

Report to the G8 Summit in Heiligendamm on GBEP's programme of work

This brief report provides an overview of the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP) and its current activities. GBEP was established to reflect the commitments taken in the 2005 G8 Gleneagles Plan of Action.

Background

In the Gleneagles Plan of Action (July 2005), the heads of State and Government of the G8, in agreement with the +5 Countries (China, Brazil, India, Mexico and South Africa), decided to “launch a Global Bioenergy Partnership to support wider, cost effective biomass and biofuels deployment, particularly in developing countries where biomass use is prevalent”. Following a consultation process among the G8 +5 countries, international agencies, NGOs and private sector associations, the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP) was formally launched during the Ministerial Segment of 14th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD14) in New York on 11 May 2006. Italy was appointed Chair of the Partnership for the first biennium, supported by Mexico as Co-chair and by the GBEP Secretariat, established in September 2006 and hosted at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome.

Currently, the following countries and organizations are Partners of the Global Bioenergy Partnership: all G8 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, United States of America), China, Mexico, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Energy Agency (IEA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), United Nations Foundation, World Council of Renewable Energy (WCRE) and European Biomass Industry Association (EUBIA). Brazil, Tanzania and the World Bank are participating as observers.

GBEP Objectives and Functions

The Global Bioenergy Partnership establishes a framework for voluntary cooperation to ensure better coordination of on-going activities on the issue of bioenergy, and to promote the efficient use of financial and technical resources involved. GBEP also provides a forum for implementing effective policy frameworks, identifying ways and means to support investments, and removing barriers to collaborative project development and implementation.

The main functions of the Global Bioenergy Partnership are to:

- Promote global high-level policy dialogue on bioenergy and facilitate international cooperation;
- Support national and regional bioenergy policy-making and market development;
- Favour efficient and sustainable uses of biomass and develop project activities in the bioenergy field;
- Foster exchange of information, skills and technologies through bilateral and multilateral collaboration;
- Facilitate bioenergy integration into energy markets by tackling barriers in the supply chain.

The Partnership works in synergy with other international initiatives to avoid duplication and enhance impact.

GBEP Programme of Work

In line with the Partnership's Terms of References and the state of the international debate on bioenergy, Partners selected three priority areas for the immediate programme of work:

- 1) provide an overview of current bioenergy policies, data and best practices in G8 +5 countries;
- 2) discuss the contribution to the reduction of GHG emissions through bioenergy, in particular through joint work on methodologies for measurement of GHG emission reductions;
- 3) raise awareness and facilitate information exchange on bioenergy.

GBEP's programme of work is a joint effort in which each Partner participates actively, bringing on board the relevant experts and institutions.

1) Overview of Bioenergy Policies, Data and Best Practices

FAO, in the context of its work on bioenergy, accepted to lead GBEP Partners in the preparation of a "Report on Bioenergy Policies, Data and Best Practices", in order to improve the understanding of the state of bioenergy development in G8+5 countries, and to provide the foundation to discuss further GBEP focus activities.

The Report will present an overview of key policies, data and best practices related to bioenergy development in G8+5 countries, and cover the entire bioenergy chain (production, conversion and use). With respect to *policies*, FAO, supported by UN Foundation and Italy, has circulated a detailed request for information provision to Partners. In the context of this overview the term "policies" is used broadly to include legislation, policies, strategies and regulatory and incentive frameworks. The overview will consider not only energy sector policies, but also policies in related sectors, in particular agriculture/forestry/land use, environment, trade and industry, waste management, poverty reduction/rural development/employment, education and information and research and development. In addition to the national policy environment, the report will also present the relevant regional and international policy context that affects bioenergy development in G8+5 countries, directly or indirectly, through binding or voluntary commitments. The report will also consider policies related to the sustainable production, conversion and use of bioenergy. On *data*, FAO, in close collaboration with IEA, is developing a standard format to collect data on the production of the bioenergy feedstock, its conversion to an energy source, and its final use in a comparable manner from all countries. Regarding *best practices*, the report will provide an overview of techniques, farming systems, processing technologies, conversion routes, or end use practices that are considered best practices in GBEP member countries.

