

GBEP Working Group on Capacity Building for Sustainable Bioenergy (WGCB)

Activity Group 2 - Workshop

“Raising awareness and sharing of data and experiences from the implementation of the GBEP indicators”

Rome, FAO Headquarter, 15 November 2012

The Co-leaders, Mr. Horst Fehrenbach from Germany and Mrs. Maritje Hutapea from Indonesia, welcomed the participants and introduced the panelists of the session.

The pilot testing of the GBEP indicators is currently being performed in several countries. The cases of Ghana, Germany, Indonesia and Colombia were presented during the workshop.

In Ghana, 11 GBEP indicators out of the 24 were chosen due to financial constraints. The accomplishment of the assessment has been defined as very relevant to Ghana because it produced baseline values and information to understand how to go forward and improve the bioenergy sector of the West African country. This study also highlighted some limitations of testing the GBEP indicators in a country like Ghana: most of the data were collected from one time studies and it was clear that the indicators need to be monitored over a rather long period of time. The methodology was found to be not readily applicable for all indicators given the data available, and methodological tailoring therefore necessary. The information gained thanks to the measuring of the GBEP indicators were very valuable. The government of Ghana, in fact, continues to explore ways to find resources for the measurement of all 24 indicators in the near future.

The panelist from Germany described how the team of researchers will measure all 24 indicators with the highest degree of accuracy possible. In 2012, 8 over 24 indicators were measured while the remaining indicators will be measured in the next two years (2013-2014). The lessons learned from this exercise are felt to be extremely important for the sustainable development of the bioenergy sector in the country. The in-depth study of the indicators under the environmental pillar concerned the assessment of the bioenergy subdivision (liquid, gaseous, or solid biomass) and the ratio between import and export of biomass. Major efforts are being put into the measurement of indicator 1, GHG LCA. Preliminary results have shown that solid biomass, among all forms of biomass produced and employed in Germany, saves the most of the GHG emission for both heat and for electricity generation. It was then possible to estimate the net GHG saving from bioenergy for Germany which is 54 million tons of equivalent CO₂ per year. This data excludes indirect land use change factors, as these are still being calculated.

In Indonesia the testing of the indicators is in the proximity of its conclusion. The presenter highlighted that all the 24 indicators were measured, however discussion was emphasized on 6 indicators, 2 under each pillar. It was possible to draw several interesting policy recommendations. Under the environmental pillar, recommendations stressed the need for further research and mapping of low carbon stocks areas since it is expected that there will be future development of bioenergy plantations, and these area should be preferred over peat soils. Peat soils, in fact, are recommended to be considered as last resort for new bioenergy activities and even in this case Indonesia requires to strengthen efforts for the accurate mapping of these areas. Lastly, the Virgin Forest and peatland conversion moratorium is

recommended to continue in order to protect these fundamental high biodiversity and carbon stock areas.

Recommendation concerning the social aspects of sustainable development targeted the reduction of land conflicts, the need to map the land use rights and the need to promote stronger awareness regarding land use rights in order to enhance indigenous people's livelihood. The economic recommendations highlighted the need for extensive involvement of the private sector in order to increase representativeness of the assessment. Moreover, in order to increase competitiveness of the bioenergy sector for the domestic market, subsidies on fossil fuels are recommended to gradually be reduced to zero.

The status of the pilot testing of the GBEP Indicators in Colombia was also presented. It was reported that stakeholder's engagement on this project is very high. The private sector, and its referent ministries, are very careful with the disclosure of information related to bioenergy because of the presence of high competition within this sector in Colombia. Furthermore, a national regulation prevents private sector associations from disclosing data that could alter the competitiveness of the industry at national and/or international level. However, because at the national scale the private sector has the most comprehensive data available at the moment, the need to include their knowledge into the project became evident in order to obtain valuable data for all 24 indicators at country level. This obstacle is intended to be overcome through a confidentiality agreement.

An interesting comparison on the different approaches to measure indicators in Colombia and Indonesia was also presented. In Colombia the team of consultants began to collect in-depth information solely for those indicators not restricted by the competitiveness law. This approach highlighted, for the first time, this necessary condition when existing laws and policies that limit the collection of data for certain indicators.

In the closing remarks, the Co-chairs recognized the importance of involving the private sector for the successful measurement of the indicators and the fundamental role that these will have in shaping the bioenergy policies of those countries that have measured them.

The Co-chairs also invited GBEP Partners and Observers to make best use of the discussion forum available on the GBEP website as a powerful tool for sharing data and experiences on the implementation of the indicators.