

Regional Caribbean Roundtable for Sustainable Biofuels
March 11th and 12th
Dominican Republic



Background

The previous surge in world energy prices, interest in energy security, and a growing international focus on climate change is sparking interest in biofuels. Governments throughout the world are increasingly concerned with how to meet growing energy needs while confronting global climate change. However, biofuels are increasingly blamed for rising food prices and recent studies showed that certain biofuels have questionable socio-economic implications, adverse environmental impacts, negative energy balances and do actually exacerbate instead of mitigate climate change. These concerns must be taken into consideration to motivate increased investment and endeavors to ensure that only the most sustainable biofuels projects are implemented.

To address these issues, the IDB and the RSB have collaborated on the elaboration of sustainability principles and criteria for biofuel projects in the LAC region. In August 2008, the RSB released their "Version Zero" of sustainability principles and criteria¹; beginning of September 2008 the IDB launched its web-based interactive "Biofuel Sustainability Scorecard"².

During the Inter-American Development Bank's Annual Meeting in Miami in April 2007, the Bank established a partnership with the Roundtable for Sustainable Biofuels (RSB). The RSB is the worldwide multi-stakeholder initiative comprising non-governmental organizations, companies, governments, academics and inter-governmental groups seeking to develop draft global standards for sustainable biofuels production and processing. As part of this Partnership, the IDB and RSB agreed on organizing and co-hosting several regional workshops before the IDB's 2009 Annual Meeting.

The overall objective of these regional workshops is to build capacity in the region, both with external stakeholders and clients, and in the Bank's country offices, in assessing the sustainability of biofuels production, in using and validating the IDB Biofuels Sustainability Scorecard. At the same time, the IDB has been working on a technical cooperation with various Caribbean Governments on advancing a domestic biofuels industry. Part of this technical cooperation includes a biofuels workshop to increase collaboration and develop an action plan by all relevant stakeholders within the Caribbean region.

Activity

The RSB and IDB propose to co-host a regional workshop in the Dominican Republic. During this regional workshop both RSB's "Version Zero" and IDB's "Biofuel Sustainability Scorecard" will be presented and discussed and feedback will be gathered from regional stakeholders, authorities, practitioners and the biofuel community at large in order to contribute to the elaboration of sustainability standards and build capacity in the region.

¹ <http://cgse.epfl.ch/Jahia/site/cgse/op/edit/lang/en/pid/70341>

² <http://www.iadb.org/scorecard>

Objective

The underpinning objective of this regional workshop is to raise awareness, enrich knowledge and foster programs to increase the sustainability of biofuels projects in the Caribbean region. Some of the issues to be addressed include:

- a. Efforts to implement sustainability standards in the biofuel sector
- b. Tackling specific issues such as food security, land use change and land ownership
- c. Identifying potential solutions and further recommendations to increase the sustainability level of biofuel projects.

Participants

The target participants are a balanced involvement at executive level of one third industry, one third Non-Governmental Organization and small farm cooperatives, and one third governments, academics and other experts. The objective of the regional workshop is to bring together private- and public sector, practitioner, regulators, policymakers, civil society and other key stakeholders of the Caribbean in order to facilitate a transfer of knowledge and to increase the sustainability of cultivation, processing and distribution of biofuels. Additionally Bank staff from each of the country offices will be invited in order to build institutional capacity in assessing biofuels projects and using the Scorecard. These regional workshops will be attended by approximately 50 people.

Agenda

The workshop will be two days in duration with the following proposed draft agenda:

<i>First Day</i> REGIONAL CARIBBEAN ROUNDTABLE FOR SUSTAINABLE BIOFUELS

9:00 – 10:30 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- Keynote welcome and brief overview of IDB activities in the biofuel sector
- Round of presentation of participants
- Enhancing Regional Cooperation under the CBI
- Overview: Biofuels and Sustainability

10:30 – 10:45 Coffee break

10:45 – 13:00 CHALLENGES IN SUSTAINABILITY OF BIOFUELS

- Case Study: Mapping Sustainability - the case of the Dominican Republic
- Biofuel production and Food Security
- Decision Support System: Biodiversity and Biofuels through GIS
- Implementing sustainability standards in the private sectors

12:45 – 14:00 Lunch break

Afternoon IDB SUSTAINABLE BIOFUEL SCORECARD

14:00 – 14:45 Presentation of the IDB's Biofuels Sustainability Scorecard (30 + 15min)

14:45 – 15:00 Coffee break

15:00 – 17:30 Working Groups to discuss and improve IDB's Scorecard in break-outs:

- Social aspects (including food security)
- Production aspects
- Environmental aspects

17:30 – 18:30 Plenary summary of Working Groups and next steps for Scorecard

<p><i>Second Day</i> REGIONAL CARIBBEAN ROUNDTABLE FOR SUSTAINABLE BIOFUELS</p>
--

9:00 – 10:30 RSB's VERSION ZERO

- Presentation of RSB's Version Zero

10:30 – 10:45 Coffee break

10:45 – 13:00 RSB's VERSION ZERO

- Working groups to discuss and improve RSB's Version Zero Principles and Criteria

13:00 – 14:30 Lunch break

14:30 – 17:30 RSB's VERSION ZERO (Con't)

- Working groups to discuss and improve RSB's Version Zero Principles and Criteria

17:30 – 18:30 Summary of Working Groups and next steps towards Version One