

**9th meeting of the GBEP Working Group on
Capacity Building for Sustainable Bioenergy**
FAO Headquarters, German Room C-229-C269
Rome, 30 November 2017

Co-Chairs Conclusions

The GBEP Working Group on Capacity Building for Sustainable Bioenergy (WGCB) held its 9th meeting on 30 November 2017 at FAO Headquarters in Rome.

Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, Germany, Ghana, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Paraguay, Spain, United States of America, Vietnam, AFREC, ECOWAS, FAO, IEA/IEA Bioenergy, IRENA and WBCSD participated in the meeting as Partners and Observers.

Opening of the WGCB

The Co-chairs, Mr. Miguel Almada from Argentina and Mr. Bah F. M. Saho from ECREEE/ECOWAS, welcomed participants to the 9th meeting of the WGCB and submitted the draft [agenda](#) that was officially adopted.

Discussions on Activity Groups (AG) 2, 3, 4 and 6 were held, along with discussions of the new potential AG7 (Biogas) and AG8 (Advanced Biofuels).

Activity Group 2 – “Raising awareness, and sharing of data and experience on the implementation of the GBEP indicators”

[Horst Fehrenbach](#), AG2 Co-Leader, provided a brief overview on the implementation of GBEP indicators worldwide. During the session, there were presentations from representatives from Italy, Paraguay and Viet Nam on recent experiences in measuring the GBEP indicators in their respective countries.

[Stefano Fabiani](#) (CREA, Italy), gave an overview of the use of the GBEP indicators to assess the sustainability of the biogas value chain in Italy. The results of the implementation suggest that the Biogasdoneright™ system analysed has a good sustainability performance. These results, once scaled up to national level, will be a useful tool for the Italian Ministry of Agriculture and other responsible Ministries, to analyse the impacts of the biogas sector and the effectiveness of current policy, and to plan future policies.

[Justo Vargas](#) (Paraguay) gave an overview of the FAO project “Building capacity to improve the sustainability of bioenergy through the use of GBEP Indicators” in Paraguay, funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI). In the implementation of the indicators in Paraguay, they found that data was available but highly dispersed and difficult to access and so future reinforcement of information management is required in the country. In order to strengthen data availability, it is hoped that data related to the indicators of the sustainability of bioenergy can be included within the census matrix to be used in the next national agricultural census 2018/19.

[Pham Quang Ha](#) (Viet Nam) gave an overview of implementation of the same FAO project in Viet Nam. He provided detailed results for the measurement of the indicators for the prioritized pathways in the country, namely: cassava-based ethanol; and biogas (mostly from pig manure, as well as cassava wastewater), at both household and industrial levels. The biogas pathway at household level is well established in Viet Nam, but the report highlighted the inefficient use

of biogas and problems of water pollution as bottlenecks in biogas development. Currently, less than 1 percent of the cassava produced in the country is used for bioethanol, with the price of fossil fuel alternatives being a key driving factor. Policy has a crucial role in sustainable bioenergy production across entire value chain.

Experiences on the implementation of the GBEP indicators will continue to be gathered and shared with the GBEP community as these projects are finalized and others proceed.

Activity Group 3 – “Study Tour for capacity building and training”

Bah F. M. Saho (ECREEE/ECOWAS) presented the key messages from the 2017 Bioenergy Week held in Accra, Ghana. The event focused on bioenergy issues specific to the African region. In particular, there were sessions on: bioenergy policy and regulatory development; sustainable value chains for food and energy security (with a focus on biogas and gasification technologies); resource assessment, options and strategies; and successful financial mechanisms and business plans for bioenergy systems. Overall, the ECOWAS/GBEP Bioenergy Week demonstrated the diversity of bioenergy projects and the various considerations that need to be taken into account to make bioenergy development sustainable. The need for a holistic approach when assessing the impacts of bioenergy on the environment and food security was stressed, and the utility of carrying out feasibility assessments and sustainability studies in advance was demonstrated in many of the sessions. These assessments should take into account a number of factors, including feedstock availability (and competitive uses of feedstock), social acceptability and environmental impacts, among many others. Financing for projects is also a key concern and capacity building is necessary in order to propose well-developed, ‘bankable’ projects to financial institutions.

A presentation was given by [Constance Miller](#) (GBEP Secretariat) on a study carried out by the GBEP Secretariat in the context of the ECOWAS/GBEP Bioenergy Week 2017 entitled “Biogas value chains in Africa: SWOT analysis”. The research aimed to lead to a better understanding of the perceptions of stakeholders on the factors important for success of biogas value chains in Africa at both small and large scale. For success of large-scale biogas value chains, the factors considered most important are very broad, covering social, economic and environmental aspects, whereas the negative factors focus on financial barriers, the problems of identifying sustainable feedstock sources, and the lack of knowledge of the potential for biogas that impedes investment. For small-scale biogas value chains, the factors considered to lead to success are the ability of biogas to provide access to modern, clean energy, waste disposal, and financial opportunities from sale of by-products. The negative factors were the financial constraints, sustainability of feedstock and cultural acceptability. The research shows that biogas is not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach and that feasibility studies are required to ensure that there is sustainable feedstock availability, acceptance of the technology by local populations, positive environmental externalities, and viable economic returns.

Argentina kindly confirmed to host the 2018 Bioenergy Week in Buenos Aires in mid June 2018. The event will consist of two days of technical discussions and a field visit to Rosario, where there is a large production of biodiesel. Partners and Observers were invited to send inputs on the agenda of the Buenos Aires Bioenergy Week. The GBEP Secretariat is also exploring with GBEP Partners and Observers the opportunity to host the 2019 Bioenergy Week.

