

Parallel break-out panel

Forestry Biomass

|

Session Chair: Tat Smith IEA Bioenergy Task 43

Rapporteur: Agathe Kuhn, European Climate Foundation

Note that names related to participants' statements – which were originally included in the group notes – were taken out to reflect that the discussion was under Chatham House rules.

IEA Bioenergy Roadmap Workshop - Sustainability Governance

Summary of Forestry Discussion Sub-group

Key points

To what extent do the current sustainability initiatives cover the principal issues?

- Lots of the biomass produced in the world today not traded – how can sustainability frameworks potentially deal with that?
- Early sustainability initiatives such as certification systems for sustainable forest management (SFM) were developed when bioenergy feedstocks from forests were primarily by-products of harvesting operations designed to produce traditional forest products e.g. saw logs, pulpwood, veneer. This is mostly the case also nowadays. However, today, in addition to sustainable forest management more frequently GHG balance in the value chain is needed in calculations because of the increased use of woody biomass in energy production. Therefore, next-generation sustainability frameworks should be designed to consider GHG balance in whole value chains.
- There is a need for a holistic approach to defining sustainability standards which bridges the gap between energy system requirements and forest protection requirements.
- Biodiversity, carbon, water and soil values are adequately covered by certification schemes in the forestry sector. The key is now to build upon these existing systems and develop them to consider GHG savings in the whole value chain. Make it simple for companies to comply with required standards (i.e. avoid regulatory complexity). Make co-regulation between voluntary and mandatory schemes (i.e. several co-existing layers) easier to deal with.

What's not controlled sufficiently?

- Governmental governance in some areas is a concern; the degree to which sustainability requirements can address governmental governance needs consideration. Governmental governance issues include land tenure and land use rights. Governmental governance has relevance to the degree to which the investment community will view bioenergy system investments as attractive, or too risky. Forest certification schemes consider these issues.
- Reducing risk is important in developing efficient bioenergy supplies to meet decarbonisation objectives.
- GHG balances: this topic and related issues will require further discussions to find a consensus amongst various stakeholders.
- Sustainable Forest Management certification standards should not be specific regarding the end-use of harvested forest biomass.
- Forest policy should also include climate change mitigation features. Overall policy frameworks promoting certain uses of wood from a bio-economy perspective should consider allowing markets to determine which biomass is used to produce energy and which biomass is used to produce higher value products.

Do current measure provide sufficient stimulus to promote the good practice and innovation to deliver a large scale sustainable supply?

- There is a lot more to do. Topics and issues to be addressed regarding wood products generally and not only bioenergy.
- Forest certification schemes including, FSC, PEFC and SBP (Sustainable Biomass Programme) framework promote good practice and innovation through market efficiency (i.e. alignment of market demand and supply drivers).

Who are the key actors willing to collaborate on a framework?

- All stakeholders present today.