RTRS
Round Table on Responsible Soy Association

Frequently asked questions about responsible soy

1) About soy 3
a. What is soy, and what is it used for? 3
b. Where and how are soybeans grown? 3
c. Which world regions are the biggest importers of soy? 3

2) About 'responsible soy' and the Round Table on Responsible Soy 5
a. What are the effects of increasing soy production? 5
b. What is 'responsible soy'? 5
c. What is the Round Table on Responsible Soy? 5
d. Who defines what constitutes responsible soy production? 5
e. Can the RTRS mitigate negative side-effects of growing global soy production? 6
f. Will the RTRS solve all sustainability problems in soy production? 7
g. Would it not be better to produce less soy than to produce responsible soy? 7
h. Who are the RTRS's members? 7
i. Who pays for the work of the RTRS? 8
j. What has the RTRS achieved so far? 8

3) About the RTRS standard and RTRS certification 9
a. What are the principles of responsible soy production? 9
b. How was the RTRS Standard for Responsible Soy Production developed? 9
c. Can producers have only parts of their production capacity certified? 10
d. Is the remainder of the supply chain covered by RTRS certification as well? 10
e. How is compliance with the RTRS standard monitored? 10
f. Will certified companies or RTRS members be held to account if they break RTRS rules? 11
g. Does the RTRS have a Grievance Procedure? 11
h. Under the RTRS standard, can producers still clear forests for soy cultivation? 11
i. How are 'high conservation values' established? 12
j. How will RTRS develop HCV maps and check their accuracy? 12

4) About responsible soy in the market 14
a. How can companies buy or support RTRS certified soy? 14
b. Can I access the EU Renewable Energy Directive market with RTRS certified soy? 15

5) Miscellaneous 16
a. The RTRS is said to lack support of important stakeholders. Is that correct? 16
b. Shouldn't the RTRS standard be more strict? 16

c. Why is genetically modified soy not excluded from the RTRS standard? 16
d. Is it true that the RTRS certifies monocultures? 17
e. Why does the RTRS standard not halt all soy expansion? 17
f. Why does the RTRS standard not halt all deforestation? 17
g. Are responsible producers rewarded for their efforts to preserve biodiversity? 18
h. Does the RTRS standard help reduce the use of toxic agrochemicals? 18
i. Will RTRS certification stop all use of banned pesticides? 18
j. Will RTRS certification put a stop to all aerial pesticide spraying? 19
k. Doesn't glyphosate-resistent (GM) soy always cause increased pesticide use? 19
l. Does the RTRS prevent displacement of indigenous people and smallholders by big producers? 20
m. Is RTRS certification only accessible to large soy producers? 20
n. How does the RTRS work to improve labor rights? 20

1) About soy

a. What is soy, and what is it used for?

Soy is a highly popular annual crop that produces edible beans. The plant has many varieties, some of which can grow up to 2 meters high. Soybeans are rich in proteins (40%-50%) and oil (20%). Soy yields lots of protein per hectare and its price-quality ratio compares favorably with other protein sources. Soy oil has a favorable fatty acid composition. Worldwide, soy has therefore become a major source of vegetable protein and oil for both humans and farm animals.
Today, soybean meal is widely used to feed pigs, poultry and cattle, contributing to the production of meat, eggs and dairy products. Soybean oil is also used extensively in many processed food products such as margarines, dressings and mayonnaise. More recently, soybean oil has also been used to produce biofuels for car engines or power plants.

b. Where and how are soybeans grown?

Soybeans are cultivated on both large-scale and small-scale (family) farms. At present, most of the world's soy producers are located in the USA, Brazil, Argentina, China and India. In 2010, soy fields in those five countries together covered an area almost the size of Venezuela, producing ninety percent of soybean worldwide.
With 270,000 square kilometers (km^2) of soy fields within its borders, the USA topped the list. Following in its footsteps were Brazil (230,000 km^2), Argentine (190,000 km^2), China (110,000 km^2) and India (60,000 km^2). Paraguay, Bolivia and Uruguay are important for soy production as well. Soy cultivation has grown rapidly over the last decade, mostly so in Latin America. Over the next two decades, demand for soy will continue to increase when growing numbers of people, many of them in China, will be able to afford food products that are rich in protein.

c. Which world regions are the biggest importers of soy?