The report is expected to be finalized in September 2007, and will be presented in a meeting providing an opportunity to foster open dialogue with private sector and civil society representatives on the critical issues for bioenergy.

2. Contributing to the reduction of GHG emissions through bioenergy

The potential contribution of bioenergy to reduce GHG emissions, compared to fossil fuels, is a key driver for bioenergy development. The Partnership's Terms of Reference highlight collaboration on methodologies to measure GHG emission reductions from the use of biofuels as a short term priority.

Prior to the UNFCCC COP12 in Nairobi, November 2006, a number of GBEP Partners collaborated in identifying key methodological issues related to the inclusion of bioenergy projects in the Clean Development Mechanism.

On the occasion of the last Steering Committee meeting, in May 2007, the USA presented a draft proposal for a GBEP programme of work on methodologies to measure GHG benefits of biofuels used for transportation. Following endorsement by the Partners, the USA is currently developing a detailed proposal. The work will bring together and build upon relevant activities by Partner countries and agencies, and explore possibilities for the harmonisation of methodologies to enhance consistency and comparability.

3. Awareness-raising and information management

GBEP's awareness-raising and information management activities seek to increase the understanding of pertinent issues related to bioenergy development among Partners and between the Partnership, other technical and political actors, and the general public. It also provides the basis for a deeper and more effective coordination of ongoing activities on bioenergy.

GBEP's awareness-raising and information management activities have focused on two main areas:

1. development of GBEP information material and a GBEP website (www.globalbioenergy.org). The website, which was formally launched on 7 May 2007, promotes information sharing on bioenergy and provides an overview of the activities of the Partnership;
2. participation in relevant international conferences and meetings focused on bioenergy, and organization of specific GBEP events.

Some of the key events organized by GBEP include:

- GBEP side event during the UNFCCC COP12 (Nairobi, 17 November 2006), with a focus on bioenergy development and climate change implications in developed and developing countries.
- Dialogue between GBEP and the private sector (Bruxelles, 7 March 2007), co-organized with the World Energy Council on the occasion of the World Biofuels Markets Congress, to identify critical barriers to investment opportunities in bioenergy. Private sector representatives highlighted the importance of policies to ensure sustainability and reduction in GHG emissions from bioenergy systems as priority areas for GBEP.
- GBEP workshop on "Bioenergy development: perspectives and barriers" (Padua, 20 April 2007), during the "SEP-Waste Technologies 2007 Exhibition" to present an overview of the state of bioenergy development globally, in the EU and in Italy, with a focus on bioenergy from waste.
- Dialogue between GBEP and NGOs/Civil Society (New York, 7 May 2007), on the occasion of the 15th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, to provide a forum for NGO and civil society representatives to highlight critical issues in bioenergy development. Sustainability considerations were again flagged as a priority for GBEP involvement.

GBEP Membership and Outreach

GBEP has issued invitations to Brazil, India, South Africa, the Netherlands and the European Commission to join the Partnership. The Steering Committee, held in May 2007, also decided to issue additional invitations to Austria, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sweden and the World Business Council on Sustainable Development (WBCSD). Tanzania has already submitted a formal request for membership. GBEP welcomes new Partners who wish to actively contribute to its programme of work. Decisions on new Partners are taken by the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee agreed upon the importance of continuing dialogue with a broad range of representatives from Civil Society/NGOs and the Private Sector, to provide information on partnership activities and to identify priority concerns to be reflected in Partnership's activities.

Next steps

In addition to Technical and Steering Committee meetings among Partners, the following key events are currently planned:

- Upon invitation by the German Presidency of the G8, the GBEP Chair will hold a press conference during the G8 Summit on GBEP activities and programme of work.
- In order to facilitate the engagement of African Countries, GBEP will organize a meeting in Addis Ababa, in conjunction with the intergovernmental conference on “Biofuels in Africa” that will be held on 30-31 July, 2007.
- The Report on Policies, Data and Best Practices will be presented in a meeting with private sector and civil society representatives in October 2007.