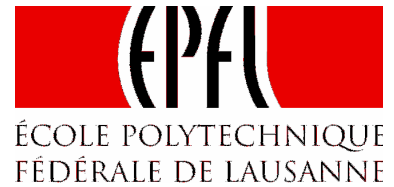


Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels

An initiative of the EPFL Energy Center



8th Virtual Meeting of the Working Group on Environment, 7th May 2008

Principle and Criteria on Soils and Air - Summary

1. News

- **Regional outreach in India:** 12-13th June 2008, in collaboration with the UN Environment Programme and the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi. Suggestions of participants from the subcontinent are welcome!
- Feedbacks from the **Steering Board and Implementation Working Group** on the Principles and Criteria related to environment, to be integrated shortly.

2. Discussion on Principle on Soils

- The Working Group agree to replace 2nd sentence by **“Soil management practices shall be implemented to improve soil health.”** ‘Appropriate’ is considered too vague.
- The Working Group agrees that **any agricultural practices will have an effect on soil** and change it, but degradation is not unavoidable and it does not seem too unrealistic to aim for a continuous improvement of soil health.
- Some participants consider there is a **contradiction between the 2 sentences** of the principle. **Suggestion:** As principles can remain aspirational, the word **‘seek’** could be introduced.
- One participant considers erosion and soil loss not sufficiently emphasised. The Secretariat will propose a new wording including a stronger statement on avoiding soil losses.

3. Discussion on Criteria on Soils

The participants did not express any strong disagreement with the content of the table. Remarks:

- The indirect impacts include nothing to do with on-farm practices. Direct impacts hence include downstream processes as well (biomass processing, transport, etc...).
- ‘Unnecessary burning’ refers to situations others than those where a trade-off with employment or workers’ safety might allow burning practices.
- The FAO guidelines on pesticides are comprehensive but quite complex. The RSB will thoroughly study the possibility to refer to this, the sources mentioned by the FSC, the Rotterdam Convention, and others...in order to select the best option. An Expert Group might be set to deal with this aspect later on. The good practices will be consequently modified.
- Social criteria on workers rights will a reference to chemical safety.

- The possibility of removing criterion 8f (soil services) does not meet a consensus, as some considers it redundant with 8b to 8e whereas others find important to have a reminder that soil provides services beyond biomass.
- The term 'waste' is inappropriate and should be substituted by 'by-products'.
- **The Working Group supports the idea of prioritizing the use of agricultural residues and by-products as amendments.**
- So far, IPM is only mentioned in the good practices? Shall we bring IPM into the criteria on soil, or even more generally? **The guidance of the Expert Panel on Soil will be requested on this aspect and the decision will be made by the Working Group during the 9th Virtual Meeting.**
- 8a should specifically request a 'continuous' monitoring so that it is not interpreted as a need for initial assessment and nothing else afterward.

4. Discussion on Principle and Criteria on Air

- A principle aiming at **zero pollution might be too aspirational** and unrealistic, although producers are to be audited against criteria, not principle. We could aim at reduced Air pollution over some baseline, with the aim of continuously improve the quality of air. There may be ways of reducing air pollution, even without totally eliminating it.
- **'Open burning'** shall be specified in 10d to keep electric cogeneration as an option.
- **Suggestion from Secretariat:** As a separate principle deals with the compliance with law, the criterion 10b should be removed. Specific points on air, soil, water etc...should be added under the principle and criteria on compliance with the existing laws.
- Reference to international conventions might be stronger than national laws, but if countries have not ratified these treaties or conventions, it remains difficult to implement. Furthermore, local laws are sometimes better enforced than national or internal laws.
- The Working Group will try to get some guidance from the California Air Resource Board through some contacts from participants.

The principle and criteria on air need some more work and discussion. Further contributions through emails are very much welcome on this aspect.

Based on the suggestions provided by the Working Group on Environment and the Expert Panel, the Secretariat will shortly send an updated version of the Principles and Criteria on Soils and Air, to be validated over the 9th Virtual Meeting (End of May), along with the forthcoming P&C on water.

THANKS TO ALL THE PARTICIPANTS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION!
