



At a Tipping Point?

How the Debate on Biofuel Standards Sparks Innovative Ideas for the General Future of Standardisation and Certification Schemes

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The expanding use of biomass as an energy source has been accompanied by a growing range of certification and standard-setting schemes in an attempt to ensure the sustainability of biofuel production. The result has added to the confusion in an already crowded certification market, but an opportunity to develop a streamlined global standard-setting system arises from this complexity. In this article, Timo Kaphengst, Mandy Ma and Stephanie Schlegel of Ecologic Institute outline how some of the innovative ideas coming from the biofuel certification and standardisation discussions can be applied to create a global generic standard-setting scheme for natural resources.

The current proliferation of certification schemes creates an opaque environment in which poor performers can "greenwash" their image, making it difficult for consumers to make an informed choice. Additionally, the existing systems are based primarily on certifying practices, without regard to impacts or results, resulting in much wasted time and resources.

The article suggests that a global standard-setting system could emerge from the synergies between the existing certification schemes for biomass and other natural resource products, thereby reducing or even eliminating the need for a multi-scheme system. The authors outline a meta-standard approach and a new generic global standard approach as two methods that could fulfil the generic standard requirements, and discuss the pros and cons of each. Moreover, possibilities for a stronger consideration of key impacts of activities by certification are discussed.

The article can be purchased from [Science Direct](#) for 31,50 EUR.

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