

# THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

*Advisers to the Nation on Science, Engineering, and Medicine*

## Workshop on Certification of Sustainable Products and Services January 19-21, 2009

**Location:** Arnold and Mabel Beckman Center, National Academy of Sciences  
100 Academy Dr.  
Irvine, California  
\*All times are PST\*

### Workshop Objectives:

- Identify strengths and weaknesses of certification as an approach to encouraging sustainable consumption
- Identify problem-driven research topics which might be taken up by academia and the analytical community
- Determine whether or not there is an opportunity for a traditional, National Research Council (NRC) consensus study to articulate guiding principles for scientifically-reliable certification systems
- Highlight what is needed from the various institutional actors to foster improvement in certification systems (i.e. governments and regulatory bodies, businesses, NGOs, research organizations, public-private partnerships, and the academic community)

### Sunday, January 18, 2009

#### ISLAND HOTEL

6:00 pm      Welcome reception for steering committee and invited guests

### Monday, January 19, 2009

#### ISLAND HOTEL

8:00 am      Shuttle to Beckman Center departs from the Island Hotel  
*Breakfast available at the Beckman Center*

#### BECKMAN CENTER

9:00 am      General welcome and introductions [Harold Schmitz and Leslie Carothers]

9:30 am      **Presentation on Certification's growth, opportunities, and limitations**  
Ben Cashore, Yale University

10:00 am      Questions and discussion

10:30 am      **BREAK**

11:00 am      Plenary discussion: **Certification's Place in the Toolbelt**  
[Leslie Carothers]

*The use of product certification and labeling is growing as an alternative or supplement to state regulation or other voluntary approaches to achieve sustainability. Are there certain sectors, or situations, in which certification might be the most desirable approach? How does certification help or hinder complementary approaches to reducing adverse social and environmental impacts? Lead discussants:*

- Peter Vandergeest, York University
- Bob Stephens, Cal/EPA (retired)

12:30 pm **LUNCH**

1:30 pm Plenary discussion: **Surveying the Landscape of Certification Schemes**  
[Pam Matson]  
*The success of some certification schemes is contributing to a proliferation of claims, both in new sectors and as competitors to existing frameworks. How are these standards typically developed and implemented? What share of the market do certified products represent? Are there sectors which have been slow to adopt standards? Lead discussants:*

- Tensie Whelan, Rainforest Alliance
- Ruth Norris, Resources Legacy Fund
- Patrick Mallet, ISEAL Alliance

3:00 pm **BREAK**

3:30 pm Plenary discussion: **What Makes a Standard Credible?**  
[Harold Schmitz]  
*Consumers and industries are increasingly concerned with “green noise” in the marketplace. While these claims are meant to convey additional information related to environmental or social impacts, they can also be misleading, contradictory, or downright false. Lead discussants:*

- Urvashi Rangan, Consumers Union
- Anne Caldas, ANSI [telephone]
- Alison Kinn Bennett, EPA

5:00 pm **ADJOURN FOR DAY**

5:15 pm Shuttle to Island Hotel departs from Beckman Center

*Due to the Presidential Inauguration, day 2 of the workshop will not start until 10am. From 7:30-10, breakfast will be available at the Island Hotel, and a room has been set aside with a television so that interested participants may watch the inauguration, currently scheduled for 8:00am PST.*

Tuesday, January 20, 2009

ISLAND HOTEL

9:45 am      Shuttle to Beckman Center departs from the Island Hotel

BECKMAN CENTER

10:00 am      Plenary discussion: **Drivers, Tipping Points, and Ratchets**

[Kai Lee]

*What has been the experience of suppliers and retailers in addressing the demand for certified sustainable products? What mechanisms exist for a standard to improve, and what drives this improvement? What seems to enable a standard to move beyond a niche market? Lead discussants:*

- o    Dave Long, SC Johnson (retired)
- o    Suzanne Lindsay, PetSmart
- o    Kevin Rabinovitch, MARS

12:00 pm      **LUNCH**

1:15 pm      Plenary discussion: **Obstacles, Impacts, and Unintended Consequences**

[Pam Matson]

*What have been some of the primary challenges associated with certification (either the process, or marketing the product/service)? What is known about the impacts (to the market, to producing communities, to the environment)? Lead discussants:*

- o    Jason Clay, WWF
- o    Jodie Keane, Overseas Development Institute
- o    Papa Gora Ndiaye, Enda Diapol

3:00 pm      **BREAK**

3:30 pm      Plenary discussion: **Supply Chains and Lifecycle Analyses**

[Dick Jackson]

*Certification often refers to production processes, but alternative efforts are emerging which seek to foster improvement throughout the lifecycle of products. Such approaches can be desirable for retailers, and they might also aid in incorporating other social and health concerns, but what has been the experience with addressing supply chain and lifecycle issues?*

*Lead discussants:*

- o    Tim Smith, University of Minnesota
- o    Paul Firth, Green Standard
- o    Jonathan Kaplan, NRDC
- o    Chet Chaffee, Scientific Certification Systems

5:00 pm      **ADJOURN FOR DAY**

5:15 pm      Shuttle to Island Hotel departs from Beckman Center

Wednesday, January 21, 2009

ISLAND HOTEL

8:00 am      Shuttle to Beckman Center departs from the Island Hotel  
*Breakfast available at the Beckman Center*

BECKMAN CENTER

9:00 am      Roundtable discussions: **Enhancing the Effectiveness of Certification as a Tool** [Leslie Carothers and Harold Schmitz]  
*Where might science and technology help enhance desirable outcomes? What social science research is needed, or could lead to further improvement? What sustainability issues on the horizon might lend themselves to certification schemes?*

10:30 am      **BREAK**

11:00 am      Roundtable discussions: **What would a credible Sustainable certification scheme look like?**  
*Participants will discuss how existing standards and schemes might be improved, and how enhanced or new standards could aid a transition to sustainability. Participants will reflect on the earlier discussions at the workshop, and will consider not only standards themselves, but the implementation of these standards, and their impacts on markets, producer communities, consumers, and the environment*

**ADJOURN by 1pm**

1:00 pm      Shuttle to Island Hotel departs from Beckman Center