

**5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the GBEP Task Force on Sustainability**  
**Paris, 9 July 2009**  
**United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**

## **Chair Conclusions**

The GBEP Task Force on Sustainability held its fifth meeting on 9 July 2009. Brazil, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, USA, European Commission, FAO, IEA, IEA Bioenergy, UN Foundation and UNEP participated in the meeting. The meeting was chaired by the United Kingdom, the leading partner for this work.

### **The process for the selection of GBEP sustainability indicators**

The main aim of the meeting was to agree the process for the selection of GBEP sustainability indicators. Version 3 of the paper “The process for the selection of GBEP sustainability indicators” – informed by comments received from Partners and Observers on previous versions – was taken as the basis for discussion at this meeting. The Task Force discussed sections of the paper where clarification or further exchange of views was required. In some places amendments to the text were agreed and are highlighted in colour in the revised paper in Annex 1. In others, actual changes to the text were not agreed and proposals in line with the approach agreed in the meeting are shown in track changes in the revised paper (Annex 1) for agreement by the Task Force. Further detail on the major discussion points is recorded below.

### **The criteria and principles for selecting indicators**

#### *Relevance*

The Secretariat clarified that components were intended to provide a soft steer towards aspects of criteria thought to be most important for the development of indicators. In relation to listing alternative indicators, the Secretariat suggested these might fall largely into the following two categories: i) slight variations on the first choice indicators (e.g. regarding units of measurement selected in order to fit in better with a certain country’s available data or policy analysis purpose) and ii) a second tier of indicators that were useful only for a particular subset of bioenergy pathways. Several delegations were concerned that allowing use of alternative indicators might lead to inconsistent approaches. In discussion the Task Force agreed that the process should be sufficiently flexible to allow for different indicators to be considered for different pathways.

#### *Practicality*

The Task Force agreed to add reference to the fact that the use of existing methodologies would make the indicators more practical, whilst not ruling out the need to develop new or amended methodologies for GBEP’s purposes. It was agreed that practicality should not be sought at the expense of glossing over complex issues. Quantitative indicators were to be preferred to qualitative ones where the former category existed, but the latter should be developed where appropriate.

### *Geographic scale*

It was clarified, and agreed, that the indicators were intended to capture both national and international effects of national-level bioenergy production and use. The Task Force agreed to keep the references to the Human Development Index and the Gini coefficient in a footnote as being potentially useful in the context of developing countries.

### *Comparison with fossil fuels*

The Task Force agreed to seek indicators that would allow for comparison between bioenergy and the fossil fuel equivalent where possible, but not to make this an essential requirement, recognising that it would not always be meaningful to make such a comparison. The exercise should be done whilst bearing in mind the broader energy context in which the sustainability of bioenergy was being considered.

### **The path towards a final set of indicators**

The Task Force agreed that sub-groups should not make a special effort to include indicators from all the different categories (e.g. driving force, state and response) that are used in some indicator frameworks, though all should be eligible for consideration. There should be no particular target for the number of indicators finally selected, but the number should be adapted to the minimum felt appropriate at the end of the work.

The Chair made it clear that adequate time would be given for comments to be received during the work of the sub-groups: sub-group leaders would establish inclusive and transparent working practices and agree deadlines with sub-group members. The Chair would work closely with the Secretariat and sub-group leads to ensure these working principles were applied.

### **A template for submission of indicators and supporting information**

The Task Force agreed that it would be useful to have a template to harmonise the format in which candidate indicators were submitted and the supporting information that was gathered in order to inform the decision on their selection. It should not be necessary for a sub-group member to complete the whole template in order to propose a candidate indicator; sub-groups should work collaboratively to complete the templates before submission of their recommendations to the Task Force. The template should include aspects of relevance, practicality and scientific basis, as well as linkages between related indicators and with other processes. It was agreed that the Chair, Secretariat, sub-group leaders and the USA would prepare a draft template, which would then be circulated to the Task Force members for agreement. (The draft template is attached at Annex 2 and comments are requested by 7 August 2009.)

