

# Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels

An initiative of the EPFL Energy Center



## Minutes of the Second Meeting, Working Group on Social Impacts (SOC) September 10th, 2007

### Coordinators:

- SOC WG; Annie Sugrue (AS) (EPFL): [Annie.Sugrue@epfl.ch](mailto:Annie.Sugrue@epfl.ch)
- Overall RSB; Charlotte Opal (CO) (EPFL): [Charlotte.Opal@epfl.ch](mailto:Charlotte.Opal@epfl.ch)

### Meeting Chair:

- Jürgen Maier (AS), German NGO Forum on Environment and Development

## 1. Participants in Attendance

Ruaraidh Petre, Solidaridad  
Peter Rowan, consultant  
Monica Romano, IFAD  
Tyson Chisambo, Biofuels Association of Zambia  
Claire Bussy Pestalozzi, ILO  
Thomas Ruddy, EMPA (Swiss Materials Testing Institute)  
Jean-Francois Dallemand, Joint Research Center of the EC  
Juergen Maier, German NGO Forum  
Steven Oates, ILO  
Lars Friberg, Postdam University  
Peter Poschen, ILO  
Olivier Geneviève, Ethical Sugar  
Aimee Gonzales, WWF International  
Eric Shayer, Infinity Bioenergy  
Linda N Thompson, Principle Energy  
Flo DiBona  
Martina Otto, UNEP  
Stefan Mård, Novozymes  
Jayant Sarnaik, AERF India  
Chris Corner, Helius Energy  
Alice Woodhead, Link Strategy  
Jay Woosaree, Alberta Research Council  
Paul Chisale  
S Sriram, Tata Chemicals

## 2. Welcome

Juergen Maier (JM) introduced himself and welcomed the participants. He noted that this meeting would be to discuss paper 2 of the SOC WG as prepared by the secretariat.

Annie Sugrue was introduced as the new coordinator of the Social Impacts Working Group.

JM confirmed that the participants accepted the proposed agenda

### **3 Discussion of Principles**

#### **3.1 Missing issues – Are there issues missing from the principles?**

This agenda item was to consider issues that might be excluded from the list of principles.

- 3.1.1 Gender – it was agreed that the recommendation made by the secretariat would be adopted, that this would not be a principle but included in the criteria to be developed. There was discussion on the ILO Decent Work Agenda and it was agreed that this would be included in the criteria as well, along with references to gender.
- 3.1.2 Biotechnology- no specific comments on the principle were made, but the group agreed that a social expert should sit in the ENV WG and that this principle should remain in the ENV WG, but social considerations should be taken into account when considering the criteria.
- 3.1.3 High Conservation Value Areas – It was agreed that a social expert in this area should be brought into the ENV experts group to ensure social values are included in the HCV concept. A further comment was made that we should promote the utilization of high conservation value/underutilized *species* (for instance, IUCN red-listed species), as growing them for biofuel feedstock could bring them back into use. It was agreed that this issue should be looked at within the ENV WG.

An additional point was raised - that no mention of how conflict resolution would be addressed could be found in the principles, nor was there reference to how the principles will be adopted. It was suggested that might be considered as an additional principle. While this received support, others thought that it was not common practise to include this point within principles, but it should be given consideration under the implementation working group. CO clarified this and noted that *how* the principles and criteria are enforced (for instance, third party certification, conflict resolution) would be an issue of implementation.

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#### **Action items**

- 1 The SOC WG coordinator will liaise with the ENV WG to ensure that some social expertise is included in the ENV Expert Groups on biotechnology and biodiversity/HCV areas.*
  - 2 The group and coordinator will ensure that gender is taken up in the criteria along with Decent Work Agenda.*
  - 3 The coordinator will liaise with the IMP WG to ensure that issue of conflict resolution are contained within the criteria.*
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#### **3.2 National law & labor rights**

It was noted that the term “fundamental rights” might result in a misinterpretation of the intention of the principles. Fundamental rights in international law have a specific interpretation and by limiting it to fundamental rights, we could be excluding other rights that are not “fundamental” in international law.

It was further noted that the language used when describing rights and laws is critical, as in law there is a different interpretation between “should” and “shall” and the language must be nuanced to ensure that it covers precisely what is meant. It was suggested that the language can be stronger than “should”, as laws have to be obeyed, there is no choice in this. The principles should be looking at what is most desirable.

A suggestion was made that regional law or agreements be looked at as they may have stronger or different emphasis, the secretariat will work closely with the Biofuels Association of Zambia to develop this idea to see if it has merit.

It was suggested that the established language used in ILO be used.

Again the issue of using the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda was raised to be included in this section

### 3.2.1 Separate out labor rights into its own principle?

While it was not specifically discussed whether or not human and labor rights needed their own principle, the wording of this principle was heavily discussed, so it is assumed that there is support for having labor/human rights separated in their own principle.

