



Addressing Water Issues through Certification



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20 February 2014 - Paris

Bioenergy & Water Workshop

What is the RSB Standard?

Principles & Criteria

- Describe requirements on **sustainability** (Biodiversity, Food Security, Land Rights, Water, Soil, etc.), chain of custody, risk, claims, etc...

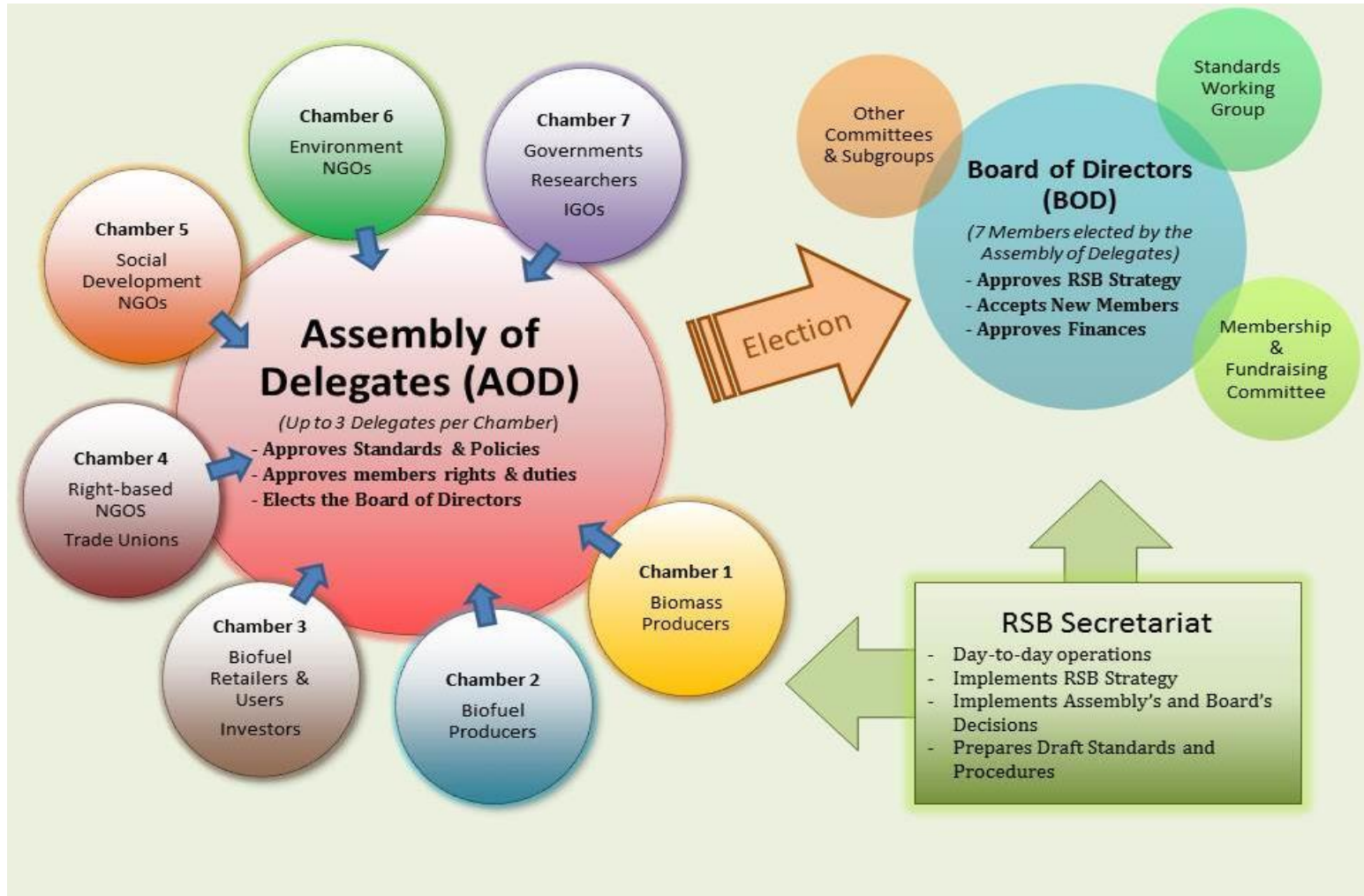
Implementation

- How operators demonstrate compliance: internal records, maps, field survey, impact assessments, etc...
- Group certification regime, sample size, policy for waste, etc...

