

2nd meeting of the GBEP Task Force on Sustainability

Rome, 25-26 September 2008

FAO Headquarters

Chair Conclusions

The GBEP Task Force on Sustainability held its second meeting on 25-26 September 2008. Brazil, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, USA, European Commission, European Environment Agency, FAO, IEA, IFAD, UN Foundation, UNCTAD, UNDP and UNEP participated in the meeting. The meeting was chaired by the United Kingdom, who are the leading partner for this work.

Contextualising the work of the GBEP Task Force on Sustainability

- The GBEP Secretariat prefaced the Task Force discussion with an update on some of the key regional and international initiatives concerning the sustainability of bioenergy. These included the ongoing negotiation of the EU Renewable Energy Directive, the work to develop a European standard for sustainable biomass for energy, the potential of a project to develop an ISO standard in the field of the sustainability of biofuels, the Inter-American Development Bank's biofuel sustainability scorecard and the Version Zero draft standard for sustainable biofuel production of the Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels.
- The inventory on current initiatives on sustainable bioenergy, developed by the GBEP Secretariat, contains a more comprehensive list of international, regional and national initiatives, and Partners and Observers were invited to provide text on their own initiatives or suggest additions to the list as they consider necessary.
- Several Task Force participants gave brief updates of their recent work of relevance to the Task Force.

Discussion of the form and uses of the outputs from the Task Force

- On the basis of a background paper prepared for the meeting, the Task Force went on to discuss the form and use of the outputs from the Task Force. The first question debated was whether the scope of the criteria and indicators being developed should include just the production, conversion, transportation and use of biomass for energy or whether it should also include issues relating more generally to the bioenergy policy framework (such as questions of macroeconomics and governance). Many Partners felt that criteria at both the business level and the government level were important and should be included within the scope of the Task Force's work, while a number of other Partners commented that GBEP could best add value at the governmental, policy-making guidance level. Other comments included recommendations that the final set of criteria and indicators should focus on a few key criteria and not be so numerous as to send a negative message to potential investors in bioenergy; that the outputs should reflect both the technological and

traditional bioenergy economies that are apparent in developed and developing countries respectively; and that the criteria should recognise the positive effects of bioenergy production as well as addressing negative effects.

- Regarding the nature of the criteria, some Partners felt they should be directional and define a test whereby the sustainability of bioenergy or bioenergy policies could be evaluated while others felt that they should be strictly neutral in tone, and highlight important factors to consider in such an evaluation. The Task Force was reminded that the 5th GBEP Steering Committee endorsed the paper on the “Scope and programme of work” of the Task Force on Sustainability in Rio, which defined criteria as “categories of sustainability factors, capacities or processes that are used to evaluate the environmental, economic or social performance of bio-energy production and use.”
- Of the various options for the form and use of the final output listed in the discussion paper, all agreed that the output should act as voluntary and non-binding guidance for policy-making (GBEP and non-GBEP partners) and others interested stakeholders. Several Partners expressed concern that even the output of a voluntary partnership like GBEP could be used to negatively affect trade, and that there was a need to preface the final criteria and indicators with text demarcating their scope, voluntary status and use in the context of trade in order to avoid this outcome. The Task Force briefly discussed a draft text proposed by a group of Partners (referred to in the meeting as the “scope text”) to help clarify the scope without reaching agreement. The Chair proposed to issue a revised version of the text taking into account the various positions expressed during the meeting and circulate it in preparation for the next Task Force meeting (see Actions and Timeline).

Discussion of criteria for sustainable bioenergy

- The Task Force moved onto a discussion of the criteria so far proposed, focussing on the compact list of criteria. Because of time, only the contents of the Environmental, Economic and Energy Security Baskets were discussed and better defined: the results are reflected in the revised compact list of criteria in Annex A.
- There was also a brief discussion of the baskets themselves. Whilst some Partners were in favour of retaining only the three baskets representing the environmental, social and economic pillars of sustainable development, others envisaged the possibility of all baskets disappearing in the final product, which would be a single list of criteria with indicators. A decision on the form of the final output would be taken at a later date. The Chair agreed to develop a further version of the matrix based on the discussion and any comments received in writing from Partners and Observers on the Social and Governance Baskets. The Chair would then circulate it for comment before finalising it for consideration at the next GBEP Task Force meeting (see Actions and Timeline).

Next meeting of the Task Force on Sustainability

- The next meeting of the Task Force on Sustainability will be held on **19 November 2008 in Sao Paulo (Brazil)** around the International Biofuels Conference, which will take place on 17-21 November 2008. Further details will be provided by the GBEP Secretariat in due course.