China and Europe are the world's biggest importers of soy products. In 2010, China imported 57 million tonnes of soybeans, which represents approximately 58% of global soybean exports.

Europe imported 14 million tonnes of soybeans and 23 million tonnes of soybean meal, which respectively represent 14% of total soybean exports and 39% of total soybean meal exports.

2) About 'responsible soy' and the Round Table on Responsible Soy

a. What are the effects of increasing soy production?

An increase in global soybean production can have positive and negative effects.
On the one hand, for many farmers in various producer nations, especially developing countries, soy sales are increasingly important sources of income, offering them a way out of poverty. On the other hand, the expansion of agricultural land used for soybean cultivation, if done irresponsibly, can hurt people or vital natural environments. For example, expansion can lead to social conflicts (e.g. over land rights, labor rights, rural out-migration) or environmental degradation (e.g. clearing of primary rainforests, water pollution, soil erosion, loss of biodiversity).
If done responsibly, however, soybean cultivation can be expanded without such negative side effects.

b. What is 'responsible soy'?

The term "responsible soy" refers to soy that was produced with considerably less negative social and environmental side effects thanks to criteria that were formulated by the global Round Table on Responsible Soy (RTRS).

c. What is the Round Table on Responsible Soy?

The Round Table on Responsible Soy Association (RTRS) was established in 2006 to enable soy producers, civil society organizations and industry to have a global dialogue on economically viable, socially equitable and environmentally sound soy production. The RTRS has enabled these parties to set up a voluntary certification system for global production and consumption of certified responsible soy. By mid-2011, more than 150 members from countries throughout the world had joined the RTRS.

d. Who defines what constitutes responsible soy production?

In 2010, after years of extensive dialogue between stakeholders from the entire soy supply chain and environmental and social NGOs, members of the Round Table on Responsible Soy approved

the "RTRS Production Standard – Version 1.0".

The RTRS standard was drafted by the RTRS Development Group of Principles and Criteria for Responsible Soy (DG), which comprised representatives from all three RTRS member constituencies: soy producers, industry and civil society organizations. Between October 2007 and March 2009, the development group undertook three public consultations, inviting outside stakeholders to provide input into the RTRS standard. Large and small soy producers from various world regions field-tested the requirements for a year before the standard was finalized.

The standard comprises five principles, translated into criteria with a total of 98 indicators, which together characterize responsible soy production.

e. Can the RTRS mitigate negative side-effects of growing global soy production?

The Round Table on Responsible Soy (RTRS) is not the only way to mitigate negative side-effects of expanding soy production, nor does it replace other ways. But yes, it has the potential to be a significant part of the solution, if only because it enables the market to contribute.

As a multi-stakeholder initiative, the RTRS puts the responsibility for mitigating negative effects of growing demand for vegetable oils and proteins on the right shoulders: those of society as a whole. It rewards producers and users of soy for responsible business practices by building and maintaining a credible and reliable certification system; it enables consumers to make a difference by purchasing certified products; and it sets the stage for a viable and growing market for responsible soy as opposed to non-responsible soy.

When most actors in the soy value chain will have embraced the RTRS, the soy sector as a whole will shift towards production methods that are friendly for people and for the planet.

Among the key success factors:

- RTRS uses a multi-stakeholder approach, which brings transparency, credibility, accountability and wide recognition;
- Responsible soy is not a distant option but a reality: it can be purchased on the market today;
- RTRS's efforts span all world regions and countries;
- RTRS's efforts cover all types of use: feed, food, industrial derivatives and biofuels.

f. Will the RTRS solve all sustainability problems in soy production?

The RTRS does not pretend to solve all problems. The RTRS aims to promote responsible soy production by improving production methods at the farm level and to enable all actors in the soy supply chain to also take responsibility. While the RTRS is not the only instrument to address negative side-effects of growing soy production, it is a major one. Other initiatives, such as the Amazon Moratorium and national and international government policies, can and should continue to play their own and complimentary roles.

g. Would it not be better to produce less soy than to produce responsible soy?

