



Successful Market Transformation with Sustainability Certification 5 Years of ISCC Operations

Press Release

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Almost five years of extensive use of biofuel certification have demonstrated the effectiveness of European legislation to bring unrivalled sustainable biofuels to European car drivers. Nowadays biofuels comply with higher ecological and social standards than they did five years ago. These improvements can be directly linked to sustainability certification.

At the “5th ISCC Global Sustainability Conference”, held at the Résidence Palace in Brussels on February 4, 2015 and attended by nearly 200 people, the impact of sustainability certification was discussed in the context of the ongoing indirect land use change (iLUC) debate. According to Prof. Gernot Klepper, Chairman of the ISCC Association and Professor at the Kiel Institute for the World Economy “Sustainability certification is a practical step towards the implementation of the climate objectives. Especially the greenhouse gas quota for transport fuels which has been introduced this year in Germany creates incentives for further improving the GHG performance of biofuels”. Experience demonstrates that “Certification is the proven tool available to verify sustainability at company level and to set individual incentives for sustainable behavior,” continues Gernot Klepper. “After having effectively implemented ecological and social criteria on a global scale in a relatively short period it is now time to step up our actions and to expand this sustainability experience to other markets like food, feed and chemicals,” he stated.

“Since our start in early 2010, ISCC has developed positively. More than 7,700 certificates have been issued for companies in 92 countries,” said Norbert Schmitz, Managing Director of ISCC. 31 certification bodies with more than 600 ISCC qualified auditors conduct the conformity assessments with our standard. A comprehensive training and integrity program is integral part of the ISCC quality policy and basis of the continuous improvement process. “The sustainability certification rules and schemes are a huge success but sadly not enough recognized by the outside world,” Norbert Schmitz told the audience. “The lessons learned can bring us even better performing biofuels and we don’t need to stop here,” he concluded.

The Conference addressed the achievements so far and discussed how the lessons learned could help to solve sensitive issues of biofuel policies. Especially the threat of the so-called indirect land use change (iLUC) that is under intensive discussion in the European Parliament and the Commission was addressed at the conference. The future challenges for sustainable land use beyond biofuels were the final topic of the conference. “Sustainable land use can only be achieved if all agricultural activities meet the standards that certification already demands for biofuels” concludes Gernot Klepper.

Nils Torvalds, MEP and Rapporteur of the iLUC-file, provided an overview about the state of play, followed by presentations from the European Commission and the German Government. Speakers from ADM, BirdLife, Elopak, Genting, German Aerospace Center, International Trade Centre, Sabic and Total completed the agenda.



About ISCC

Five years ago the EU, as the first region in the world, introduced legally binding environmental sustainability standards for biofuels, and since then several voluntary sustainability schemes were developed. A total of 19 schemes are now EU approved, and the EU is still globally a sustainability standard setter.

As a frontrunner and widely used voluntary sustainability certification scheme ISCC – International Sustainability and Carbon Certification – is open to interested stakeholders.

The ISCC Association, established in Berlin in January 2010, has 77 members at the time being. Membership stretches out from Europe, North and South America, Asia to Australia. All parts of the supply chain, from agricultural operations to the final products are represented. In addition, NGOs, associations, and research institutions participate in ISCC. Significant efforts are being undertaken to facilitate global and regional stakeholder dialogue. Inter alia, ISCC runs four regional stakeholder committees in which application and continuous improvement measures are discussed on a regular basis.

The impact assessment carried out by ISCC in the second half of 2014 has shown that sustainability certification contributes to the protection of highly biodiverse and carbon rich areas, supports the implementation of good agricultural practices, reduces chemical hazards, and helps to avoid erosion and to improve soil structure and biodiversity. In several cases, certification has also contributed to better living conditions as well as improved health and safety situations for farm workers. Significant achievements are being seen in GHG emission reductions, both due to improvements in agricultural operations and further processing steps.

ISCC is continuously working on improving its system. Tools are being developed to facilitate the work of the certification bodies in order to make audits more efficient and more effective. At the time being, a system is under development, which enables the identification of land use changes based on algorithms using remote sensing data. The history of land use back to the year 2000 is clearly visible and traceable with this tool. Any changes, e.g. from forest land to agricultural crop land, can be identified.

In addition, ISCC works on several other issues, in particular with respect to the development of ISCC PLUS. ISCC PLUS is the scheme to be used in the food, feed and chemicals market. A Non-GMO-Module has been developed, and a current project is working on the set up and implementation of criteria to improve biodiversity on farm level. For advanced biofuels such as wood based biofuels an RED compliant certification approach has been developed. For the chemical market a guideline for clear claims in the B2B market and to end consumers is being developed. As the assessment of social criteria is often difficult in practical terms, ISCC has also started a project on food security with Welthungerhilfe (a NGO with a focus on combatting hunger) and the Center of Development Research (ZEF). With The Nature Conservancy, projects are being carried out to develop biodiversity maps for South America.

For further information, visit the ISCC website (www.iscc-system.org) or contact ISCC directly via e-mail (press@iscc-system.org).