

GBEP Communication Strategy Paper

**To be discussed by the 3rd WGCB and
submitted to the 14th Steering Committee for consideration**

A. Background

The GBEP Working Group on Capacity Building for Sustainable Bioenergy (WGCB) was established in May 2011 to promote, inter alia, the dissemination, use, and implementation of the outcomes of the GBEP Task Forces on GHG Methodologies and on Sustainability through activities and projects. It is co-chaired by The Netherlands and the United States of America since November 2011.

The WGCB aims at raising awareness of the potential benefits of sustainable modern bioenergy through multiple means, including workshops, study tours, public forums and other ways to present sustainable practices and assess resources. The activities and projects developed within the WGCB are country driven. Its main focus is to facilitate collaboration among GBEP Partners and Observers for capacity building projects and related activities.

The WGCB is also facilitating cooperation and capacity building through sharing information, stimulating discussion, and identifying opportunities for cooperation on sustainable bioenergy development and deployment, as well as encouraging sharing of lessons learned, identifying and disseminating information about existing tools and resources available from both the public and private sources and facilitating appropriate linkages between them.

The WGCB prepared this a draft communication strategy with the main objectives of strengthening its communication activities, further raising its profile, and strengthening GBEP relationships with other international institutions to streamline common activities and consequently maximise their efficiency and effectiveness.

This communication strategy paper is submitted to the Steering Committee for consideration and decision.

B. Objectives

As a global partnership, GBEP seeks to contribute to the establishment of a process of information exchange to improve mutual understanding and develop competences and skills necessary to enable best practices in the sustainable development and deployment of modern bioenergy. Strategic communication through GBEP activities should provide the basis for a deeper and more effective coordination of ongoing activities on bioenergy between the following actors:

- Partners and Observers within the Partnership;
- governmental and international institutions;
- scientific and technical institutions and relevant international fora;
- private sector companies; and
- civil society as well as the general public.

Moreover the communication will bring the products and tools that have been developed within the Partnership to the attention of a wider and broader audience so that they can use and implement these tools.

Strategic communication through GBEP activities should also help promote greater consideration in national and international planning, monitoring, and evaluation and in decision making on energy policy, as well as the pursuit of sustainable development. This supports GBEP in reaching its objective of implementing effective policy frameworks and enabling environments for the sustainable production and use of modern bioenergy, identifying ways and means to support investments and removing barriers to collaborative project development and implementation.

In particular, the activities of the GBEP Working Group on Capacity Building have a comparative advantage in facilitating the involvement of developing countries through an exchange of views, experiences and technologies not only North-South, but also South-South and South-North.

The GBEP communication activities would focus on three main areas:

1. the activities of the WGCB – their objectives and achievements;
2. spreading the products, tools and instruments that have been developed within the Partnership and bring it to the attention of a wider and broader community of officials and scientists;
3. the importance of sustainable modern bioenergy as an opportunity – for sustainable development, climate change mitigation, and food and energy security. This appears to be particularly important at a moment to promote the most accurate information when bioenergy, and biofuels in particular, are in the limelight of lively discussions;
4. specific technical and/or socioeconomic issues related to bioenergy – for instance in the context the Partnership’s activities on guidelines for measuring the GBEP indicators for bioenergy and for measuring greenhouse gas emission reductions from use of bioenergy;
5. the Partnership itself – its objectives, activities; achievements and decisions;
6. attracting new Partners and building new partnerships with other initiatives and entities, including from civil society and the private sector.

C. Tools and Activities

GBEP has developed its communication strategy with the use of the following tools and activities. These tools are to be used by the WGCB as a primary instrument to convey information about its goals and activities both at national and international level:

1. GBEP leaflet and banner

Standard foldable leaflets and roll-up PVC banners are the basic information tools for all audiences who are not familiar with GBEP. These tools are normally used in occasion of GBEP’s participation in conferences as well as in the organization of GBEP events, to provide basic information about the Partnership, its objectives and programme of work.