Using less soy may at first seem like the easiest solution, but the growing demand for vegetable proteins and oils then would have to be met by the expansion of other crops, all of which have their own sustainability issues.

With more people in developing countries reaching higher income levels, there is little doubt that global demand for plant resources will grow. The best we can do to prevent injury to people or planet is set criteria for responsible agricultural expansion, and to convince as many soy producers as possible to adhere to these criteria. That is what the Round Table on Responsible Soy is all about.

h. Who are the RTRS's members?

'Participating Members' of the Round Table on Responsible Soy Association come from three main constituencies:

1. *Producers (smallholders and large organizations)*
2. *Industry, Trade and Finance* (including supply chain actors such as crushers, traders, food and feed manufacturers and financial institutions)
3. *Civil society organizations* (including social and environmental NGOs).

By mid-2011, the RTRS had more than 150 members representing these three constituencies. Producer members include Grupo Maggi and SLC (Brazil), Grupo Grobo (Argentina) and farmers from India and China; Industry, Trade and Finance members include Bunge, Cargill, Louis Dreyfus, IFC, Carrefour, Waitrose, ASDA, Ahold, Unilever, Shell, Wilmar International, and others; Civil

Society members include WWF, Solidaridad and The Nature Conservancy. The RTRS website (www.responsiblesoy.org) carries a full and up-to-date membership list.

i. Who pays for the work of the RTRS?

The RTRS receives funds from all of its members (through annual membership fees) and from the trade in RTRS-certified responsible soy (through a small fee for every certified ton that is traded). The association gets additional funding from some national governments. Specific events are sometimes sponsored by private organizations such as trade associations or corporations.

j. What has the RTRS achieved so far?

The RTRS has built a framework that enables the world to verifiably produce and source certified responsible soy. The framework includes:
- *The RTRS Production Standard:* principles, criteria and practical requirements, which ban the conversion of areas with high conservation value to agricultural land, promote the best management practices, ensure fair working conditions, and respect land tenure claims.
- *Certification Standards*, to make sure that third-party auditors will certify soy producers who adhere to the RTRS standard, in a transparent and standardized way.
- *Chain-of-Custody Standards,* to make sure that claims about products containing responsible soy in the market place can be verified.
- A *Certificate Trading Platform,* to enable any soy grower to participate even if they do not have access to fully separated responsible soy supply chains.
- A *Code of Conduct* that all members of the RTRS have to subscribe to.
- A *Grievance Procedure* to enable impartial, fair and transparent review of alleged breaches of the RTRS Production Standard or Code of Conduct by RTRS members.

Following the building of this framework, the first stages of its real-world implementation have recently been achieved.
- Independent, third-party auditors issued the world's first certificate for responsibly produced soy in May 2011.
- In June 2011, the first 85,000 tonnes (metric tons) of responsible soy were purchased by industrial users.

3) About the RTRS standard and RTRS certification

a. What are the principles of responsible soy production?

The RTRS Production Standard – Version 1.0 document defines five principles of responsible soy production. The document includes criteria and requirements at more practical levels.

1. Legal compliance & good business practice.
2. Responsible labor conditions.
3. Responsible community relations.
4. Environmental responsibility.
5. Good agriculture practices.

The full RTRS Production Standard is available on the RTRS website (www.responsiblesoy.org).

b. How was the RTRS Standard for Responsible Soy Production developed?

The RTRS Standard for Responsible Soy Production was drafted by the RTRS Development Group of Principles and Criteria for Responsible Soy (DG), which comprises representatives from all three RTRS member constituencies: soy producers, industry and civil society organizations. Between October 2007 and March 2009, the development group held three transparent and open stakeholder consultations during which all stakeholders were invited to provide input.

