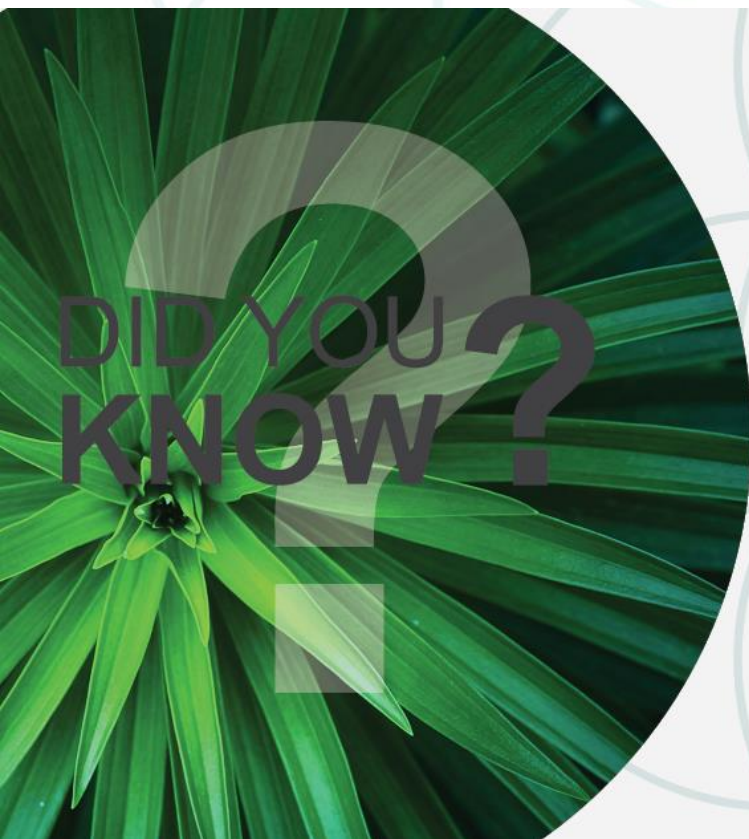
There were 15 projects active in 2019 (concluded along the year or with ongoing activities). From these, three already resulted in new RSB certifications in 2019 and five in improvements to their sustainability strategy, policies and/or practices. The others are in the process of being certified for 2020 and 2021.

### Partnerships:

In 2019, RSB joined two coalitions:

- The Brazilian Coalition on Climate, Forests and Agriculture<sup>6</sup>
- The Business for Nature Coalition<sup>7</sup>

RSB also worked with other standard-setting bodies in 2019 as a member of the Technical Advisory Board of Bonsucro (as a peer certification system), and in partnership with Equitable Origin in a project supported by ISEAL in partnership with the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) for development of tools for FPIC (Free, Prior and Informed Consent).



**The Free, Prior & Informed Consent of indigenous peoples is a key requirement of our sustainability standard**

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.coalizaobr.com.br/home/index.php/en/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.businessfornature.org/>

## Public Commitments and Recognition:

Eight new public commitments and recognition/benchmark studies recommending RSB were registered in 2019. Of these, four are related to specific geographic regions (The Netherlands, Germany, Ethiopia and Indonesia), and one related to Latin America – with the others being related to global scopes.

- **Netherlands regulatory recognition:** In 2019, the Government of the Netherlands recognised RSB's EU RED Standard to certify waste and residues-based biofuel, and to verify that this material has not been modified to achieve the status of waste.
- **H&M procurement policy:** in 2019, H&M included certification in their Procurement Preference. For all bio-based materials made from traditional food crops, the H&M group require that the raw material is independently certified to a credible standard (including RSB)<sup>8</sup>.
- **Latin American financial institution:** The Development Bank of Latin America's Green Bond Framework, in their principles for investment under "Sustainable management of living natural resources and land use", recommend RSB as one of the recognised providers of standards for sustainable agriculture projects<sup>9</sup>.
- **Benchmarks by external organisations:**
  - Germany's oldest eco label, Blauer Engel (Blue Angel), found that the RSB Standard is the only certification system for biomass that fulfils their own approach's rigorous recognition requirements<sup>10</sup>.
  - The German Öko-Institut has benchmarked sustainability standards for cotton supply chains in Ethiopia, in which RSB scored the best<sup>11</sup>.
  - The German Öko-Institut has benchmarked sustainability standards for palm oil supply chains in Indonesia, in which RSB scored the best<sup>12</sup>.
- **Endorsement and Recommendations:**
- The BFA (Bioplastic Feedstock Alliance) recommends RSB as a system that allows credible certification of biomaterials through many stages of the supply chain due to its multi-feedstock approach and its ability to recognise other standards<sup>13</sup>.
- The International Coalition for Sustainable Aviation's (ICSA) vision for a "zero climate impact" international aviation pathway towards 2050 endorses the RSB Standard as the "best-in-class sustainability certification standard for advanced aviation fuels"<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>8</sup><https://about.hm.com/content/dam/hmgroup/groupsite/documents/masterlanguage/CSR/Policies/HM%20Group%20Animal%20Welfare%20and%20Material%20Ethics%20policy%20-%20April%202019.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.caf.com/media/2244127/cafs-green-bond-framework.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/sites/default/files/medien/1410/publikationen/2019-08-19\\_texte\\_87-2019\\_be\\_biomassennutzung\\_uebergreifende-aspekte.pdf](https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/sites/default/files/medien/1410/publikationen/2019-08-19_texte_87-2019_be_biomassennutzung_uebergreifende-aspekte.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.oeko.de/en/publications/p-details/the-cotton-supply-chain-in-ethiopia/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.oeko.de/fileadmin/oekodoc/BioMacht-palm-oil-report.pdf>

