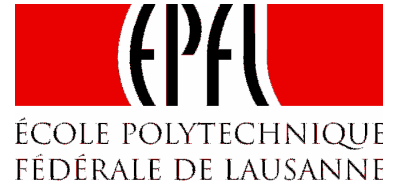


Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels

An initiative of the EPFL Energy Center



4th Virtual Meeting of the Working Group on Environment (synthesis)

19th of October 2007

[For the full minutes of the meeting, please consult env_paper 15]

1. General News:

- The Steering Board will meet in Lausanne on the 6th and 7th of November.
- The **Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels/UNEP Regional Outreach in Belo Horizonte** has attracted around 45 participants.
- A similar Regional Outreach will be held in Shanghai (13-14th Nov).

2. Identification and management of production areas:

The secretariat had formulated the following proposition:

6.a “It is the responsibility of the producer to identify the nature of the ecosystems on the production site and around it. 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. “

- Although it is impossible to avoid introducing new concept and practices among producers, it seems that their capacity to comply with such a criterion will depend on the **scale of production**.
- An **adapted language** must be introduced to understand the sense of the principle.
- The ENV Working Group addresses a **recommendation to the Working Group on Implementation (IMP WG) to define the limit between the different scales and intensity of production**. Does the scale depends on the agricultural production or the downstream conversion? Small producers can be grouped as cooperative for big scale biofuel production.
- Some initiatives have developed **separate standards** for small producers with consequent criteria. Regional meeting should help us defining smallholders.
- Existing identified areas are not sufficient, some identification of restricted areas must be undertaken. But by who? Who will pay for it? When we talk about the scale and intensity of operations and the burden that we are expecting to put on the producers, we need to consider it through the **actual capacities, compared to large producers who obviously have more means at disposal to carry out these requirements**.
- Most of the time, farmers are very well aware of what’s happening beyond their farm, including if protected areas are around. Every producer should have a land management plan.

3. Protection of conservation areas:

The secretariat had proposed the following wording:

6.b “HCV areas, intact or fragmented native ecosystems and biological conservation areas (list of areas will be provided in annex or as indicators. Ex: KBA) 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?)

- “Limited exploitation” will be specified.
- “Exploitation” is more accurate than “Management” in this case.
- Fragmented native ecosystems may be exploited without disrupting their HCV.
- **Lack of geographical specificity.** There is a concern that this could be left unspecified without defining a mechanism about how to reduce this geographical lack of specificity.
- **Biological Conservation Areas could be considered “protected areas”, on a legal perspective, which means that they are geographically bound.** But intact or fragmented native ecosystems really lack geographical specificity.
Geographical specification must be looked at.
- One of the key aspects in the discussion is that the **values are identified and then the areas.** How those values are identified and managed on the production areas? What is needed? The Identification of high conservation values, going back to scale question, are currently dealt with by an international network.
- Suggestion: **“Areas identified as containing HCVs, intact or fragmented native ecosystems and biological conservation areas cannot be converted for biofuel production.”**
- Producers can identify small areas on their production site but if we are to avoid the bigger effects (displacement of plantations for instance), it seems there is no way to avoid large scale identification. But a **high level process of mapping, though needed, cannot be done by the producers only. We must make a reference to an overall system of mapping of these areas.**
- **2 options: to consider that if HCV values have not been identified, one can freely move ahead. The other option is that unless values have been mapped, we potentially consider all of them containing HCVs. We need to define a way to avoid that unidentified areas are freely exploited.**
- **Issue of land use planning is one we need to be explicit about.**

4. Ecosystem functions and services:

The secretariat has proposed the following wording:

6.c “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)”

- **The Secretariat will add a definition of Ecosystem Services.**

- **Conversion of HCV areas will result in the loss of ES and EF, but not necessarily the opposite. Hence, this second lay of safety is needed.**
- The cut off date needs to be established.
- **The use of chemicals is to be addressed through soil, water and air, with Expert Panel for each topic.**

5. Buffer zones and ecological corridors:

The secretariat had proposed the following wording:

6.d “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”

6.e “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.”

- Criterion 6.d will be reworded on state that effects are minimized rather than the areas in question are “unaffected”, which would be unrealistic.
- The size of the area to be maintained as ecological corridor must be discussed by the IMP WG, considering the difference in capacities of the farmers.
- Wording is modified to “undisrupted migration of wildlife AND PROTECTION OF HABITATS”?
- Importance to develop **landscape level maps** that would allow comprehensive understanding for the decision makers **to identify the “no go” areas at a national or subnational level, as well as strategic migration corridors.** -> to be discussed with the IMP group.
- **We can be positive and constructive to emphasize that kind of contribution (Reconstruction or reestablishment of corridors), which conservation can make to the overall activity of the land.**
- **Calling for a management plan to be prepared is not necessarily a political statement. Management planning is done today and is a much more inclusive process than it once was.**

6. Conclusions and next steps:

All the suggestions agreed on during the conference will be included to reword some of our criteria. The next Virtual Meeting of the Working Group will be held in the second half of November 2007.

Thanks to all the participants!

Please keep on sending your views, comments and opinion to sebastien.haye@epfl.ch or upload them on the **Bioenergy Wiki** for an interactive debate!