

COMMUNIQUÉ

Working together towards sustainable supply of biomass for the bioeconomy

On 23 May 2019 the IEA Technology Collaboration Programme on Bioenergy (IEA Bioenergy) held a workshop in Utrecht, the Netherlands on '**Governing sustainability in biomass supply chains for the bioeconomy**'. The workshop was organized in collaboration with the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Energy Agency (IEA), the Biofuture Platform, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), and below50, and hosted by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RvO).

Securing a sustainable supply of biomass is one of the key issues for deploying bioenergy, but also other biobased products. Given the ample debate on the sustainability of bioenergy and biofuels, it can be expected that similar requirements and governance systems will be discussed for other emerging biobased products, and existing bioeconomy commodities such as food & feed, fibers, timber etc. **Supporting and building a sustainable bioeconomy will require collaboration of policy and market actors across sectors as well as civil society.** This workshop kicks-off the work of IEA Bioenergy to identify approaches and strategies for sustainable cross-sectoral supply-chain management, together with many partners.

Jim Spaeth, chair of IEA Bioenergy, states: "What we have gathered to do here today is critical for the future of bioenergy, and it is truly precedent setting in bringing together in collaboration all of these key international organizations. The work to deliver clear and fact-based information as to the sustainability basis for bioenergy is absolutely vital to establishing the bioeconomy."

Pharoah Le Feuvre of the International Energy Agency outlined that: "Modern bioenergy is the largest source of renewable energy today, and crucial to long term climate change mitigation efforts. This is especially the case in industry and long haul transport where less options for GHG emissions reduction exist. Policy frameworks are needed to speed up the deployment of the most beneficial forms of bioenergy. However, such support also needs to link to demonstrating sustainability. While good examples of bioenergy sustainability governance exist, these are not widespread enough and are more commonly related to liquid biofuels for transport. Effective policy frameworks need to extend to more countries, all forms of bioenergy and therefore cover a larger share of global bioenergy consumption. The IEA is actively working with the Biofuture Platform and other key stakeholders to achieve this aim".

Maria Michela Morese, Executive Secretary of the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP) recognizes "the importance to give strong visibility to bioenergy within the bioeconomy." She added that "GBEP is more than happy and ready to share its experience on the development and implementation of the GBEP sustainability indicators, for their use in the bioeconomy context."

Olivier Dubois, coordinator of FAO's Energy Programme, indicates that "Bioeconomy, and in particular ensuring sustainable biomass supply, is complex and multifaceted. Therefore, assessing its sustainability should be context specific and evidence-based, and it requires a multi-stakeholder process." He recognizes that "This workshop fulfills these requirements and is therefore important for the advancement of sustainable bioeconomy. Given its current work on developing sustainable

bioeconomy guidelines, FAO is pleased and interested in co-organizing and participating in this event”.

Renato D. Godinho, Chairperson of the Biofuture Platform, a 20-country coalition created to help accelerate the sustainable low carbon bioeconomy, states: “If key countries and stakeholders can get behind a few common principles for what constitutes a workable sustainability governance, this could spur the right policies at the national level and attract investments to the most sustainable and efficient practices and projects. The Biofuture Platform is well placed to help facilitate such a result, and this workshop is a key starting point.”