

Progress report on the work of the GBEP Task Force on Sustainability

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Brief Recap

- Task force established in June 2008
- To help build consensus on a practical way to achieve sustainable bio-energy production and use
 - Priority - to provide relevant, practical, science-based, voluntary sustainability criteria and indicators to guide any analysis undertaken of bio-energy at the domestic level;
 - to be used with a view to informing decision making and facilitating the sustainable development of bio-energy;
 - not to be applied so as to limit trade in bio-energy in a manner inconsistent with multilateral trade obligations.

Recent progress

- Task force held its 4th meeting in Heidelberg, Germany – 19/20 March 2009
- A very constructive and productive meeting, which resulted in very good progress
- Provisional draft sustainability criteria drawn up
- Agreement to commence work on science-based indicators

Provisional criteria

- Organized into 4 baskets:
 - Environmental
 - Economic
 - Social
 - Energy Security
- A fifth category for cross-cutting issues, e.g. institutional and policy frameworks, which are not a good fit with the baskets but important

Environmental basket

1. Greenhouse gas emissions
2. Productive capacity of land and ecosystems
3. Land use change, including indirect effects
4. Air quality
5. Water availability, use efficiency and quality
6. Biological diversity

Economic basket

1. Resource availability
2. Resource use efficiency in bio-energy production, conversion, distribution and end-use
3. Economic development
4. Economic viability and competitiveness of bio-energy
5. Access to technology and technological capability

Social basket

1. Food security
2. Access to land, water and other natural resources
3. Labour conditions
4. Rural and social development
5. Access to energy
6. Human health and safety

Energy security basket

1. Energy security

Development of indicators

- Three sub-groups established
 1. Environmental sub-group, led jointly by UNEP and Germany
 2. Social sub-group, led by FAO
 3. Economic and energy security sub-group, led jointly by IEA and UN Foundation
- A work stream on indirect effects within the Environmental sub-group, led by Germany

Development of indicators

- Ways of working to be determined, but a paper with proposals to circulate from Secretariat very soon
- Consistency across the sub-groups will be ensured by an ad hoc group involving the Task Force Chair, the sub-group leads and Secretariat
- Sub-groups will meet in Paris in July to feed back on progress and discuss next steps

Next steps

- Review progress on the development of science-based indicators and consider what additional work is needed to refine them;
- Revisit and refine the sustainability criteria in light of the outcome of the work on indicators;
- Elaborate the cross-cutting recommendations, such as on policy and institutional frameworks, which provide the essential context for the effective application of sustainability strategies and measures;

Next steps

- Work with the separate GBEP Task Force on Deployment of Technologies for Sustainable Bio-energy to identify suitable examples of sustainable bio-energy in action for dissemination;
- Give further consideration to how the criteria and indicators could be used, and in doing so, will seek the views of a wide range of interested parties and stakeholders.
- A final report containing the agreed criteria and indicators, together with recommendations on their use, as well as examples of good practice in bio-energy production, use and policy-making, is expected to be published by May 2010.