In each step of the development of the RTRS standard, the DG took the ISEAL Codes of Good Practice for developing and assessing multi-stakeholder standards (www.isealalliance.org) into account. The ISEAL Codes provide guidelines for open and transparent standard-setting procedures. The two-year multi-stakeholder process led to the 'RTRS Principles and Criteria for Responsible Soy Production: Field Testing Version' being published in May 2009. The same version was used by National Technical Groups (NTGs) in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia, India and China to initiate national interpretation procedures. Also, producers and auditors field-tried this version in various countries.

An International Technical Group (ITG) was convened in March 2010 to review comments coming out of NTGs, public consultations and feedback from field trials and diagnostic audits. Guidance was included from the RTRS Executive Board on the issue of land clearance. At their final meeting,

in Brazil in March, 2010, the multi-stakeholder group reached a final set of auditable Principles and Criteria that could be used as a foundation to a certification framework.
This document, after being approved at the 2010 RTRS General Assembly, became the RTRS Standard for Responsible Soy Production – Version 1.0. It is often referred to simply as 'the RTRS standard'.

c. Can producers have only parts of their production capacity certified?

Initially, RTRS member producers can designate limited production areas for RTRS certification. For example, not all farms owned by an RTRS producer company have to be certified at the same time. However, the RTRS Code of Conduct does require its members to have a plan for improvement at all of its locations and to demonstrate tangible progress based on this plan each and every year.

d. Is the remainder of the supply chain covered by RTRS certification as well?

Yes, the RTRS standard also contains provisions for companies further down the responsible soy supply chain. All links in the 'chain of custody' of responsible soy, including companies that trade, ship and/or store responsible soy products or their derivatives, need to be certified before they can claim to sell responsible soy. Chain of custody certification provides assurance to end-buyers that their purchases indeed attribute to soy being produced responsibly. Of course, one company's certification only applies to those parts of the RTRS standard that are relevant for that particular company.

e. How is compliance with the RTRS standard monitored?

The RTRS itself does not audit companies against their compliance with the RTRS standard. Instead, the RTRS recognizes independent, third-party auditors or 'Certification Bodies' that go out to carry out on-the-ground audits. These Certification Bodies also need to be accredited by national or international Accreditation Bodies to safeguard their quality. A list of accredited Certification Bodies can be found on the RTRS website (www.responsiblesoy.org).
Once a company or site has passed the initial audit, it receives a certificate valid for five years. Its compliance is also monitored annually by follow-up audits carried out by their Certification Bodies.

f. Will certified companies or RTRS members be held to account if they break RTRS rules?

Yes, they will. RTRS members subscribe to a Code of Conduct. If they are found to have acted in breach of the Code, they risk disciplinary measures including termination of their membership. Certified companies that no longer comply with the RTRS standard risk the loss of their certification status.

g. Does the RTRS have a Grievance Procedure?

Yes, it does. The RTRS Grievance Procedure fulfils the need to address complaints against members in a manner that reflects the nature, mission and goals of the RTRS. The responsibility for responding to grievances lies with the three vice presidents of the RTRS Executive Board, each of whom come from a different membership constituency. The full grievance procedure can be found on the RTRS website (www.responsiblesoy.org).

h. Under the RTRS standard, can producers still clear forests for soy cultivation?

The RTRS standard forbids the clearing of native forests or other areas with High Conservation Values (HCV) for the cultivation of soy. Non-native habitats, such as forests that have rebounded after previous disturbances, can only be cleared if 'HCV maps' show that they do not harbor High Conservation Values.

In 2012, RTRS will publish HCV maps showing the regions in Brazil that cannot be converted for soy production. In 2013, the maps for Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay will be published. Until then, members can use other official maps or maps prepared for the Convention on Biodiversity to check for the presence of High Conservation Values. For areas that are not part of current HCV maps, producers need to carry out High Conservation Value Area (HCVA) assessments before any forest can be cleared.

The (voluntary) RTRS standard has, for the first time, introduced rules that require soy farmers to make detailed environmental assessments before they can expand. The standard will help preserve the Amazon tropical forest and other native forests or HCV areas from being cleared for soy cultivation.

i. How are 'high conservation values' established?