Activity Group 4 - “Towards sustainable modern wood energy development”

An overview was given of the work carried out under AG4, in terms of both the workstream on small-scale wood energy management, and the most recent literature compilation on industrial-

scale wood energy. It was noted that there is a growing trend towards the industrial production and use of wood energy in emerging and developing countries and that there is an important role for GBEP in facilitating the sustainable transition from traditional to modern uses of wood energy in these countries. Therefore, it was agreed to continue the work of the Activity Group and focus on the *transition* from traditional to modern uses of wood energy in emerging and developing countries (transcending small and large scale). It was agreed that strong collaboration should be sought with other organisations in these regions, including ECREEE/ECOWAS.

Under this new focus, it was proposed to have a dedicated session in the Bioenergy Week 2018 in Buenos Aires, and inputs from Partners and Observers on country experiences are requested. Another possible activity is a webinar to share best practices presented in the above context, in synergy with other relevant initiatives (e.g. IEA Bioenergy, IRENA, etc.).

New proposals will be suggested at the 10th WGCB in November 2018 in light of the activities above in order to determine further work.

Activity Group 6 - “Bioenergy and Water”

The Scope of Work of AG6 has been completed and it was decided to close the Activity Group. The members applauded the work achieved and thanked the Co-chairs for their leadership.

Although AG6 has closed, it was stressed that the linkages between bioenergy and water still represent a priority for GBEP and will be integrated into future work. This includes in the context of: the TFS work on the Implementation Guide; the relevant Activity Groups of the WGCB (e.g. a possible session at the Bioenergy Week 2018 under AG3); and water and bioenergy linkages in the SDG context.

Activity Group 7 – “Biogas”

The establishment of AG7 was formally agreed and Partners and Observers will be asked for their willingness to become members and to nominate relevant external experts for the group. Based on the Scope of Work recognised during 2017, presented and discussed during the session, some further revisions are to be made. The revised Scope of Work will be circulated by the GBEP Secretariat for final agreement.

During the session, a paper by CESC on “State of Biogas in the World: 2017” was presented by [Meghan Sapp](#) as a voluntary contribution to discussions under AG7. Inputs are requested from Partners and Observers on this document¹ by March 2018.

As part of the initial Scope of Work of the AG7, a stocktaking report was agreed upon as a fruitful activity. The co-chairs will propose a template for this stocktaking report for inputs from Partners and Observers so that an eventual decision can be made on whether the paper presented by CESC could form the basis of this GBEP report.

Further to this, and based on the Scope of Work, E-learning webinars hosted by Consorzio Italiano Biogas (CIB) and CIBiogas-ER (Brazil) will be put forward as deliverables of the AG7 in 2018. Background information will be circulated to Partners and Observers for their information prior to the e-learning webinars.

¹ The CESC paper is not a GBEP product. As such, it was agreed to circulate it to Partners and Observers taking out the GBEP logo from the cover and deleting any reference to GBEP as connected to its current development.

Activity Group 8 – “Advanced Biofuels”

The establishment of AG8 was postponed to allow for revision of the Scope of Work prepared during 2017, which was presented and discussed during the session. The new Scope of Work may focus on the comparative strengths of GBEP dealing with Advanced Biofuels, with relation to other relevant initiatives and search for opportunities to collaborate. Inputs from Partners and Observers on a new Scope of Work are requested by March 2018.

A paper prepared by the CESC on “Opportunities for Co-location of Advanced Biofuels Production” was presented by [Meghan Sapp](#) as a voluntary contribution to the discussions under the AG8, once established.

Conclusions and next steps

The next steps that were discussed and agreed upon are:

- **Activity Group 2** will continue its work in the future to support the TFS in the development of the implementation guide as new experiences become available from countries where implementation of the GBEP indicators is ongoing or planned.
- **Activity Group 3** will organise the 2018 Bioenergy Week in Buenos Aires, Argentina in June 2018 (week of 12 June) focused on themes of direct interest to the Americas (exact date and venue to follow in due time). The GBEP Secretariat requests inputs from Partners and Observers by 19 January 2018 on potential themes and speakers to be invited to the Bioenergy Week in Argentina, so that a draft agenda can be developed and circulated.
- **Activity Group 4** will focus on the sustainable transition from traditional to modern uses of wood energy in emerging and developing countries (transcending small and large scale). Under this new focus, the option to have a dedicated session in the Bioenergy Week 2018 in Buenos Aires was proposed, and inputs from Partners and Observers on country experiences are requested by 19 January 2018.

The possibility of a webinar to share best practices presented in the above context, in synergy with other relevant initiatives (e.g. IEA Bioenergy, IRENA, etc.), will be explored.

- **Activity Group 6** has completed its Scope of Work and has been closed. The topic of bioenergy and water is still of importance to GBEP and will be integrated in other work.
- **Activity Group 7** on biogas was officially established.

A stocktaking document was proposed as the first activity of AG7 and the co-chairs will propose a template for this document. Inputs on this template will be requested from Partners and Observers.

Inputs on the CESC paper on “State of Biogas in the World: 2017” will be requested from Partners and Observers by March 2018.

E-learning webinars are also proposed for 2018, kindly hosted by Consorzio Italiano Biogas (CIB) and CIBiogas-ER (Brazil).

- **Activity Group 8** on advanced biofuels was not officially established to allow for revision to the Scope of Work. Inputs from Partners and Observers on this new Scope of Work will be requested by March 2018.