

6th meeting of the GBEP Task Force on Sustainability
Menara Thamrin Building – Jalan M.H. Thamrin, Kav. 3
7th Floor (FAO Representation in Indonesia) - Papua Room
Jakarta, 16-17 November 2009

Chair Conclusions

The GBEP Task Force on Sustainability held its sixth meeting on November 2009. Australia, Brazil, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Ghana, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Lao P.D.R., Mexico, Netherlands, Paraguay, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, USA, FAO, IEA, UN Foundation and UNEP participated in the meeting. The meeting was chaired by the United Kingdom, the leading partner for this work.

General issues relating to GBEP work on indicators

Attribution of impacts to different co-products and by-products

The Task Force agreed to continue on the basis that different allocation or substitution methods may be used, but that in recording measured values of GBEP sustainability indicators, details as to the method and assumptions used to perform the measurement should be stated and a justification given. The Chair invited Partners and Observers to read the “Guidelines on apportioning emissions from production processes between main product and co- and by-products”, recently initially adopted by the CDM Executive Board.¹ The Task Force would not at the moment embark on new work to develop guidance on the issue, though it could at a later stage compile existing information and offer guidance on which methods might be relevant in certain circumstances.

Binary and qualitative indicators

The Task Force agreed to continue with an open approach to binary, qualitative and quantitative indicators, with preference given to quantitative indicators, but room for qualitative indicators, some of which might later evolve into quantitative indicators once appropriate methods had been developed. A distinction was made between qualitative indicators showing a trend in a variable that could not be measured by figures (which could be very useful), and those asking about the existence of policy (which might require further information to be useful). One Partner registered concern regarding binary indicators that ask about the existence of policy as well as the idea of indicating the direction in which an indicator should be going.

Additionally, it was suggested that the Task Force should provide suggestions for how to interpret indicator values.

¹ http://cdm.unfccc.int/EB/050/eb50_repan12.pdf.

Site-specific and national-level indicators, and appropriate means and levels of aggregation

The Task Force agreed upon the need for indicators to inform national policy development and to take sub-national differences into account. The indicators should be phrased in a flexible manner such that the user might determine the level of aggregation.

Universal and local or pathway-specific indicators

The Task Force recognized that since the work on criteria and indicators was dealing with the full range of bioenergy, whilst we should aspire to universality, it may not always be possible.

Tiering of indicators

The Task Force agreed to return to this issue later, but for now Sub-Group leaders were asked to indicate possible priority indicators for each criterion when the first draft of indicators was circulated to the Task Force for comment.

Discussion of proposed shortlists of relevant candidate indicators

The Task Force Chair stated the objective of meeting was to give a clear steer for sub-groups so they knew what to do with the indicators after this meeting. He informed the Task Force that there would later be consultation by email and discussion in the next Task Force meeting on the detailed language of the indicators.

Environment Sub-Group session

The proposed shortlist of relevant candidate indicators proposed by sub-group leaders were discussed by the Task Force and various amendments were suggested, to be reflected in the next version of the working document.

General themes that were touched upon included the need to find a way to define indicators whose values were dependent on local conditions in such a way as to lead to a meaningful figure to inform national policy development. Also, since some absolute values would be meaningless without a comparison, there was work to be done in identifying the appropriate comparators, which might include regional or national averages or reference systems.

The proposal was made to insert the following introductory question at the top of the list of environmental indicators:

“Existence of a formal mechanism (policy, strategy or protocol) at the national level to assess (Y/N), monitor (Y/N) and address (Y/N) environmental impacts of bioenergy”

In this context, “assess” referred to looking at the baseline, “monitor” to looking at changes, and “address” to looking at best practices. More specific elements could be listed underneath. This text would substitute most of the binary indicators relating to the existence of policy. The Task Force agreed to adopt this suggestion as a working basis, amended to include also regulations, but to reserve judgment on whether this would be appropriate for the final output, in order to be sure that no important content was lost from the criteria and indicators.

Economic and Energy Security Sub-Group session

The Task Force asked the Sub-Group to seek to streamline the current list of indicators, whilst also remarking that in other bioenergy sustainability initiatives the economic pillar of sustainable development is often under-discussed and there was a need to address the opportunities for developing countries to develop bioenergy for economic reasons.

For the criterion on energy security (diversification of sources and supply), the Sub-Group leaders set out a proposal for rationalizing the large number of candidate indicators and measuring the contribution of bioenergy towards the diversification of energy sources by introducing the concept of the adapted Herfindahl Index. The Task Force asked the Sub-Group leaders to draft two proposed sets of indicators, one using this index and one not, so that a more informed decision on how to proceed could be taken.

Regarding the indicators for the criterion on energy security (infrastructure and logistics), the Task Force asked the Sub-Group to reflect further on the necessity of this criterion and to provide alternative means to reflect the issues relating to infrastructure and logistics, including the option of addressing them under other economic criteria.

Social Sub-Group session

The Task Force decided to adopt – again pending a final decision – the same kind of introductory question about the existence of policy as for the environmental basket. The Sub-Group was asked to streamline the current list of indicators, injecting proportionality, strengthening the causal link to bioenergy and providing information on appropriate methodologies and associated data collection costs.

GBEP activities on the indirect effects of bioenergy

The Task Force agreed that the workstream on indirect effects within the Environmental Sub-Group should focus on two immediate activities:

- producing a briefing paper summarising the issue of indirect land-use change and current work on it, which would aim to inform GBEP members rather than represent a common GBEP opinion; and
- developing indicators of indirect land-use change caused by bioenergy.

Next steps

The following timeline is proposed as an update to and revision of that agreed in the “The process for the selection of GBEP sustainability indicators”.

December 2009-March 2010 – sub-groups work to produce final draft of indicators; Task Force Chair, sub-group leaders and Secretariat produce first and second drafts of cross-cutting recommendations and first draft of accompanying guidance.

1 December 2009 – circulation of Chair conclusions of 6th meeting of the Task Force on Sustainability (and revised shortlists of relevant candidate indicators recording agreement in

the meeting) and request from sub-group leaders for **collaborative** development of indicators within sub-groups.

January 2010 – teleconference(s) on indicators for land-use change (including indirect effects) and others issues as necessary to provide updates and discuss technical issues.

25 January 2010 – submission of first draft of criteria, indicators and cross-cutting recommendations to the Task Force for comments by 15 February 2010.

1 March 2010 – circulation of second draft of criteria, indicators and cross-cutting recommendations and outline of the report on criteria and indicators (for publication), for discussion at the 7th meeting of the Task Force on Sustainability.

17-18 March 2010 – Task Force meeting to:

- agree final set of criteria and indicators (first draft for indirect land-use change indicators) and cross-cutting recommendations; and
- discuss content of the rest of the report on criteria and indicators (for publication).

March-May 2010 – finalisation and agreement by Task Force of report (for publication) and drafting of brief report to the G8 Summit on the work of the Task Force.

mid-April 2010 – GBEP workshop on indirect-land use change, to refine draft list of indicators on indirect land-use change (for subsequent agreement via email by Task Force).

May 2010 – endorsement of final reports (one for publication and one for G8 Summit) by Steering Committee (option of additional Task Force meeting immediately prior to the Steering Committee meeting).

June 2010 – submission of brief report on the work of the Task Force to the G8 Summit in Canada.