

GBEP Progress Report to the G20 Seoul Summit 2010

This report provides an overview of the work of the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP) and its progress over the last year. In response to the 2005 G8 mandate (renewed in 2007, 2008 and 2009), GBEP initiated an international discussion on the issues related to bioenergy. Four years after its establishment and at a time of intense debate on bioenergy, GBEP is actively working to advance bioenergy for sustainable development, climate change mitigation and food and energy security. To this end, GBEP has developed and tested a common methodological framework for use in measuring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions reductions from bioenergy and is continuing work on development of a set of global, voluntary, science-based criteria and indicators regarding the sustainability of bioenergy. GBEP has also published on its website collations of financing options and analytical tools currently available, the latter developed in collaboration with UNEP and FAO. In the upcoming year, GBEP intends to initiate work on facilitating capacity building for sustainable bioenergy.

GBEP was established to implement the commitments taken by the G8 in the 2005 Gleneagles Plan of Action to support "biomass and biofuels deployment, particularly in developing countries where biomass use is prevalent" and it was invited by the 2007 G8 Heiligendamm Summit "to continue its work on biofuel best practices and take forward the successful and sustainable development of bioenergy". The 2008 Hokkaido Toyako Summit declared renewed support for GBEP's work and invited it to "work with other relevant stakeholders to develop science-based benchmarks and indicators for biofuel production and use." The 2009 L'Aquila Summit welcomed GBEP's work and "invite[d] GBEP to accelerate its work in developing science-based benchmarks and indicators for sustainable biofuel production and to boost technological cooperation and innovation in bioenergy." In June 2010, the G8 Leaders in Muskoka, Canada, committed "to facilitating swift adoption of voluntary sustainability criteria and indicators, as well as on capacity building activities".

GBEP membership

Over the last year, GBEP has continued to expand its membership, such that its Partners now comprise the following 22 countries and 11 international organizations and institutions: all G8 nations plus Argentina, Brazil, China, Colombia, Fiji Islands, Ghana, Mexico, Netherlands, Paraguay, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland and Tanzania, as well as FAO, IEA, Inter-American Development Bank, UN DESA, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, United Nations Foundation, World Council for Renewable Energy and European Biomass Industry Association.

A further 23 countries are participating as observers (Angola, Australia, Austria, Chile, Egypt, El Salvador, Gambia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Lao P.D.R., Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Norway, Peru, Rwanda, South Africa, Thailand, Tunisia and Viet Nam), along with the African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS/ECREEE), European Commission, European Environment Agency, IFAD, IRENA, Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA), the World Bank and the World Business Council on Sustainable Development. GBEP welcomes new Partners who wish to actively contribute to its programme of work and is working to facilitate the engagement of more developing countries.

Italy is currently Chair of the Partnership while Brazil is the Co-Chair. They are supported by the GBEP Secretariat, hosted at FAO Headquarters in Rome.

GBEP's activities

GBEP is a forum where voluntary cooperation works towards consensus amongst governments, intergovernmental organizations and other partners in the areas of the sustainability of bioenergy and its contribution to climate change mitigation. It also provides a platform for sharing information and examples of good practice.

The main objectives of the Global Bioenergy Partnership include to:

- promote global high-level dialogue on bioenergy policy-related issues and facilitate international cooperation;
- support national and regional bioenergy policy discussions and market development;
- favour the transformation of biomass use towards more efficient and sustainable practices;
- foster exchange of information and skills through bilateral and multilateral collaboration; and
- facilitate bioenergy integration into energy markets by tackling barriers in the supply chain.

GBEP's achievements in the last year

Over its last year of work, GBEP has made real advances in its current priority areas, which are:

1. facilitating the sustainable development of bioenergy;
2. testing a common methodological framework on GHG emission reduction measurement from the use of bioenergy; and
3. raising awareness and facilitating information exchange on bioenergy.

1. Facilitating the sustainable development of bioenergy

In June 2008, GBEP established a Task Force on Sustainability, under the leadership of the United Kingdom.

The Task Force is working to develop a set of relevant, practical, science-based, voluntary criteria and indicators regarding the sustainability of bioenergy. The criteria and indicators are intended to guide any analysis undertaken of bioenergy at the domestic level with a view to informing decision making and facilitating the sustainable development of bioenergy in a manner consistent with multilateral trade obligations.

The Task Force has provided a unique forum for discussion amongst governments and international organizations of the full range of opportunities and challenges presented by bioenergy. It has made significant progress in sharing the different perspectives of an increasingly diverse group of countries and organizations and identifying common ground on sustainable bioenergy development. Partners and Observers have cooperated in formulating a list of robust science-based sustainability indicators that are practical to measure. GBEP aims to present a complete set of indicators in 2011. The Task Force will also explore the possibility of piloting and consultation.

2. Testing a common methodological framework on GHG emission reduction measurement from the use of bioenergy

The GBEP Task Force on GHG Methodologies was established in October 2007 under the joint leadership of the United States and the UN Foundation to develop a common methodological framework for the use of policy makers and stakeholders when assessing GHG emissions associated with bioenergy and to make GHG lifecycle analyses more transparent. In June 2009, the Task Force published "Version Zero" of "The GBEP Common Methodological Framework for GHG Lifecycle Analysis of Bioenergy" and, after a phase of dissemination and testing, this is now complete as "Version One" and will be considered by the Steering Committee on November 19, 2010 for approval and for publication by early 2011.

3. Raising awareness and facilitating information exchange on bioenergy

GBEP's awareness-raising and information exchange activities have focused on the following areas:

- a. Development of GBEP's information material, including management of the GBEP website (www.globalbioenergy.org), which includes a database of bioenergy information, and collations of financing opportunities for bioenergy projects and programmes for developing countries and analytical tools to assess and unlock sustainable bioenergy potential;
- b. Participation in relevant international conferences and meetings focused on bioenergy as well as organization of specific GBEP events relating to its activities and programme of work;
- c. Organization of an international media campaign to promote GBEP activities, which has led to extensive media coverage of GBEP's activities, and publication of a quarterly GBEP newsletter.

New GBEP work

GBEP is planning to build on its current activities by finalising a set of voluntary sustainability criteria and indicators and approving Version One of "The GBEP Common Methodological Framework for GHG Lifecycle Analysis of Bioenergy". Alongside this work, GBEP has decided to discuss a scope of work for a new task force to facilitate capacity building for sustainable bioenergy. In light of this work, GBEP will submit a report to the 2011 G8/G20 Summits in France.