Assurance

- Accreditation of Certification Bodies
- Qualifications of Auditors
- Training and Exams of Auditors

How is the RSB Standard developed?



What is RSB Certification?

- **RSB Certification** is an **independent and accurate** evaluation of practices and management systems in conformity with the RSB Standard by 3rd party professional auditors.
- **Traceability** of product
- Market access & Regulatory compliance (e.g. EU)
- Unique benefits from RSB Certification
 - Strong **support** from NGOs and CSOs
 - Awareness of community impacts leads to stronger and healthier communities
 - Robustness and flexibility

Which products are eligible?

- RSB Certification applies worldwide and to **all products derived from biomass**, including:
 - Biofuels and bioenergy
 - Bio-chemicals
 - Bio-plastics & Biopackaging
 - Fiber
 - Food additives
 - ...

RSB Principles & Criteria

- ❖ Principle 1: Legality
- ❖ Principle 2: Planning, Monitoring and Continuous Improvement
- ❖ Principle 3: Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- ❖ Principle 4: Human and Labour Rights
- ❖ Principle 5: Rural and Social Development
- ❖ Principle 6: Local Food Security
- ❖ Principle 7: Conservation
- ❖ Principle 8: Soil
- ❖ **Principle 9: Water**
- ❖ Principle 10: Air
- ❖ Principle 11: Use of Technology, Inputs, and Management of Waste
- ❖ Principle 12: Land Rights

Principle 9: Water

- **Principle 9. “Biofuel operations shall maintain or enhance the quality and quantity of surface and ground water resources, and respect prior formal or customary water rights.”**
- **Principle 9 elements**
 - Rights & access to water
 - Water Management Plan
 - Water quantity
 - Water quality
- **Impact Assessment Guidelines**
 - [RSB-GUI-01-009-01](#): RSB Water Assessment Guidelines
 - [RSB-GUI-01-009-02](#): RSB Guidelines on Water Rights and Social Impacts



Criterion 9a: Respect water rights

- **Criterion 9.a Biofuel operations shall respect the existing water rights of local and indigenous communities**
 - “assess the potential impacts of biofuel operations on water availability within the local community and ecosystems during the screening”
 - Implement measures to ensure water rights are protected
 - “legitimate disputes [must] have been settled”
 - “evaluate [...] formal or customary water rights that exist”



Criterion 9b: Water management plan

- **Criterion 9.b Biofuel operations shall include a water management plan which aims to use water efficiently and to maintain or enhance the quality of the water resources that are used for biofuel operations.**
 - Identification of water consumption & understanding of best practices
 - “include the neighboring areas, which receive direct runoff from the operational site”
 - “Any negative impact on these neighboring areas shall be mitigated”

Criterion 9c: Water quantity

- **Criterion 9.c Biofuel operations shall not contribute to the depletion of surface or groundwater resources beyond replenishment capacities**
 - “shall not be withdrawn beyond replenishment capacity of the water table, watercourse, or reservoirs”
 - “shall not be established in long-term freshwater-stressed areas”, unless a. “good practices” or b. “adequate mitigation” are implemented
 - “Shall not withdraw” [...] “to the extent that it modifies its natural course or the physical, chemical and biological equilibrium
 - “Identify critical aquifer recharge areas, replenishment capacities of local water tables, watercourses, and ecosystem needs”
 - “improvement of water efficiency over time”

Replenishment capacity: where to measure?

Borewells

Water ponds

Water courses

Local water committees
& communities

Examples of proofs of compliance

Rainfed agriculture

Drip irrigation

Water reuse

Criterion 9d: Water quality

- **Criterion 9.d Biofuel operations shall contribute to the enhancement or maintaining of the quality of the surface and groundwater resources.**
- “implement the best available practices”
- “precautions shall be taken to contain effluents and avoid runoffs”
- “Buffer zones shall be set between the operation site and surface or ground water resources”
- “determine the optimal water quality level required to sustain the system”
- “degradation [...] that occurred prior to certification [...] shall be reversed”
- “Waste water or runoff [...] shall be treated or