### **Directionality**

There was a short discussion on the question of directionality during which it was apparent that the Task Force was still some distance from reaching a consensus on the issue. Due to pressure of time, the Task Force agreed to return to this issue at a later point. The Chair suggested that the place for giving an overall sense of the purpose of the work of the Task Force might be in the text of the final report containing the criteria and indicators.

## **Additional guidance**

The Task Force agreed that the final report containing the criteria, indicators and cross-cutting recommendations should also contain supporting information that would include methodological descriptions.

### **Indirect land-use change activities**

Uwe Fritsche (Germany), as co-leader of the environmental sub-group, presented a set of possible GBEP activities on indirect land-use change (ILUC), building on discussion in the GBEP workshop on ILUC in New York (15 May 2009). He stated that this workshop showed that the developing country perspective on ILUC needed better reflection and inclusion. GBEP should seek wider participation, particularly from developing countries, and collaborate with Partners and other organizations and processes working on the issue.

Four activities were proposed:

- Inventory of existing/planned national policies on ILUC, with a focus on developing country experiences (e.g. land-use planning/zoning laws, feedstock restrictions).
- Briefing paper on ILUC and possible responses (for GBEP at first, but could be shared later if agreed).
- 2-3 working-level meetings to collect science-based indicators for ILUC.
- Follow-up workshop to NYC in spring 2010, possibly back-to-back with GBEP Sustainability Task Force meeting.

The Task Force was broadly content with the approach outlined, though there was a concern from one Partner that the work proposed would require substantial effort and that the end result might not be commensurate with effort. The Chair asked Germany to produce a draft paper outlining a proposal in consideration of the discussion, for comment and agreement by the Task Force by the end of August.

Regarding the timing, if the proposed activities are agreed by the Task Force, a draft of the briefing paper (which would be in non-technical language) will be circulated by early November. Inputs for the inventory would be requested by the end of September to allow a first draft of the report to be prepared by mid-December. The working-level meetings would feed into the development of indicators for the "Land-use change, including indirect effects" provisional criterion. One meeting might be on other indicators dealing with indirect effects if agreeable to other sub-groups. The dates and locations of these meetings would be chosen to minimise travel costs.

## Next steps

- **Comments on Annexes by 7 August 2009** – Comments on the amendments to the revised paper outlining the process for the selection of GBEP sustainability indicators (Annex 1 – attached to these conclusions) and on the draft template for candidate indicators (Annex 2 – also attached) should be sent to the Secretariat by 7 August 2009.
- **Request for comments on components for criteria and nomination of experts to be circulated on 27 July 2009** – Sub-group leaders will invite their sub-group members to comment on their suggestions for components for criteria and to nominate experts to join the sub-groups on 27 July 2009. Partners and Observers will be invited to respond within three weeks. However, nominations for experts will be accepted after this date.
- **Paper outlining proposed GBEP activities on ILUC by 24 July 2009** – Germany will provide the Secretariat with a paper outlining proposed GBEP activities on indirect land-use change by 24 July 2009 for circulation. Comments will be invited by 14 August 2009.
- **GBEP workshop on sustainability indicators in Buenos Aires, 18-21 October 2009** – A workshop will be held in parallel with the XIII World Forestry Congress to discuss technical issues relating to the development of GBEP sustainability indicators for each of the three sub-groups in turn. The Secretariat will circulate further details in due course.
- The **next meeting of the Task Force on Sustainability** is expected to take place on 16-17 November 2009 in Indonesia. The meeting will discuss the first draft of indicators developed by the sub-groups and decide on further work. The Secretariat will circulate further details of this meeting in due course.
- The **8<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting** is expected to be held on 18 November 2009 in Indonesia. At the meeting the progress of the Task Force will be discussed.