

GBEP Workshop on Sustainability Indicators
Task Force on Sustainability
Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (INTA), Chile 460, Buenos Aires
19-21 October 2009

Chair Summary

GBEP held a workshop on sustainability indicators from 19 to 21 October 2009 in Buenos Aires, under the auspices of its Task Force on Sustainability. Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Paraguay, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, USA, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), FAO, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), IEA, UN Foundation (UNF) and UNEP participated in the workshop. The UK chaired the workshop, as leading partner for this work.

Dr Norma Pensel, National Coordinator of Research and Development at the host organization, the Argentinian National Institute of Agricultural and Livestock Technology (INTA), gave a welcome address. Melinda Kimble (UNF) then presented an update on the work of the Roundtable of Sustainable Biofuels in developing sustainability criteria and indicators and Elizabeth Beall (IDB) presented the IDB's Biofuel Sustainability Scorecard.¹ Uwe Fritsche (Germany) gave an update on the proposed work on indirect land-use change within the Environmental Sub-Group of the GBEP Task Force on Sustainability. Further discussion would be required before pursuing the work, and in order to make more efficient progress during the workshop, it was decided to revisit this issue at the next meeting of the Task Force.

The Task Force Chair summarized the background to the workshop, including a brief history of the Task Force on Sustainability, and the objectives for the workshop, as expressed in the background document "General Guidance on Structure and Objectives of Workshop". The aim of the workshop was to select a draft shortlist of relevant candidate indicators for each criterion by reviewing the proposed indicators circulated in advance of the meeting on the basis of the relevance field of the template designed for the submission of candidate indicators and showstopping issues from the practicality and scientific basis fields.

Discussion of indicators

Each of the three sub-group leaders in turn chaired discussions on the candidate indicators proposed under their baskets. Discussions focused on seeking to streamline the indicators into more manageable shortlists as the basis for further efforts. Due to the large number of proposals received it was not possible to consider each indicator in detail, so in many cases those selected for the shortlists reflected the subjects (e.g. policy at the national level aimed at promoting the progressive reduction of GHG emissions from bioenergy or water stress) that

¹ These two presentations are available on the GBEP website: <http://www.globalbioenergy.org/events1/gbep-events-2009/task-force-on-sustainability-2009/en/>

the workshop participants wished to be included at this stage. There was also discussion of how some proposed indicators might be merged or split, and whether some might better be addressed under different criteria. Additionally, some proposals regarding merging or splitting criteria were made. The background documents to be circulated prior to the next Task Force meeting will reflect in more detail the discussion on criteria and indicators (see “Next steps”, below).

General issues arising throughout the workshop

Several general issues emerged during the course of discussion. The need to attribute the impact due to bioenergy production as opposed to other co-products such as food and feed was raised, as well as the practical difficulties in doing so. It was also noticed that the proposed indicators seemed to fall into several categories, in particular binary (which would prompt a yes/no answer), qualitative and descriptive, or were drafted so as to be intended to apply at either the site/operator level or national level. The workshop participants suggested that the Task Force should review and seek to clarify these issues at its next meeting, reflecting on what it has previously agreed in this regard.

Next steps

Background documents for the next Task Force meeting (Jakarta, 16-17 November 2009) to be circulated by 5 November 2009

Sub-group leaders and the Secretariat will distil the discussions of the workshop to come up with a **provisional shortlist of indicators**. The shortlist will be developed on the basis of discussion in the workshop, with reference to arguments made in relation to relevance, practicality and scientific basis. This is likely to involve considerable streamlining of the original proposals. In view of the informal status of the Buenos Aires workshop, the background documents for the next Task Force meeting in Jakarta (16-17 November 2009) will include a **complete list of the indicators submitted by sub-group members for the Buenos Aires meeting with an explanation of how they have been dealt with**. In his summing up in Buenos Aires, the Task Force Chair said that because the shortlist will be based on proposals received in advance of that meeting, the revised list circulated for consideration at Jakarta should not be viewed as comprehensive or final, and new proposals would still be welcome (although any new proposals received between Buenos Aires and Jakarta will not be reflected in the documents for Jakarta). **The documents will be circulated on 5 November**. The sub-groups will return to the completion of templates after Jakarta.

Further topics for discussion at the next Task Force meeting

The Chair also raised the issues of when and how **consultation** on the GBEP criteria and indicators might take place and future use of the **electronic discussion forum**. These questions will be discussed at the next Task Force meeting in Jakarta, along with possible **ways to prioritise the indicators**, the possible **content of the final report** containing the agreed criteria and indicators, and initial thoughts on the **cross-cutting recommendations** (which are envisaged to accompany the criteria and indicators).