

Sustainable Bioenergy and the RSB

Barbara Bramble – Chair of the RSB Board of Directors and Senior Advisor, International Wildlife Conservation NWF





Biomass and Bioenergy



Neither good nor bad by category

It all depends – on how and where produced

There are valid concerns – inadequate legislation

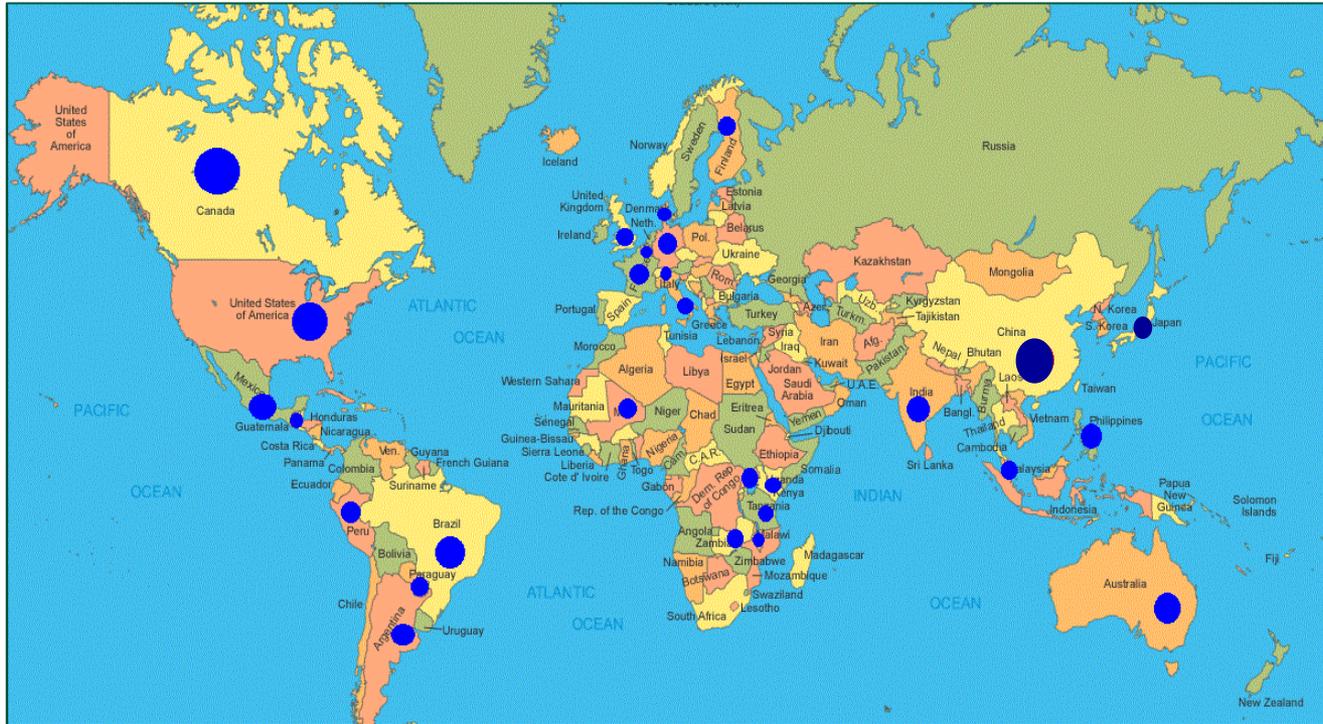
- Land use change and conservation of biological diversity
- Water availability
- Invasive species as new energy crops
- Real carbon benefit
- Social concerns – land and water rights, and others