Target groups: GBEP Partners and Observers, experts, private sector and civil society.

2. GBEP website

The GBEP website is the primary communication tool between the Partnership and outside audiences and is meant to be also a primary communication tool among Partners and Observers.

Since its official launch in May 2007 the GBEP website has been developed quite extensively both in content and structure. Website statistics are available in the Annex.

Information on the website includes:

- Background of GBEP, including Terms of References and White Paper;
- List of partners and links to their websites (as indicated by Partners);
- Information on the GBEP's programme of work, calendar of events and "news". Information on the programme of work comprise dedicated pages to the GBEP WGCB activities, including on the implementation of the tools developed by the GBEP Task Forces on GHG Methodologies and on Sustainability;
- A GBEP Toolkit containing search facilities to help decision making and information on sustainable bioenergy as well as the GBEP Clearing House on GHG methodologies for lifecycle analysis of bioenergy;
- Links to relevant websites (Partners and Observers; other international initiatives; events/conferences; national networks including the private sector);
- A "Virtual Library" serving as an electronic database with relevant documents or links to documents on other websites. Since February 2008 the Virtual Library is subject to constant updating to provide website users with selected information and documentation related to bioenergy at international level;
- Newsletter on Partnership's activities and other international bioenergy related topics (developed approximately every six months);
- A password-protected section of the website, named "My GBEP" with information available to "partners only" as a tool to exchange comments on specific documents to be finalized. A Discussion Forum in this section of the website has been created as part of the activities of the WGCB to facilitate exchange of information and discussion on the GBEP indicators for bioenergy.

Target groups: GBEP Partners and Observers, technical experts, private sector and civil society.

3. GBEP publications – available on the website and in printed version

- The GBEP Report "The Global Bioenergy Partnership Sustainability Indicators for Bioenergy" was released in December 2011 to guide analysis at the domestic level and to inform decision-making that encourages the sustainable production and use of bioenergy.

- In January 2011 GBEP released “The GBEP Common Methodological Framework for GHG Lifecycle Analysis of Bioenergy - Version One” for the use of policy makers and stakeholders when assessing GHG emissions associated with bioenergy.
- The GBEP Report “A Review of the Current State of Bioenergy Development in G8 +5 Countries” was released in November 2007 and was instrumental in preparing for the GBEP’s current work towards the sustainable development of bioenergy. The GBEP Report is subject to constant updating. The updated version is available on the GBEP Website.

Printed versions of the GBEP Reports, their Executive Summaries and CDs containing the full Reports are also available and are distributed by the GBEP Secretariat during relevant international conferences and GBEP events.

For future communication activities it is suggested to explore the use of flash or thumb drives (with GBEP reports/documents) in order to save paper and distribute more documents in an economical manner.

Target groups: GBEP Partners and Observers, decision makers, technical experts, private sector and civil society.

4. Conferences/meetings/events

Working in synergy with other relevant initiatives and partnerships, as well as an active participation of GBEP (Partners and Observers as well as Secretariat) in relevant conferences/meetings/events provide opportunities for effective communication of GBEP’s activities and objectives. The GBEP Secretariat has prepared a standard presentation which can be used by all partners to present GBEP in other fora. Furthermore, the GBEP Secretariat organizes side events and press events both at international and national level to promote the work of GBEP in the occasion of prominent meetings on bioenergy.

Target groups: decision makers, technical experts, private sector and civil society – depending upon the specific event.

5. Media communication campaign in print and online format

Contact with the press is a core communication activity aimed at diffusing the Partnership’s work and more generally at communicating the importance of bioenergy as an opportunity, especially in times when the role of biofuels and bioenergy appear to be strongly under discussion. The GBEP Secretariat develops its media communication campaign which is focused on the following main activities:

1. development of press releases in occasion of important GBEP events (i.e. dissemination of outcomes of events organized by the Partnership; establishment of activity groups within the WGCB; release of GBEP Reports);
2. constant contact with the international press through article writing and release of interviews.