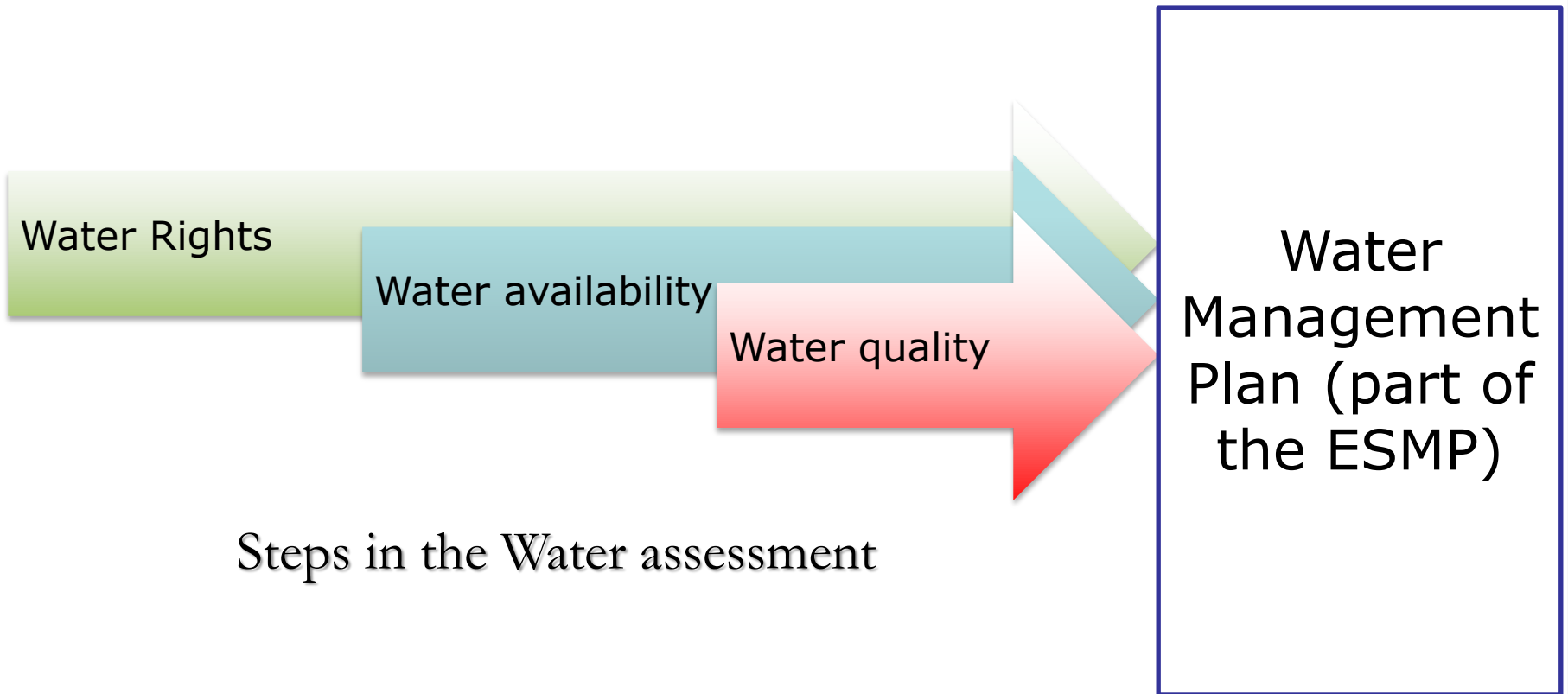
Stepwise Approach (Water Impact Assessment)

1. Conduct a screening exercise
2. Conduct a water impact assessment if triggered by the screening (guidelines available)
3. Develop water management plan as part of ESMP
4. Monitor performance and demonstrate compliance with P9.

Screening Questions (examples):

