

Criteria and Principle on Conservation – Draft Synthesis

1. Introduction

The Working Group on Environment has been discussing the **Conservation criteria and principle** from the month of September to the beginning of December, as per the RSB timeline. A valuable preparation work was permanently done by an Expert Panel on Conservation, who has been interacting through emails and the bioenergy wiki, in addition to two conference calls over this period.

Although the wording of the criteria is still debated, their content is close from a consensus, save for a few elements to be clarified. **As per the Steering Board requirement in order to respect our timeline, the Working Group on Environment is asked to provide a first set of draft criteria shortly.**

In order to fulfil this requirement, the Secretariat makes the following propositions:

- The discussion on Conservation Criteria will remain open as long as the wording as not reached a consensus. Discussions can be held at any moments, with regards to the Working Group coordinator's availability, though his presence is not forcefully required if members want to exchange by emails or on the wiki.
- The following table is a synthesis of the current state of the discussions. It does not include a specific wording, but state the content of the criteria, their current status (whether there is a consensus and other points to be debated) and some remarks. This table would be presented to the Steering Board and available for public consultation on the internet, but with a clear mention that this is a temporary version.

Each participant is invited to comment the table during the conference call, or before if possible. Elements can be added, removed or edited according to these comments. The secretariat has tried to include all the previous elements of discussion, but in case some of them would be missing, the table would be completed consequently. Please note that some elements of the table have not been subject to consensus, but may have been relevantly raised by one or two members only. Please indicate if you would disagree to see some points included in such a table and why.

2. Criteria on Conservation (Draft synthesis table)

Criterion	Theme	Content	Status/Points of disagreement	Remarks
7.a	Identification of production site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Responsibility of the producer in the identification of HCV areas, Native ecosystems, ecological corridors and other biological conservation areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consensus on a distinction between small and large farmers' responsibilities. ➤ Governments must be involved in a global mapping exercise but producers must provide data accordingly to their means. ➤ The identification of surrounding areas poses the problem of land ownership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ HCV areas defined as per the HCV network definition. ➤ Timing of identification needs to be defined. Type of assessment not defined: quick EIA? LCA? ➤ Support mechanisms to help producers must be discussed. Maybe in the IMP WG? ➤ Distinction between small/large producers based on land areas or biofuel production capacities? ➤ Is a separate set of criteria, with appropriate wording needed for small producers?
7.b	HCV areas, native ecosystems, ecological corridors and other biological conservation areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No conversion of such areas. ➤ Limited exploitation under appropriate management as long as HCVs are maintained. ➤ Conversion of areas having lost their HCVs (degraded after a cut-off date) allowed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Almost at consensus. ➤ This criterion might be too strict and not workable from a business perspective. When development in one or more of these areas is unavoidable, there should be some recognition of a compensation mechanism that under the circumstances of unavoidable impact to an area of HCV (once defined), and that the mitigation hierarchy has been applied (i.e. avoid, reduce, mitigate), can kick-in (e.g. like-for-like or like-for-unlike biodiversity offset). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cut-off date to be established for use of former HCV areas, which have lost their HCVs. ➤ The notion of offsets must be introduced. ➤ Needs to define degraded lands somewhere in the standards
7.c	Ecosystem functions and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Avoid or minimise negative effects on EF and ES. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consensus (Wording agreed). ➤ Need to define what a producer would concretely have to do to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ecosystem functions include ecosystem physico-chemical integrity, regeneration and

			achieve this (IMP WG?)	succession; genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity; natural cycles that affect the productivity of the ecosystem. Ecosystem services are the benefits obtained by people from ecosystems. These include provisioning, regulating, cultural and supporting services, as defined by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
7.d	Buffer zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ BZ must be set between production site and surrounding areas. ➤ Riparian zones to be kept in a natural state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consensus on the concept. ➤ Definition of “natural” is problematic. ➤ Guidance needed in terms of methodology and timing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ BZ not forcefully at the edge of each cluster, if part of a clustered production site
7.e	Ecological Corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Avoid disruption. ➤ If an EC is identified in the production site, it must be maintained in its original state. ➤ In case habitat connectivity or wildlife movement is reduced, a significant area of the production site must be set aside. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consensus on the concept. ➤ Need to define a % of the area to be set aside. ➤ To allow compensating through set aside land is contradictory with “avoiding disruption”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Could BZ and EC be the same set-aside land?
7.f	Good practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promote the use of degraded land, native species, crop rotation, global landscape management system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Point superficially discussed due to limited time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Not sure to keep it in the conservation principle or to have it as a more general principle including social and other environmental aspects?
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ According to some feedbacks we received, HCV areas cover everything including fragmented native ecosystems and all types of biological conservation areas. Hence, is it necessary to cite the latter in the wording? ➤ The HCV concept lacks mapped areas. Practical implementation of a standard requires that specific HCV areas be located areas may be difficult to map, unless we refer to national interpretation with the establishment of proxy criteria. ➤ Global Land-use management is to be promoted in the standards (Reference to CCBA standards) 			

3. Principle on Conservation

If possible, the Working Group will have to find a consensus on the wording of the principle on Conservation, which was still kept open after the 3rd Virtual Meeting.

The current version of this principle is:

Biofuel production should not directly or indirectly endanger wildlife species or areas of high conservation value

However, this wording still receives some critics, especially regarding the use of “endanger” or “wildlife”. The following suggestion was made by one participant:

<p><i>Biofuel production should avoid significant impacts on wildlife populations, or areas of High Conservation Value.</i></p>

We could also imagine replacing “*avoid significant impacts*” by “*minimise negative impacts*”, but in both case, there will be a need for a clear definition somewhere in the standards, both for “significant” or “minimise”.

An easy yet efficient option is also to suppress the wording of the principle and simply have a heading for each set of criteria, in this case, “Conservation”.