Almost all natural habitats have at least some conservation values, such as the presence of rare or endemic species, sacred sites or resources that are used by local populations. High Conservation Value (HCV) areas are forests, grasslands, watersheds or landscape-level ecosystems where these values are considered to be of outstanding significance or critical importance.
There are six potential High Conservation Values (HCVs), some social, some ecological, which together cover conservation priorities that many stakeholders share.

The HCV assessment process can be carried out by assessors recognized by the HCV network and typically includes the following three stages:
- *Identify High Conservation Values that are present* by using data that is already present and/or, when necessary, by collecting additional data.
- *Identify the HCV area and its proper management*: the HCV area is the area that must be appropriately managed in order to maintain or enhance the HCVs that were identified.
- *Establish an appropriate monitoring regime* to ensure that the management practices are effective in their aim of maintaining or enhancing the HCVs.
Learn more about HCVs at http://www.hcvnetwork.org/about-hcvf.

j. How will RTRS develop HCV maps and check their accuracy?

RTRS is developing general, global guidance for creating national, macro-scale maps that indicate four categories of land. Among those are areas where no soy expansion may occur and areas where High Conservation Values (HCV) assessments are still needed to assess whether soy expansion can take place. Using input from the HCV Resource Network, RTRS will also develop global guidance for on-farm HCV assessments.
The work will be led by an RTRS technical advisory group with help from process facilitators and technical assessors. Outcomes will be reviewed, amended and (ultimately) endorsed by a multi-stakeholder working group with representatives from all three RTRS member constituencies. At the national level, the global guidance will be interpreted for local circumstances. On macro-scale national maps, various types of land will be marked: a) areas available for expansion, b) areas

where no expansion may occur, and c) areas for which an HCV assessment first needs to be done. Also, specific country- or region-specific guidance on carrying out HCV assessments and biodiversity-friendly practices will be developed. Such work will be overseen by national multi-stakeholder groups and will be implemented by national technical groups and/or specialist mapping organizations.

National projects will commence in Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay, respectively.

4) About responsible soy in the market

a. How can companies buy or support RTRS certified soy?

Soy products reach consumers in many different ways. In order to enable all companies that use soy products to quickly begin buying and/or supporting responsible soy, the RTRS has developed three supply chain models through which they can participate:

1) SEGREGATED. In the Segregated supply chain model, soy from one or more RTRS certified farms is physically kept apart ('segregated') from other soy sources throughout the entire supply chain. All links in the supply chain need to be monitored by independent certification bodies to ensure that no mixing takes place.
   Within the segregated stream of RTRS certified soy, genetically modified (GM) soy and non-GM soy are kept apart as well.
2) MASS BALANCE. In the Mass Balance supply chain model, soy from RTRS certified farms can be mixed with non-certified soy, as long as such mixing is administratively monitored. After mixing, equivalent percentages of certified soy and non-certified soy can be sold to the market.
3) CREDIT TRADING. To enable any soy grower or buyer to support responsible soy, even those who do not have access to segregated or mass balance supply chains, a trading platform for 'responsible soy production credits' has been set up. Companies that buy soy on the regular market can now also purchase 'responsible soy production credits' directly from soybean growers, with one credit equaling the responsible production of one metric ton of soybeans. After having bought credits, a company can publicly claim to have supported the responsible production of equivalent volumes of soy products. The RTRS credit trading platform is called ´Certificate Trading Platform' and resembles well established 'green energy' and 'sustainable palm oil' credit trading systems.

No matter which model is applied further down the supply chain, the 'on farm' certification requirements for soy producers are exactly the same, so all RTRS certified soy farms are required to adhere to the same RTRS Standard for Responsible Soy Production.

b. Can I access the EU Renewable Energy Directive market with RTRS certified soy?

Yes, the European Commission has accepted the RTRS EU RED Scheme, which was specifically developed for soy biofuels. The scheme encompasses the RTRS standard, additional EU RED criteria and the EU RED Mass Balance standard. Producers can choose to certify their oil according to the RTRS EU RED Scheme.

5) Miscellaneous

a. The RTRS is said to lack support of important stakeholders. Is that correct?