Partners and Observers are encouraged to bring GBEP’s programme of work and achievements to the attention of their national media through the most appropriate tool.

Target groups: decision makers and general public.

6. Further dissemination of information by the GBEP Secretariat

The GBEP Secretariat provides information about the GBEP activities through its communication activities by receiving and answering to all the different inquiries on the Partnership on a day by day basis. The Secretariat also circulates a newsletter which covers the Partnership's activities, included those of the WGCB, as well as other international bioenergy related topics. The newsletter is circulated approximately every six months among GBEP's Partners and Observers and press contacts as well as posted on the website.

It is suggested to explore the possibility to develop a progressive social media campaign in order to move away from traditional sources.

Partners and Observers are encouraged to contribute to raise awareness and further disseminate information on the GBEP's programme of work and activities as appropriate, i.e. during speeches/presentations in relevant Conferences, as well as during bilateral meetings with relevant stakeholders (public, private and civil society actors).

D. Interaction with Private Sector and Civil Society stakeholders

It is suggested to discuss and decide on the organization of regular consultation sessions (at least once a year), in particular in the context of international meetings, in order to facilitate dialogue and exchange of lessons learned with private sector and civil society stakeholders. This will continue to enhance GBEP's strategy and provide new information and tools that could be used to expand and improve upon it.

