



Criteria for Ensuring the Sustainability of Biofuels

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Overview

- Introduction
- Basic principles for sustainability criteria
- International work on sustainability criteria – RSPO
- Work in the UK - RTFO
- Analysis/ Conclusion



Lowland rainforest in Sumatra, Indonesia



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Only 3% remain



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Principles

Sustainability criteria must:

- Ensure that natural and semi natural ecosystems are protected;
- Be consistent with international environmental commitments;
- Deliver at least a 50% reduction in GHG emissions compared to fossil fuels;

Principles (cont.)

- Use the whole lifecycle analysis to assess the carbon balance of biofuels;
- Be based on the Ecosystem Approach;
- Protect ecosystem services (soil function, watershed protection, livelihoods);
- Take account of indirect land use changes (such as land leakage).

Principles (cont. II)

These principles must be underpinned by specific indicators including:

- Land use changes,
- Biodiversity,
- Water use,
- Soil impacts,
- Pollution,
- Introduction of invasives/ GMOs and
- GHG emissions

International work - RSPO

- Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil Production (RSPO) was set up in 2004 by a multi stakeholder forum in Southeast Asia;
- Addresses unsustainable palm oil production;
- Agreed a set of sustainability criteria including economic, social and environmental criteria;
- Adopted certification scheme Nov 2007 – first cert palm oil early 2008;

RSPO (cont.)

- RSPO has agreed on 8 Principles and 39 criteria for sustainable palm oil,
- Principles address economic, social and environmental aspects of palm oil production,
- *inter alia*: transparency, economic viability, environmental responsibility, employees' rights and responsible development of new plantings;

RSPO (cont. II)

The environmental criteria include:

- Identification and mitigation of environmental impacts;
- Identification and taking account of rare, threatened or endangered species and HVC habitat in management plans and operations;
- Reduce waste and promote env. friendly disposal;



RSPO (cont. III)

- Improve energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy;
- Discourage the use of fire as a method of waste disposal;
- Develop and implement plans to reduce GHG emissions.



The RTFO in the UK

- The Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation (RTFO) is the core legislation to promote biofuels in the UK
- Comes into force in April 2008
- 5% share of transport fuels by 2010



Sustainability reporting under RTFO

- Fuel suppliers will be required to report on GHG balance and sustainability of biofuels,
- From 2010/11 biofuels rewarded according to carbon savings and sustainability,
- Reports will be measured by a '**qualifying standard**'
- The qualifying standard consists of already existing standards, e.g. RSPO, Basel, FSC etc.



RTFO (cont.)

- The RTFO does not design a new standard but uses existing standards such as the RSPO
- Limited number of standards for limited number of feedstocks

Analysis/ Conclusions

- RSPO and RTFO make a promising start but are not a panacea
- No standard addresses indirect land use changes (land leakages)
- Do not address illegal production,
- No international standard applicable to all feedstocks and production,

Analysis (cont.)

- Do not deter unsustainable biofuels to enter the market;
- Need for labelling;
- Schemes are still in their infancy (just past pilot project stage);
- Doubtful if they will be able to cope with the demand for sustainable feedstock.

Conclusion

- The beginning of a process for more sustainable production rather than the end;
- Extend sustainability criteria to all agricultural commodities.

Many thanks for your attention!

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