Not all relevant stakeholders have become RTRS members yet, but the number of stakeholders supporting the RTRS is continuously growing. At present, more than 150 stakeholders from countries throughout the world have become members. They include small-, medium- and large-scale producers from South America and Asia, retail companies, feed and biofuel producers, leading traders, global and local NGOs from South America and India.

b. Shouldn't the RTRS standard be more strict?

The essence of the Round Table on Responsible Soy is bringing the various constituencies together and help them establish a meaningful compromise. By definition, the final RTRS standard is a compromise between the legitimate interests and concerns of all stakeholders who participate. The RTRS standard subsequently derives its strength from the fact that it is widely embraced by all the constituencies, enabling it to transform a global, mainstream commodity sector.
Some NGOs have criticized elements of the standard such as the inclusion of genetically modified soy or allowing some types of expansion to continue. On the flip side of the coin, some producers have felt that the standard is too demanding on farmers. For the RTRS, the challenge is to find the middle ground.
The current standard has done so by, for example, not allowing producers to clear native forest for soy while allowing them to responsibly expand within other biomes. Also, while the standard does not exclude GM soy, it does enable some soy producers and purchasers to build fully separate non-GM, RTRS certified supply chains.

c. Why is genetically modified soy not excluded from the RTRS standard?

Potential sustainability issues are very similar for GM soy and non-GM soy: use of dangerous pesticides (i.e. those forbidden by the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Rotterdam Convention), clearing of primary forests or other high conservation value areas for soy cultivation, poor labor conditions, or irregularities surrounding land tenure.

These days, around 75 percent of global soybean fields are planted with genetically modified varieties. If RTRS were to exclude those 75 percent from its certification schemes, clearly the RTRS would not be able to address the crucial environmental and social issues with the majority of producers that cultivate GM soy. Ultimately, the RTRS aims to shift the entire soy sector towards more responsible practices. To achieve its goals, the RTRS will need to work with all producers.

d. Is it true that the RTRS certifies monocultures?

No, that is not correct. The RTRS standard (Principle 5) requires producers to have a plan for Integrated Crop Management (ICM). Compliance with all the criteria of Principle 5 makes it virtually impossible to practice monoculture farming.

e. Why does the RTRS standard not halt all soy expansion?

In the coming decades, the planet's population is projected to grow. Also, growing numbers of people, in China and elsewhere, will be able to afford more protein-rich food products. Increasingly, green resources are also being used for the production of things like fuels and plastics. Hence, demand for agricultural production will probably continue to grow.
In the end, the problem lies not in expansion of agricultural production itself but in expansion of agricultural land into areas of high natural value. Not allowing soy production to expand would merely shift agricultural expansion to other crops, all of which have their own potential sustainability issues.
The RTRS was set up to encourage responsible soy production and to help ensure that future expansion of the sector will not harm valuable biodiversity, for example by using existing agricultural lands more efficiently than before. Ideally, all other crops would follow suit.

f. Why does the RTRS standard not halt all deforestation?

The RTRS standard forbids the clearing of any area with High Conservation Values (HCV) as well as native forests for the cultivation of soybean. Non-native forests can not be cleared unless it has been established that they do not harbor High Conservation Values.

The RTRS standard uses May 2009 as the cut-off point, meaning that for certification no clearing may have occurred after that date.

g. Are responsible producers rewarded for their efforts to preserve biodiversity?

The RTRS believes soybean cultivation can be expanded responsibly, for example by using existing agricultural lands more efficiently than before. Farmers may need to make investments to do so, but higher prices for RTRS certified soy, thanks to growing demand for responsible soy, would open up avenues to recovering these costs. As such, RTRS certified soy can work as a mechanism through which global society can remunerate farmers, landowners and countries who make efforts to preserve the world's most biodiversity-rich areas.

h. Does the RTRS standard help reduce the use of toxic agrochemicals?