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#### **Action items**

*4 The secretariat will work closely with the ILO to develop the right language and nuance for these principles so that they are in line with international and regional laws and norms.*

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### **3.3 Food security**

#### 3.3.1 Suggestion by secretariat - leave scope definition to the criteria level

The group were happy with the principle as it stood, with the changes suggested by the secretariat. It was suggested that the priority be given to non food crops as a principle, but others felt that the issue was about competition and if there were adequate land and adequate food, then surplus food crops could be used for biofuel production without negative impacts and if you are too restrictive then the crops go to waste. It was agreed that the principle as it is revised covered the concern, but within the criteria, a close examination of crop types and competition issues would need to be addressed. This point was added to by another participant who felt this should be both for food and non food applications.

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#### **Action items**

*5 The coordinator and group will ensure that the criteria balance carefully the need for both ensuring food security and marketability of agricultural products*

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#### 3.3.2 Aspirational wording of principles– is this what we prefer to use?

CO noted that this had been discussed in the ENV WG. It had been agreed that this would be dealt with by the Steering Board. We are asking the Steering Board in their meeting on September 20<sup>th</sup> to endorse that these are intended to be mainstream principles that most supply chains could achieve. This will affect the chosen wording.

Some comments were made that were not just about the wording in this section but generally for all principles. There was general support for the aspirational nature of the principles, as a way to lead those involved towards the ideal over time but:

- That while the principle can be aspirational, the criteria should be more realistic, otherwise they might be impossible to achieve.
- Making principles too aspirational could deter farmers and companies from implementing them because they find them impossible.
- We should move more towards ensuring compliance, based on impacts.
- It was suggested that the principles should have more teeth and not be too broad, don't water them down too much, or they won't lead the criteria in the right direction. Should not make them so easy that they let in low –performers or 'free riders'.
- However, the principles should be measurable, otherwise it is difficult to determine if you have achieved anything.

In summary the group agreed that moderately aspirational wording for the principles will have the biggest impact, but they need to be based on what is achievable and measurable.

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## Action items

*6 Recommend to the Steering Board that they keep the aspirational nature of the principles but ensure that the criteria lend a greater realism to the final outcome.*

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### 3.4 Rural development

#### 3.4.1 Phrasing of concept (well-being vs. socio-economic development vs. social security)

- It was generally agreed to phrase the principle as promoting a positive.
- It was pointed out that the principles as it stood could not be achieved unless rural communities were fully integrated into the processes, such as through buying from small holder farmers.
- There was a big discussion about the need to state rural, versus indigenous, versus producer communities versus local communities, as it was pointed out that you get poverty and need in urban areas as well, and many benefiting communities will not be rural but could be semi-urban or even urban communities. It was agreed by the group that although it made the principle long and cumbersome, that all these groupings need to be specifically stated as they are unique and have different needs and in this way the principle will protect against possible trade offs that might take place. The principles will be altered to reflect this change.
- The issue of consultation with local communities was raised, it was noted that this issue was not being dealt with sufficiently in the other working groups nor was there a principle that would reflect this need and intention. As it was considered really important by many of the participants, it was agreed that the secretariat would develop a new principle to reflect the need for full participation of communities in the development of biofuel programmes. While there was some discussion about which working group should deal with this, it was agreed that this should stay in the social working group. The ILO offered to help with the wording for this principle.
- While there was agreement that “socio economic upliftment” of communities was the aspirational principle in this case, rather than “well being” which was the term used previously, it was pointed out that you don't want to risk making a trade off between environmental concerns over socio economic concerns by pursuing a very strong socio economic agenda.

- CO noted that we will be seeking clarification from the Steering Board on this point, but that she assumed that there would be no trade-offs allowed – that one would have to comply with *all* principles to be considered a ‘sustainable’ biofuel. For instance, an excellent GHG balance would not be accepted as ‘sustainable’ if child labor were used. The Working Groups will probably have to define, for each principle, unacceptable behaviour.
- A point was raised that the value-added aspects of biofuels (for instance, capturing wealth locally) was important to rural and local community upliftment and therefore needed to be given priority. There was agreement that this was an important point, but should be included in the criteria under the principle dealing with socio economic upliftment
- It was agreed to take out the words “directly and indirectly” with respect to the proposed new principle.

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#### Action items

7        *The principle will read as follows:*

*“Biofuel production should contribute to the social and economic development of producer communities and local, rural, and indigenous people.”*

8        *A new principle on public participation will be developed with support from the ILO*

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#### 3.5 Biomass versus biofuels

CO noted it had been agreed by the Steering board that the RSB would focus on liquid biofuels rather than biomass, as the focus was on fuels for transport as this was where the debates lay. A point was made to change it to biofuels rather than liquid biofuels, as biogas is also used for transport.

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#### Action item

9        *The term “liquid biofuels” would be changed to “biofuels” so as to include biogas as a suggestion to the steering board.*

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## 4 Final synthesis of recommendations

AS noted that she would write up the minutes and distribute them to the group for comment and possible changes, where after they would be placed on the Wiki. Comments or changes to these minutes should be sent to Annie by Friday, September 14<sup>th</sup>.

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#### Action items

12        *AS to write up minutes and distribute to the participants for comment.*

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## 5 WG timeline

This issue was not discussed. Please send any comments on the timeline to Annie directly.