Actions and Timeline

- **Task Force members are invited to send their comments/suggestions on the Social Basket as well as on Good Governance** (which were not discussed during the TF meeting for lack of time) to the Task Force Chair and to the GBEP Secretariat **by Tuesday 14 October 2008**.
- **The Secretariat will circulate on behalf of the Chair (1) a revised version of the “scope text” and (2) a revised version of the matrix on criteria and indicators** (in light of the comments received and discussion during the 2nd TF meeting) to the Task Force members **by Friday 17 October 2008**.
- **Task Force members will be invited to send their comments** on these revised documents simultaneously to the Task Force Chair and to the GBEP Secretariat **by Tuesday 28 October 2008**.

Compact list of criteria

The fourth column of this list reflects the discussion at the 2nd meeting of the GBEP Task Force on Sustainability in Rome, 25-26 September. (The third column reflects specific comments/suggestions received from GBEP partners and observers on the initial criteria drawn up by the GBEP Task Force on Sustainability at its first meeting on 19 June 2008.)

	Draft initial criteria: 19 June 2008	Draft revised criteria: 19 September 2008	Draft revised criteria: 26 September 2008
Environmental Basket			
	Greenhouse Gases (GHG)	Greenhouse Gases (GHG)	Greenhouse gases (GHG)
	Soil quality/land degradation/desertification	Soil fertility/productive capacity of the land	Soil fertility/productive capacity of the land
	Land use change/deforestation	Land use change	[Land-use change][Carbon stocks][Deforestation]
		Land availability	Air quality
	Air quality	Air quality	Water quality/quantity
	Water quality/quantity	Water quality/quantity	Biodiversity and ecosystem conservation
	Biodiversity/ecosystem/nature conservation	Biodiversity and ecosystem conservation	[Bio-safety/GMOs]
		Bio-solids/by-products and residues	Productive capacity of ecosystems and landscapes
		Bio-safety	

Economic Basket			
	Resources efficiency	Resource efficiency	[Resource use and conversion efficiency and productivity/land availability]
	Production cost effectiveness	Production and use cost effectiveness	
	Economic/rural development	Economic/rural development	Economic/rural development
	Externalities	Externalities	
	Incentives/disincentives	Competitiveness, Incentives/disincentives	[Policy support framework]

		Biomass conversion efficiency	
		Cost effectiveness of GHGs reduction	
		Energy resources	
		Market	
		Balance of payments	Balance of payments

Social Basket¹			
	Direct/indirect impacts of trade policies	Direct/indirect impacts of trade policies	
	Food security	Food security	
	Land and water rights	Land and water rights	
	Worker rights/ILO	Worker rights/ILO	
	Income generation	Income generation	
	Quality of incomes	Quality of incomes	
	Job creation/opportunities	Job creation/opportunities	
	Social equity	Social equity	
	Local/rural energy security	Local/rural energy security	
	Creation of sustainable livelihoods	Creation of sustainable livelihoods	
	Improvement of energy access	Improvement of energy access	
	Health benefits	Health benefits	
		Legal and institutional compliance	
		Workforce capacity	
		Rural development	

Energy Security Basket			
	Access to energy	Access to energy	Energy access (national, local/rural)
	Energy balance	Energy balance	Net energy balance
	Fossil fuel displacement	Fossil fuel displacement	Displacement of non-renewable energy sources and fuels
		Fossil fuel dependency	
	Diversification of	Diversification of	Diversification of

¹ Contents not discussed at the Task Force meeting of 25-26 September for lack of time

	energy supply	energy supply	energy supply [Energy diversification and supply]
	Local/rural energy security	Local/rural energy security	
	Oil price		
	Optimization of the energy matrix	Optimization of the energy matrix	
	Production capacity	Production capacity	
	Energy imports/exports	Energy imports/exports	
		Energy efficiency	[Energy efficiency]
		Technology	[Technology access]
		Natural resources	[Natural resources]

Good Governance²			
		Bioenergy development is carried out in respect of all applicable national laws	
		Bioenergy development is carried out using appropriate safeguard measures	
		Bioenergy development respects results of participatory land use planning (national and local)	
		Bioenergy development follows a transparent and participatory process	
		Bioenergy developments are monitored in a comprehensive system that provides relevant information to stakeholders in a timely fashion	

² Contents not discussed at the Task Force meetings of 25-26 September for lack of time (proposed in between the 1st and 2nd TF meeting)

		Bioenergy development is guided by a clear policy framework that is supported by competent institutions	
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