Yes, the RTRS standard helps to work towards using fewer, and less toxic, agrochemicals and reducing their negative environmental and health impacts. Criteria in the standard include measures that producers must take towards reducing the use of chemicals, towards using low-toxicity products, towards responsible disposal of containers and chemical residues, and towards systematically implementing well established Integrated Crop Management (ICM) techniques. Examples of criteria in the RTRS standard include: has the producer banned the use of agrochemicals listed in the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Rotterdam Convention for Prior-Informed Consent? Do workers have a good understanding of the health risks of the agrochemicals they handle? Do they use adequate protective equipment? Does the producer have a plan, with clear targets, to reduce the use of pesticides over time? Are all chemicals safely stored? Is all use properly documented?

i. Will RTRS certification stop all use of banned pesticides?

The RTRS standard excludes the use of all agrochemicals listed in the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Rotterdam Convention.
In addition, in 2014 the RTRS will review other hazardous agrochemicals, in particular Paraquat (a Class II pesticide) and Carbofuran (a Class Ib pesticide). Deliberations can be complex, however,

because the RTRS is a global endeavor and pesticides are regulated nationally. Local situations vary and countries may have their own, legitimate reasons for wanting to ban or allow specific chemicals.

Within the RTRS framework, national interpretations of the RTRS standard can be used to add or amend criteria at the country level.

j. Will RTRS certification put a stop to all aerial pesticide spraying?

The RTRS standard allows for aerial spraying only if negative impacts on health or the environment are sufficiently addressed. For example, the standard requires producers to give advance notice of aerial sprayings to anyone living or working within 500 meters of the area that will be sprayed. Pesticides in WHO Class 1a, 1b and II cannot be applied by aerial spraying closer than 500 meters to populated areas or water bodies; no aerial spraying at all is allowed closer than 30 meters to populated areas or water bodies.

k. Doesn't glyphosate resistant (GM) soy always cause increased pesticide use?

Many studies have been set up to assess the overall effect of the introduction of glyphosate resistant soy varieties on the use of pesticides. Some concluded that desiccants (such as glyphosate) have replaced more harmful herbicides that were in use before, others found that the emergence of glyphosate resistant weeds led to higher pesticide use. The RTRS doesn't have definitive answers to such questions either.

Environmental impact depends on whether a farmer operates responsibly with regard to the natural surroundings, not just on whether he or she grows GM or non-GM soy. In practice, producers vary wildly in their use of pesticides and/or the types of pesticides they apply. Responsible farmers know that they should properly rotate crops and herbicides to prevent the appearance of pesticide-resistant weeds.

The RTRS standard serves to encourage responsible farm practices overall.

l. Does the RTRS prevent displacement of indigenous people and smallholders by big producers?

Yes. The RTRS standard ensures that certified soy producers fully recognize the rights of indigenous people and smallholders.
In regions characterized by traditional land use, conflicts over land use have to be avoided or resolved. In cases of disputed land rights, comprehensive and participatory community right assessments must be carried out. The RTRS standard requires documented evidence that affected communities have given free, prior and informed consent and have received proper compensation. There must be evidence of fair and transparent communication between producers and communities. Production in indigenous territories, or on lands of which ownership cannot be proven, cannot be certified.

m. Is RTRS certification only accessible to large soy producers?

No, RTRS certification is meant for small as well as for large farmers. In fact, the RTRS standard contains special provisions for small farmers, and after field-testing by smallholders the standard was fine-tuned to further improve smallholder access to certification.
For example, smallholder cooperatives can apply for group certification, which reduces certification costs per farmer without reducing the quality of certification. The standard also includes smallholder-tailored requirements on workers' rights to reflect situations typically found at family farms.
Together with Solidaridad, the RTRS has established the Soy Producer Support Initiative (SOYPSI). It helps owners of small- and medium-sized farms to improve production and prepare for RTRS certification. In 2011, more than 20,000 smallholders in India, Brazil and Bolivia participated in SOYPSI projects; thousands of smallholders in India, Brazil, Bolivia and China are projected to get certified in 2011 and the years after.

n. How does the RTRS work to improve labor rights?

Through certifications based on the RTRS standard, the RTRS works to improve labor conditions in soy production. The standard contains criteria related to, among other things, workers' freedom of

association, fair salaries, and adequate handling of health or safety issues. The standard is grounded in International Labour Organization Conventions.