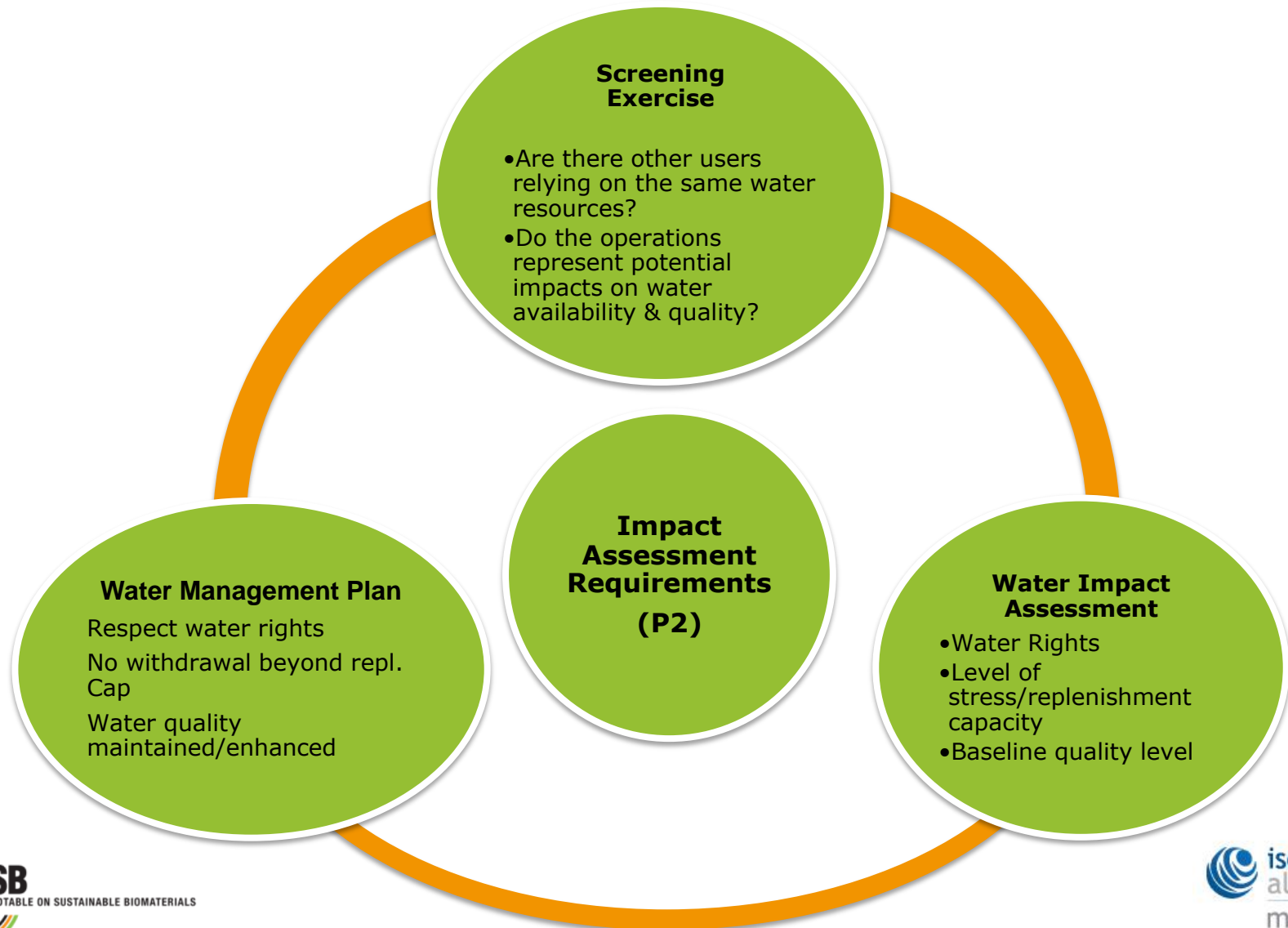
- *Is there any evidence that the existing or proposed agricultural or industrial operations have affected (or will affect) water **availability for downstream water users** with either formal or customary water rights?*
- *Have/Will the agricultural or industrial operations require(ed) the installation of a **dam**?*
- *Are the basic needs of local populations (including drinking, sanitation and cultivation) constrained by **water scarcity**?*
- *Do/Will agricultural activities include the **storage or use of sewage, harmful chemicals or dangerous microorganisms** within 100 meters of a surface water resource?*

Development of the Water Management Plan



Steps in the Water assessment

Principle 9 link to Principle 2 and other P&Cs



Challenges in Implementation

- ❖ Evaluation of water impacts is difficult and costly, in particular cumulative impacts
- ❖ Broad range of crops and geographic contexts make one-fit-all guidance difficult to issue
- ❖ Implementation is easier for larger companies, esp. when impact assessments are required by law, or when supported by certain funding mechanisms (e.g. world bank, IADB, etc.)
- ❖ Screening is seen as an efficient tool to reduce cost
- ❖ Notion of «legitimate dispute» difficult to define
- ❖ Use of official water permits in certain countries as proof of compliance?

Conclusions and outlooks

- Sustainable use of water in bioenergy production is achievable
- Sustainable use of water is to be determined in every context
- Specific support mechanisms are needed for smallholders
(RSB Smallholder Standard in preparation)
- Role of LCA to be discussed: relevant comparator?
- Applicability to other biomass-derived products?



Thank you!

For More Information

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