E. Information Management

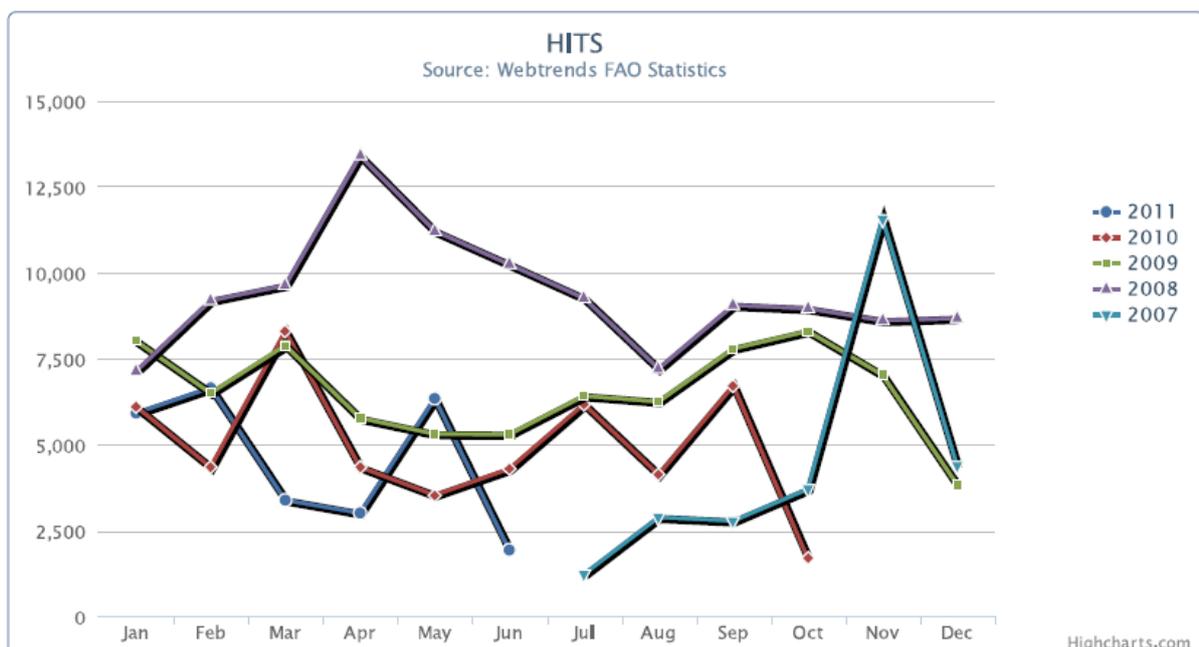
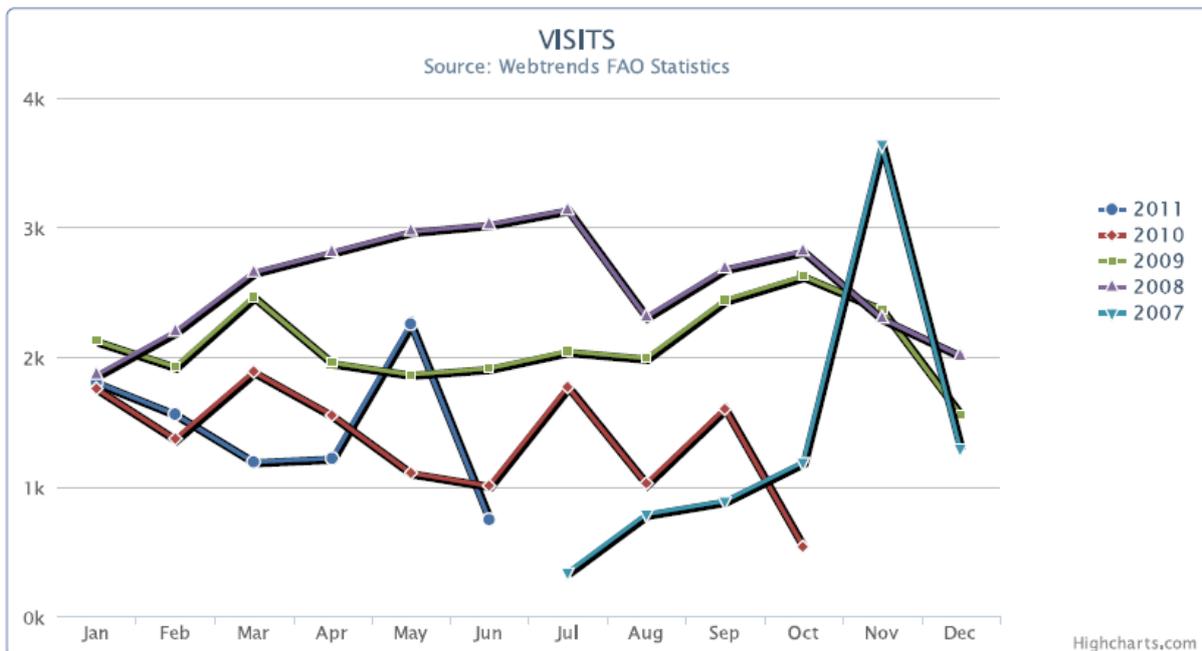
The GBEP Secretariat, as main coordinator of GBEP communication, will continue to make available information and documentation related to its programme of work through website, newsletters and press releases once these have been agreed among Partners and Observers.

F. Action required from the Steering Committee

Discussion and decision on activities and resource implications, including voluntary financial support from GBEP Partners and Observers.

GBEP website statistics

As in the two graphs below, website statistics highlight peaks in the number of visitors and hits on the GBEP website in November 2007 and in 2008 (30.743 visitors and 112.526 hits) due to an aggressive and expensive GBEP communication campaign in light of the release of the first GBEP Report (“A review of the current state of bioenergy development in G8 +5 Countries”, November 2007). After that period the number of visitors and hits gradually diminish in correspondence with the gradual decrease in the budget available for communication purposes. However, momentary increases in correspondence with our press release or newsletter activities (i.e. press release in coincidence with the Steering Committee in Washington, May 2011, and newsletter dated July 2010) have been registered.



Despite this fluctuation in the number of visitors and hits in light of the communication strategy adopted, it has been registered an important widening of the geographical areas related to visitors. While during the first two years visitors were mainly from the USA and European Countries, in the following years visitors included high numbers also from Canada and Japan.