

The Mass Balance approach is attracting attention as an essential approach for promoting biomass in the supply chain of the chemical industry, which has complex production processes and for achieving carbon neutrality. "ISCC PLUS Certification" developed by ISCC (International Sustainability and Carbon Certification) is one of the leading globally acknowledged certification systems. The ISCC PLUS Certification is a certification system for the sustainability of biobased and recycled materials and is becoming widely applied in the Japanese chemical industry. Chemical Daily asked Andreas Feige, Managing Director of ISCC, about his perception of the current situation.

Q. ISCC is an independent multi-stakeholder initiative and leading certification system. Dear Mr Feige, could you give us an overview of ISCC?

A. ISCC is a global certification system recognized by several authorities such as the German Agency for Agriculture and Food (BLE), the European Commission, the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). The number of ISCC members (200+) and certified system users grow each year with ISCC being used in more than 100 countries with 49 cooperating certification bodies providing certification services. Up to now more than 750 ISCC auditors have been trained. Beside the certification by independent third parties (certification bodies) ISCC closely monitors certification activities and conducts additional audits with its own auditors. These additional audits are integral part of the ISCC Integrity Program and risk and quality management.

ISCC is applicable for food, feed, energy, chemical and industrial applications anywhere in the world, including the bio- and circular economy. Under ISCC PLUS bio, bio-circular, circular material as well as many derivatives & final products can be covered.

Q. Would you tell us about market trends in the circular economy and bioeconomy?

"There is no doubt that certifications related to the circular- and bioeconomy are increasing. When we introduced ISCC to the Japanese market in 2018, the market was mostly related to waste and residues. ITOCHU was the first company in Asia to obtain ISCC certification in 2019, and since then certification increased very rapidly in Japan."

Q. What is the status of ISCC certification issued so far?

A. Despite the pandemic, the number of valid ISCC PLUS certificates has grown from 535 in September 2020 to 2333 certificates in September 2022. In the Japanese market 75 certificates are currently valid, out of them 58 being ISCC PLUS certificates. As Japan is one of the largest chemical nations in the world, it becomes more relevant to ensure a

credible sustainability certification in the market.

Q. ISCC is going to host an event in Tokyo in October. Please tell us about it.

A. 'This session will be the first event officially held by ISCC in Tokyo. The main focus of this event is highlighting market opportunities for Japanese companies when becoming ISCC certified. As Japan is one of the largest chemical nations in the world, ISCC certification can be the solution of choice to prove sustainability for supply chains and credible products. Participants will gain valuable insights into ISCC certification, learn more about the ISCC PLUS approach as well as carbon credit certification.

Q. We have heard that it takes 6 months to 1 year for a Japanese company to obtain ISCC PLUS certification. Can this situation be improved?

One of the key purposes of holding this event is to make ISCC more known and attract further Japanese certification bodies in order to eliminate the waiting period for certification. In case the capacity of the certifying audit organizations could be adapted to the high demand even leadtimes of three months may be achieved. To this end, in addition to the event, we will also set up meetings with certification bodies.