That's why credible, practical, and affordable certification is crucial

- NWF supports RSB for this

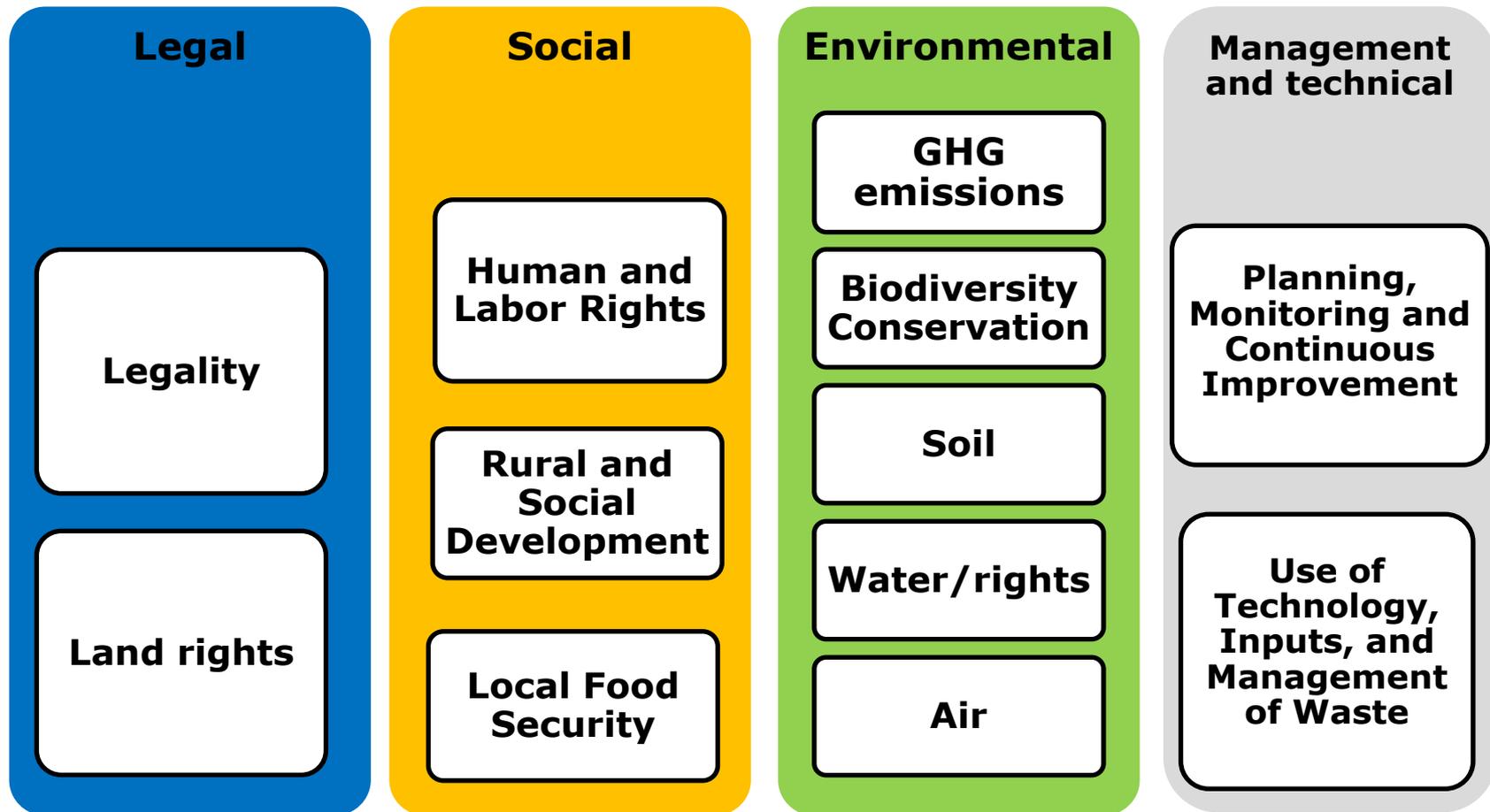
RSB Stakeholders

120+ organizations from 30 countries including 30 NGOs





RSB Principles and Criteria



RSB Approach to ILUC – Low Risk Biomass



Problem: **Indirect impacts** occur when land or raw materials are switched from traditional use as food/feed/fiber to a new use – for bioenergy or biomaterials.

One result may be that the market demands replacement products, which raises the price and induces invasion of additional production areas - the famous “***Indirect Land Use Change.***”

RSB’s Solution: The Low Risk Biomass Approach

- Developed jointly with WWF International and Ecofys
- **Encourages biomass production/processing which decreases the risk of displacement and competition with the food, feed and fiber sectors**
- Designed as a built-in **complementary module** for RSB-certified companies who wish to demonstrate a low risk of creating indirect impacts.



Low ILUC Risk



3 scenarios

1. Yield increase beyond the baseline/no additional land conversion
2. Unused or degraded land/avoid shifting cultivation and natural habitats
3. Wastes and residues/not requiring dedicated production from arable land



Food versus Fuel is a Red Herring – Much Too Simplistic #1



The real controversy is conflict over LAND and its many uses

- Nature conservation, human habitation, etc.

Land may be available

- Low productivity/degraded pastures and cropland can be restored

But humans don't have a good history of using land carefully

- Costs of land restoration often discourage investment
- Native prairies and rangelands are being turned into monocultures





Food versus Fuel is a Red Herring – Much Too Simplistic #II



Food security can be **INCREASED** via biomass and biofuels

- Diversify crops and markets
- Give value to cover crops and residues
- Provide non-food, seasonally staggered sources of income
- Provide energy for value-added products (critical for smallholders and local communities)
- Stabilize grain prices – **IF** mandate for fuels is variable





Residues can be Carefully Harvested – but Potential Impacts Remain



Forestry and agriculture residue harvests should protect wildlife and habitat from

- Harvesting during nesting, cutting stubble too short, chemicals

Soil structure and carbon should be conserved

- How much residue should be left on the land?

Use of cover crops and no till practices could maximize carbon retention

- But most farmers don't use these yet
- Rules for these are uncertain/uneven



Biomass for Energy – More Controversies



Threats

- Habitat loss – Bottomland Hardwoods and Longleaf Pine chipped up/for co-firing with coal
- Whole trees – carbon debt for decades masquerading as ‘carbon neutral’ (during precisely the near-term period where emissions must come down)
- Large scale power plants – may depend on huge “woodsheds” that exceed local residue capacity

Solutions

- Small diameter – thinnings or residues from harvest
- Short time to sequester – 5-7 years
- Additional sequestration – more carbon in the forest, not less
- Good forest management – FSC standard is RSB selection



Final Message – Do More than One Thing at a Time



So many smart projects solve more than one problem

- Waste treatment service – and get fuel
 - MSW/Sewage/Algae-choked lakes
- Restore land to productivity – and gain fuel
- Cover crops and intercropping – several crops from the same land
- Numerous ways to produce food and fuel from the same land and resources
 - Moderate intensification of cattle and sugarcane in Sao Paulo, Brazil

RSB recognizes these projects

Thank you!



Barbara Bramble, Chair of the Board
bramble@nwf.org; +1 202 262 8236

Matt Rudolf, Director of Business Development
matthew.rudolf@rsb.org

<http://www.rsb.org>