<sup>13</sup>[https://bioplasticfeedstockalliance.org/bioplastics/BFA\\_Methodology\\_for\\_Assessment\\_of\\_Bioplastic\\_Feedstocks.pdf](https://bioplasticfeedstockalliance.org/bioplastics/BFA_Methodology_for_Assessment_of_Bioplastic_Feedstocks.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.icao.int/Meetings/A40/Documents/WP/wp\\_561\\_en.pdf](https://www.icao.int/Meetings/A40/Documents/WP/wp_561_en.pdf)

## Conclusions

*Through the continuous monitoring and evaluation of our work, RSB is able to identify areas for improvement and key trends that support us as we shape both our best-in-class Standard and many other activities that are helping to drive a sustainable economy.*

The system's growth into a new market – namely non-fuel products – and the excellent response to the Standard for Advanced Products from leading producers globally highlights the importance of this new frontier for the bio-based and circular economy.

Going forward, RSB will continue to refine and develop its approach – building on our commitment to continuous improvement of both the RSB Standard and certification system – to ensure their ongoing applicability, credibility and practicality for sectors committing to sustainability.

Fuels remain an important focus for RSB – the aviation sector in particular – with several operators producing, or preparing to produce RSB-certified Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) at scale. Ensuring that demand for sustainability in SAF continues, RSB continues to work closely with the ICAO's Alternative Fuels Task Force in developing the CORSIA measures and ensuring that RSB remains fully aligned with these regulations. In 2019, RSB also brought together many global airlines to a meeting on the side of the IATA Alternative Fuels Symposium, where discussion looked at innovative projects, challenges to reaching large-scale supply, and potential partnerships.

Further expanding our impact, 2019 also saw RSB launch a global project to advance the global bioeconomy through the Boeing Global Engagement Portfolio. By providing guidance on the sustainability of alternative fuels, bringing together relevant stakeholders, and integrating the bio-based and circular economy as a critical part of the just energy transition, *Fuelling the Sustainable Bioeconomy* will help to direct investment, policy makers, market development, and further research to support the emergence of a truly sustainable bioeconomy.

In addition to the aviation sector, RSB also continues to engage with the shipping and ground transport sectors in supporting the growth of demand for truly sustainable fuels in these markets – with 2019 having seen RSB work closely with the Sustainable

Shipping Initiative and Maersk to help map out a future for the shipping industry. Energy for heat and power presents an exciting new area, with growth expected thanks to RSB's approach being recognised by Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) in demonstrating compliance with the sustainability requirements for palm residues under Japan's Feed in Tariff (FIT) system.

The market for alternative products is relatively young – but growing steadily – and in 2019 RSB began to work closely with the chemicals and polymers industry as uptake of, and support for, RSB's Standard for Advanced Products was pronounced. Two certifications of the new standard in 2019 were built upon significant investments of time and resources towards understanding the sectors involved, building relationships with key players, and ensuring that RSB's approach is as relevant and powerful as possible for the industry – while retaining the key credibility and sustainability that RSB is known for globally. RSB takes a proactive approach and is working with many different sectors and partners to support the growth of a global bio-based and circular economy. Going forward, RSB will continue to work closely with the chemicals and polymers industry while looking to apply the same expertise and learnings to new areas, like the textiles and fibres space.

The continued importance of waste and residue-based feedstocks will have a particular impact at industrial sites, and ensuring that sustainability - not just traceability - is managed according to best practice is of key importance as issues of water management, air quality, and human and labour rights are a focus for operators as well as end users and consumers.

By providing a practical and credible approach to sustainability, the RSB system supports operators in using the certification process as a mechanism for resolving any social and environmental challenges in their operations – as evidenced through the resolution of non-conformities.

RSB continues to provide truly holistic support to an advancing bio-based and circular economy. A range of services beyond certification ensure that RSB is creating real impact around the world by supporting the continuous improvement of social and environmental practices. With a firm footprint of services delivered on every continent, RSB is able to build best practice on the ground through certification, policy support, advice, sustainable supply chain development, market engagement and communications, partnerships and much more.

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