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Certification: Good Enough?

What actions are needed for progressing towards a sustainable, circular bioeconomy – key questions and structure

1. What research is needed to address sustainability and how can governance contribute to gaining support for sustainable biobased systems and supply chains?

Research Needs

- Constantly emerging technologies
- Create interdisciplinary competence
- Reach common definitions and concepts for “bioeconomy” and “circular economy”
- Set priorities
- Understand role and risks of incorporating new waste streams
 - Biodiversity
 - GHG Emissions
 - Human health
- Displacement effects
- Development of good indicators to monitor and evaluate bioeconomy projects’ impacts and circularity

Governance Role

- Key stakeholders need to be engaged **globally** to represent the entire supply chain and civil society
- Transparency and public awareness
- Consensus is key

2. What are the top 3 priorities to align international sustainability criteria, to move beyond controversies on bio-based systems and enable developing sustainable bio-based systems?

Controversies include: Real GHG Emissions, land use change and ILUC, social impacts.

- Global alignment of approaches – developed by multiple stakeholders
- Move beyond “single issue” legislation of sustainability

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- Need for credible oversight and enforcement for both legal and voluntary approaches
- Key priorities:
 1. Transparent benchmarking and grading of standards and legislation.
 2. The limitations of site-based measures need to be clear – cumulative impacts need to be assessed.
 3. Communication, education and consumer awareness.

3. What are the roles, responsibilities and resources required?

- Existing, credible and global voluntary certification systems (e.g. ISEAL) should be engaged to agree a system for benchmarking & grading certification systems e.g. based on WWF's CAT system
- Independent benchmarking study
- Grading and continuous assessment system
- Global and continental studies on feedstocks (IIASA, FAO, WWF)
- Communication and education for consumer and decision makers

Key Resources:

- RSB Principles & Criteria: <https://rsb.org/about/what-we-do/the-rsb-principles/>
- RSB Standards for Fuel, Products: <https://rsb.org/the-rsb-standard/working-with-the-rsb-standard/>
- RSB Governance System: <https://rsb.org/community-membership/about-community/>
- Example Resource Assessment – Biofuel Potential in Sub-Saharan Africa: https://www.wwf.org.za/report/taking_off/
- WWF Certification Assessment Tool: <https://wwf.panda.org/?228430/WWF-Certification-Assessment-Tool-CAT>

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