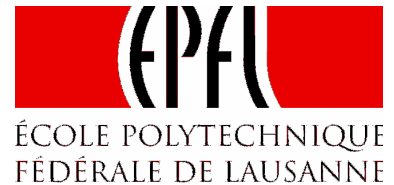


Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels

An initiative of the EPFL Energy Center



1st Meeting of Expert Panel on Conservation/Biodiversity - Minutes 3rd of October 2007

1. General objectives:

Because we have so many participants in the Working Group that in-depth conversations via teleconference will be difficult, the RSB secretariat has decided to form small groups of experts in order to prepare the discussions of the working group and formulate a certain number of recommendations based on an in-depth analysis and the experience of their members. Within the RSB Working Group on Environment, the Expert Panel on Conservation needs to discuss the following aspects:

- Establish the exhaustive list of aspects that need to be taken into consideration under the “conservation” principle in order to cover all the possible adverse effects.
- Organise these aspects into a list of criteria that would be as simple and explicit as possible. These criteria will be suggested and discussed by the Working Group.
- Suggest the indicators needed to perform a complete assessment of whether these criteria are met along the biofuel value chain.
- During their recent meeting, the RSB Steering Board indicated that they would like the Working Groups to try to establish the red line below which a biofuel would not be eligible for the standards (even with a good score in other aspects). For instance, conversion of primary forest. The Sustainable Agriculture Network/Rainforest Alliance use the term “critical criterion”. If this particular one is not met, the biofuel would not meet the standard.
- Propose an appropriate wording to the principle in order to cover all the above-mentioned aspects.

2. 1st Meeting objectives:

As the issues need much discussion to be solved, several teleconferences will be needed to cover all the objectives. This first meeting aimed to start discussing the content of the criteria and their wording.

3. List of attendees:

Debbie Hammel	NRDC
Lera Miles	UNEP-WCMC
Juliana Cesar	Petrobras
Sachin Kapila	Shell
Lars Laestadius	World Resources Institute

Laszlo Mathe	WWF
Frank Katto	FSC
James Mudie	Tropical Forest Trust
Julien Troussier	Tropical Forest Trust
Wayne Twine	Univ of Witwatersrand
Sebastien Haye (moderator)	RSB

4. Contents of the criteria and indicators:

As per the discussions held within the Working Group, on the bioenergy wiki website, the elements from the questionnaires and the inputs of the Expert Panel, the important aspects to cover under the *conservation* principle are:

- Protect all aspects related to biodiversity, in particular endemic, rare, protected or threatened species.
- Minimizing the loss of ecosystem Services (incl. carbon sequestering soils). There is a possibility to specify a certain number of services under the principle on conservation, whereas others might be included in other principles.
- Protect HCV areas such as native ecosystems (including fragmented ecosystems), IUCN, Ramsar, AZE, KBD...Prohibit Conversion but allow exploitation as far as HCV are preserved. (*Note: in the case of 2nd generation, we could imagine HCV grasslands exploited without being converted*)
- Protect ecological Corridors
- Include temporal considerations. (1) No conversion of important areas after a certain date (cut-off date for eligibility). (2) Historic burden of deforestation in Northern countries VS forbidding Southern countries to do the same.
- Encouraging Best Practices in agriculture such as the use of native species, the restoration of degraded lands, and the diversification of cropping.
- Do not make the requirements so strict that biofuel production is impossible

5. Aspects discussed during the teleconference:

- The term “endemic” is introduced. Endemism refers to species with ranges restricted to a particular region/area. We could hence cite “
- The absolute loss of ecosystem services, given the complexity of these processes, seems impossible to avoid. Hence the use of “minimize”...
- There is a need for a general principle on best practices, for example the use of native species, crop rotation, no monoculture, use of degraded lands, etc...This does not come as a crucial criterion (or redline) but must be highly promoted.

