Conclusions of the 2nd GBEP Task Force Meeting on GHG Methodologies

Washington D. C., 6-7 March 2008

The Global Bioenergy Partnership held its second task force meeting on harmonizing greenhouse gas (GHG) methodologies in Washington, D.C. on March 6-7. The meeting was hosted by the UN Foundation (thanks to the financial contribution of the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation) and co-chaired by the United States and UN Foundation. The meeting was well attended with participation from: Austria, Brazil, Canada, China, the European Commission (EC), France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. FAO, the International Energy Agency (IEA), the European Environment Agency (EEA), Purdue University, Rembio (Mexico), the Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels, UNCTAD, UNIDO, the UN Foundation, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the University of California, the University of Minnesota, Winrock International, and the GBEP Secretariat also attended.

This second taskforce meeting built off the accomplishments of the first meeting held in October 2007, where the taskforce developed a checklist for what different countries should be analyzing in measuring the GHG benefits of biofuels. The goal of the second meeting was to further develop the checklist and develop a timeline for when the taskforce's work would be completed. Additionally, at the request of the GBEP Steering Committee, the taskforce considered if it was possible to incorporate solid biomass fuel in the methodological framework.

The meeting also provided a means for countries and institutions to update the taskforce on new policy developments relating to biofuels and GHG reductions. A number of countries and organizations presented, including: the EC, the U.S., the Roundtable on Sustainable Development, Germany, Netherlands, Winrock International, France, UC Berkeley, the UK, UNFCCC, Argonne National Laboratory, and various universities. These presentations led to active and interesting discussions on many important issues including indirect land-use change, the necessity of comparing biofuel lifecycle analyses to a full life cycle analysis of the fuel replaced, and how solid biomass can be incorporated into the framework. Presentations can be found on the GBEP website at: www.globalbioenergy.org.

After the discussions, the taskforce decided that rather than developing a universal GHG methodology, it was more appropriate and feasible to provide a methodological framework for countries/institutions to use when developing GHG methodologies for biofuels (Annex 1). The taskforce decided that the methodological framework would consist of a series of ten questions derived from the checklist agreed to at the first meeting. The Taskforce also recognized the need to develop more specific sub-questions in some cases and formed four sub-groups to address these questions and where possible identify where it is possible to dig deeper (Annex 2).

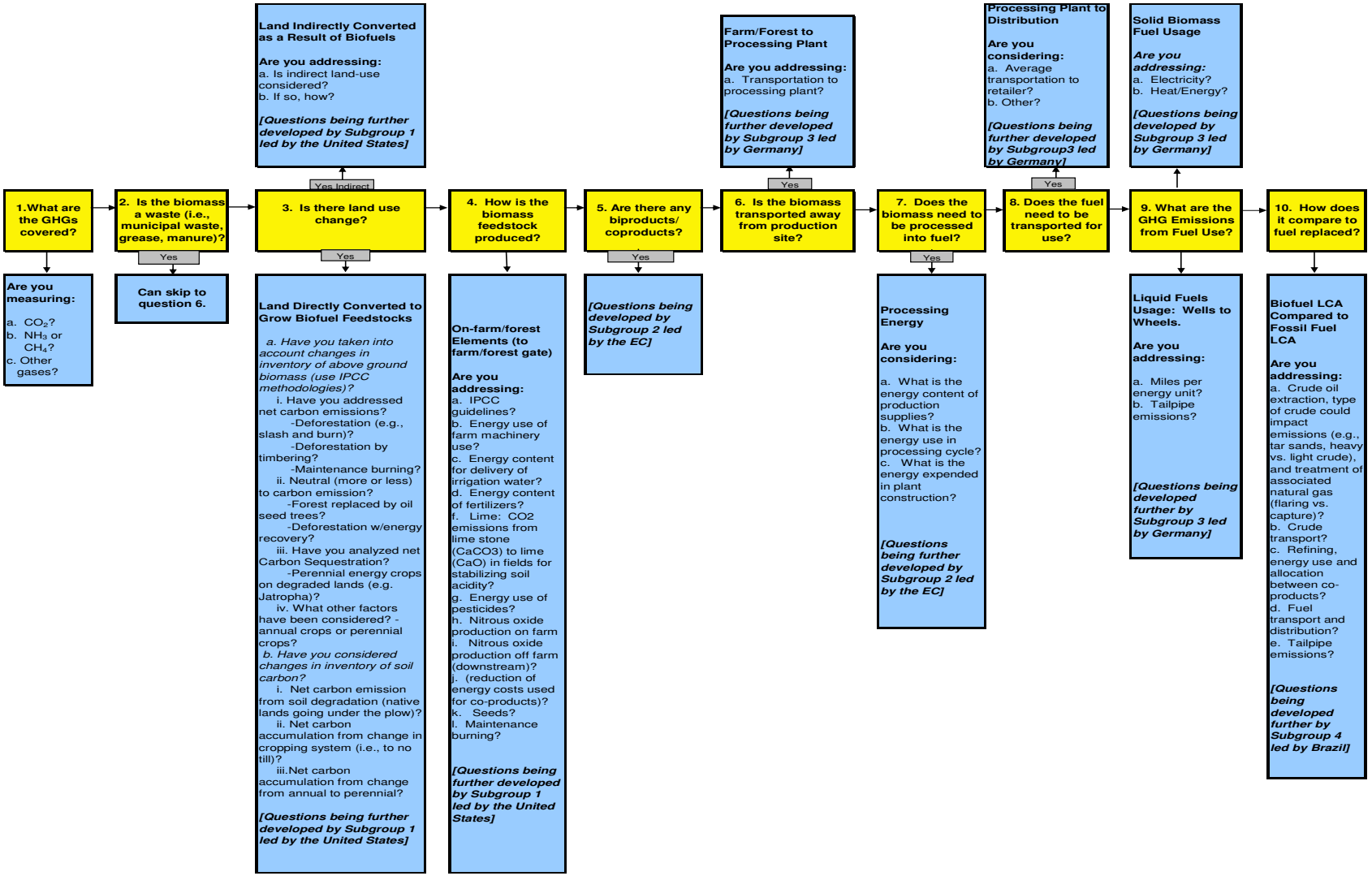
The goal of the methodological framework is to provide a reference of pertinent questions for countries/institutions to ask when seeking to develop a methodology. Although the answers may differ, the taskforce recognized that having a commonly agreed set of questions will increase transparency and facilitate comparison amongst methodologies. It was also recognized that solid biomass fuel concerns should be incorporated into the framework.

