

Clean Energy Ministerial Biofuture Platform Initiative
Workstream on Biomass Quantification and Sustainability Governance

Report on Stakeholder Input

Version as of July 13, 2023

Background

The Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM) Biofuture Platform Initiative's (<https://biofutureplatform.org/>) Workstream on Biomass Quantification and Sustainability Governance (hereafter, [Sustainability Workstream](#)) promotes an evidence-based understanding of sustainable biomass production and use. Per instructions from the Biofuture Initiative leadership, the Sustainability Workstream formed an interdisciplinary, international, Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to represent diverse stakeholders in support of Biofuture Platform Initiative's mission and goals. The terms of reference for the TAG include (a) enable stakeholder representation and outreach; (b) offer guidance on strategies, planning, and draft Biofuture documents; and (c) help to identify priority biomass sustainability issues and strategies to address them.

Since its inception, the TAG has met nine times and provided input on Biofuture strategies and practical steps to help increase understanding and confidence in sustainable biomass production and use. TAG contributions are summarized in the presentations and minutes documenting each meeting, and a set of accessible files maintained by the TAG Secretariat. Based on TAG suggestions, guidance documents on *Good Practices for Sustainable Biomass* and *Tools to Manage Biomass Investment Risks* were prepared and were included in an Update Report for CEM14.

Understanding Stakeholder Concerns

The TAG helped devise a strategy for meetings with influential stakeholders who are critical of using biomass as fuel to (a) listen and better understand their primary concerns; (b) identify ways to improve subsequent dialogues; and (c) identify opportunities to collaborate in the promotion of best practices for integrating a sustainable bioeconomy in climate-smart development strategies. Meetings were held with over 30 representatives across institutions. The preliminary results from these meetings follows.

- Common concerns include:
 - Impacts projected under broad based scale-up and modeling of “what could happen”
 - Competition for inputs (e.g., land, water, funding)
 - Competition for outputs (e.g., best use of biomass, food, feed, materials, etc.)
- Areas of Agreement include the need for
 - Building more trust in the sustainability of supply chains
 - Reliable systems to monitor, report, and verify actual effects
- Opportunities to increase constructive collaborations include:
 - Expanding TAG membership
 - Actions to improve supply chain efficiency, reduce waste, and promote the best use of biomass
 - Developing methods for transparent, practical carbon accounting.

Special Concerns with Biomass from Forests

The Sustainability Workstream collaborates with The Forest Dialogue (TFD) project (implemented by the Yale School of Forestry) to better understand and address woody biomass sustainability issues. The TFD is developing a scope report on key issues and will organize a series of regional workshops to better focus on place-based risks and opportunities. Based on the Sustainability Workstream's initial consultations with TFD, we note several issues (or preliminary "fracture lines") that represent obstacles to reaching agreement on the use of woody biomass for energy.

1. The definition of forest wastes and residues.
2. Safeguards to ensure woody biomass is truly sustainable and how safeguards will be enforced, including how sustainable forest management is defined.
3. How analyses of woody biomass are framed, including the general principles (broadly applied) that focus on avoiding harm based on future projections of what could happen versus the analysis of threats, opportunities, and practical management options to improve biomass management in specific sites.
4. Standard and transparent methods to measure the climatic, social, and ecological costs and benefits associated with forest-based biomass supplies.

Contact the Biofuture Facilitator at facilitator@biofutureplatform.org for more information.