- The possibility of extracting resources from an HCV area must remain open, as it is the case in forestry, where some forest can be exploited while preserving its high conservation value. This may hold true for 2nd generation rather than the 1st one. IN any case, conversion will remained absolutely prohibited.
- On a technical point of view, it seems possible to map HCV areas by using proxy criteria, as already done in Russia for the FSC. However, this would imply to reformulate the criteria, maintaining the essence of the principle, and delegate this role to field specialists. This would require appropriate means.
- “Natural” is a confusing and imprecise term. In the case of ecosystem, we should use “native” instead.
- Which degree of awareness and involvement can we legitimately expect from the managers? Is it unrealistic to expect the producer to identify areas around their production site or to set a special management system? It looks difficult to expect this degree of consciousness and skills but the knowledge of surrounding areas and an environmental management plan can be promoted, not as a crucial criterion thus. There should be a difference between the responsibility of the producer in the direct impacts its production may have on the surrounding areas (emissions in river or lake for instance) and a possible involvement in the ecological management of the areas around. The first aspect is absolutely compulsory, whereas the second one is to be encouraged, but not as a crucial criterion.
- It appears impossible to establish an environmental management plan without a proper Environmental Impact Assessment before. This is required in some countries for any new production site, could we make it compulsory in the countries where it s not the case?
- Ecological corridors. Areas maintained as ‘set aside areas’ are very useful monitoring indicators (“reference sites”) for biodiversity conservation or the impacts of biofuel production on the biodiversity status. So making this a requirement rather than optional would be useful irrespective of whether or not such an area would be used an ecological corridor. There is always some reluctance by managers to implement things that are optional especially if there are some costs implications in terms of time and money. It can be challenging to develop indicators within a standard for activities that are optional.
- Rather than citing all the existing protected areas classifications, we should better refer to systems set by a country itself or by a non-governmental or international organization. The intent behind referring to existing classifications (even beyond that national level) would be to ‘fill in’ where gaps exist under the national biodiversity standards and thus the Biofuel production systems/standard would be seen as adding value.
- The terms “national/international” are to imprecise to be used.
- High conservation values include endangered, protected and endemic species.

6. Proposition of criteria for the RSB (some aspects have not yet been debated by the Expert Panel)

General comment: it is important to define, in the preamble, what we understand as “biofuel production” or “biofuel production site”, for it shall ideally include both the agricultural and industrial part of the production. Similarly, every term such as biodiversity, wildlife, ecosystem, etc... will have to be detailed somewhere in annexes or in preamble.

a) Identification of native ecosystems and wildlife protection:

“It is the responsibility of the producer to identify the nature of the ecosystems on the production site and around. If native ecosystems, ecological corridors or HCV areas are identified by the producer on the production site and around, the exploitation must comply with criteria 6.b and 6.e.

b) High conservation value areas:

“HCV areas, intact or fragmented native ecosystems and biological conservation areas (*list of areas will be provided in annex or as indicators. Ex: KBD*) cannot be converted for biofuel production. Exploitation of such areas can be envisaged as long as high conservation values are preserved.” (*Cut-off date and compensation included in the indicators?*)

Note: Ban of conversion can be our “redline”.

c) Ecosystem functions and services:

“Adverse effects of biofuel production on ecosystem functions and services must be avoided or minimised. Ecosystem functions include (1) ecosystem physico-chemical integrity, regeneration and succession; (2) genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity; (3) natural cycles that affect the productivity of the ecosystem.” (*cf: FSC criterion 6.3*)”

d) Buffer zones and Riparian areas:

“Buffer zones must be set between the production sites and surrounding natural areas to ensure that they remain unaffected by the production. Riparian zones should be maintained or restored to a natural/near-natural state”

e) Ecological corridors:

“Biofuel production must not destruct or disrupt natural ecological corridors. In case the production site disrupts an ecological corridor, a significant area (10%???) of the production site must be maintained in a natural state to allow undisrupted migrations of wildlife.”

Suggestion from a participant: The size of the area shall be defined by laws and regulations or by an environmental agency.

f) Best practices: (possibly somewhere else in the standards)

“Biofuel production using native species, no tillage, crop rotation or consortium and degraded land shall be promoted and technically or financially supported.”

***NEXT VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE EXPERT PANEL
ON CONSERVATION: 24th of October; 3pm GMT***