

8th meeting of the GBEP Task Force on Sustainability

Barceló Carthage Thalasso Hotel
La Marsa-Gammarth, Tunis (Tunisia)
5-6 May 2010

Chair Conclusions

The GBEP Task Force on Sustainability held its eighth meeting on 5-6 May 2010. Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, Germany, Ghana, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mauritania, Netherlands, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States of America, FAO, IDB, IEA, UN Foundation, UNEP and UNIDO 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

Definition of modern bioenergy for GBEP sustainability criteria and indicators

The Chair stated that the Secretariat would circulate a definition of modern bioenergy for the work of the Task Force on criteria and indicators for comments in writing.

Dealing with the legal, policy and institutional framework

Two Partners wished to delete this section. One commented that decisions on this section should be taken after discussion of the indicators, since the balance of the final product might influence the views of Partners and Observers. All other Partners and Observers present supported retention of the section. Further discussion is necessary in order to reach consensus.

Discussion of economic and energy security indicators

Discussion led to a large degree of agreement on aspects such as productivity, net energy balance, total domestic consumption and production of bioenergy, training and re-qualification of the workforce, change in diversity of energy supply due to bioenergy and diversity of bioenergy supply. In some areas, further discussion was deemed necessary in order to reach consensus. There were also more fundamental concerns from a small minority of Partners on issues related to trade, government support for bioenergy and intellectual property rights.

Discussion of social indicators

Discussion led to a large degree of agreement on aspects such as net job creation, wages, change in unpaid time spent by women and children collecting biomass as a result of switching from traditional to modern bioenergy services, size distribution of farms producing bioenergy feedstock, quantity and share of modern bioenergy used to expand access to modern energy services, change in mortality and burden of disease attributable to indoor smoke from solid fuel use, and incidence of occupational injury, illness and fatalities. In some areas, further discussion was deemed necessary in order to reach consensus. There were also more fundamental concerns from a small number of Partners on the inclusion of indicators on food security.

Discussion of environmental indicators

Discussion led to a large degree of agreement on aspects such as lifecycle GHG emissions, soil quality, harvest levels of wood, emissions of non-GHG pollutants, proportion of water resources used, water use efficiency, water quality, conversion of nationally recognised areas of high biodiversity importance and ecosystems of national importance, and land-use change. In some areas, further discussion was deemed necessary in order to reach consensus. There were also more fundamental concerns from a small minority of Partners on issues related to land management practices and invasive alien species.

Indirect effects of bioenergy

Regarding the indirect effects workstream under the environmental Sub-Group, the Chair recalled the conclusions from the Task Force meeting in The Hague and reiterated the invitation to Partners and Observers to suggest a location for the proposed GBEP workshop on indirect effects of bioenergy around mid-November 2010.

Chair of the Task Force

The Chair of the Task Force announced he would be stepping down from the role. Partners were invited to contact the Secretariat with expressions of interest in taking over this role.

Next steps

Given the state of progress on the indicators, the proposed next steps were not discussed in Tunisia. The following tentative timeline is proposed by the Task Force Chair in light of the outcomes of the 8th meeting of the Task Force:

- **19 July 2010:** Secretariat aims to circulate draft report containing criteria and indicators (C&I) for comments from Partners and Observers by 20 August;
- **29 September-1 October 2010:** 9th meeting of the Task Force on Sustainability plus possible workshop on bioenergy and food security (Rome, FAO Headquarters), pending confirmation (the Task Force would use this meeting to agree the content of the initial report on C&I);
- **By end October 2010:** agree report (by email) on the GBEP C&I to be submitted to G20 Summit in South Korea and used as the basis for piloting and consultation;
- **24-25 November 2010:** 10th meeting of the Task Force on Sustainability plus workshop on indirect effects of bioenergy (Rome, FAO Headquarters), pending confirmation (the Task Force would use this meeting to agree the next steps tentatively outlined below);
- **November 2010-May 2011:**
 - Partners and Observers offer to pilot (test for feasibility) the indicators, devise a national strategy for measuring the indicators and assist developing countries where necessary;
 - conduct open consultation on C&I;
 - refine C&I in light of above work as well as further discussion on the basis of latest scientific research;
 - collate examples of best practice in bioenergy policy, production and use for each indicator;
 - draft, agree and publish a further report on the C&I containing the C&I (revised, if necessary, in light of piloting and consultation) and examples of best practice.