NEXT STEPS

The Taskforce approved an action plan to complete the framework by at least March 2009 (Annex 3). In order to meet this deadline the taskforce will complete consideration of the sub-questions by June 15, 2008 and to provide a draft methodological framework available for public comment. ***The lead country for each Subgroup will provide this information to the United States and UN Foundation co-chairs no later than June 15, 2008.*** If a country is not on a particular Subgroup, this does not prevent them from providing information if deemed necessary.

ANNEX 1

At the second GBEP GHG methodologies meeting the taskforce developed the common methodological framework below.



ANNEX 2

The taskforce recognized that several components of the methodological framework needed further discussion and decided to develop sub-groups in order to have those discussions. Four subgroups were formed and there tasks are to:

1. Identify what the necessary questions are for each relevant topic
2. Time allowing, see where it is possible to dig deeper and provide answers
3. Include in the considerations the impact on solid biomass and liquid biofuels
4. Work through the sub-group leads who will then provide the sub-questions to the co-chairs of the taskforce
5. Finish consideration of the necessary sub-questions by June 15th 2008

Subgroup 1 – Land Use Change and Feedstock Production

Lead: United States

Participants: Canada, the European Commission (EC), France, Germany, IEA, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Purdue University, Rembio (Mexico) Sweden, UNEP, UN Foundation, UNFCCC, University of California, the United Kingdom, University of Minnesota, the United States, and Winrock International.

Developing Sub-questions for Following Framework Questions:

- #3 – Is there land use change (indirect and direct land use sub-questions)?
- #4 – How is the biomass feedstock produced?

Subgroup 2 – Biomass Processing

Lead: the European Commission (EC)

Participants: Canada, EC, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Rembio (Mexico), Netherlands, Sweden, UK and US.

Developing Sub-questions for Following Framework Questions:

- #5 – Are there any byproducts/co-products?
- #7 – Does the biomass need to be processed into fuel?

Subgroup 3 - Fuel Transportation and Use

Lead: Germany

Participants: the EC, EEA, Germany, IEA, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden and U.S.

Developing Sub-questions for Following Framework Questions:

- #6 – Is the biomass transported away from the production site?
- #8 – Does the fuel need to be transported for use?
- #9 – What are the GHG emissions from fuel use?

Subgroup 4 - Biofuel Usage Compared to Fossil Fuels

Lead: Brazil

Participants: Brazil, Canada, France, IEA, Germany, Japan, UNEP, UN Foundation, UNFCCC, University of California, and the United States.

Developing Sub-questions for Following Framework Questions

- #10 How does it compare to fuel replaced?

ANNEX 3

Action Plan for GBEP Task Force on GHG Methodologies

Task	Lead Country	Mar 2008	Apr 2008	May 2008	Jun 2008	Jul 2008	Aug 2008	Sep 2008	Oct 2008	Nov 2008	Dec 2008	Jan 2009	Feb 2009	Mar 2009
		March 7												
2nd TF Meeting	US													
Taskforce continues review of current methodologies														
TF reviews and updates checklist														
Form 4 sub-groups to continue work on various topics: 1. land use change and feedstock production (US lead); 2. biomass processing (EC lead); 3. fuel transportation and use (Germany lead); 4. biofuel usage compared to fossil fuels (Brazil lead).	US EC Germany Brazil													
Sub-groups engage in their work														
Sub-groups report to TF (in person, via DVC, or phone)	US													
TF makes necessary suggestions														
Sub-groups revise work														
TF creates first draft														
Publish Draft for Public Comment														

		Mar 2008	Apr 2008	May 2008	Jun 2008	Jul 2008	Aug 2008	Sep 2008	Oct 2008	Nov 2008	Dec 2008	Jan 2009	Feb 2009	Mar 2009
Task	**Lead Country**													
GBEP Steering Committee recommendations														
Possible pilot project for application of the GBEP methodologies under development														
Workshop hosted by the Task Force November/December (at COP14)														
Input from workshop to be included into methodology (Jan/Feb 09)														
TF reviews "final" methodology														
GBEP Steering Committee approval (in person or email)														
Final version of Harmonized GHG Methodological Framework published														