

## Information note:

# Developing a format for a ‘rapid implementation’ of the GBEP Sustainability Indicators

## Rationale:

The methodology of the GBEP Sustainability Indicators for Bioenergy (GSI) was developed as a thorough assessment of the national bioenergy sector, in order to provide a basis for informed decision making. Given this objective, and therefore the nature of the methodologies for the 24 indicators, the measurement of the GSI is sophisticated and has large requirements in terms of resources (both humans and financial), capacity and data.

Since the development of the GSI in 2011, the aim of the Task Force on Sustainability has been to facilitate the use of the indicators through the development of an Implementation Guide. The completion of the Implementation Guide in January 2020 represents an important step in aiding countries with the implementation of the GSI, providing, e.g. important information on the development of an implementation project and on attributing impacts to bioenergy. However, as mentioned in the Implementation Guide itself, data and capacity requirements are still high, and can be a barrier in some national circumstances. To advance the uptake of the implementation of the GSI, it could be important to further facilitate GSI measurement, concurrently with the development of the data entry sheets that are in progress.

## Proposal for discussion:

Building on the above mentioned rationale, the proposal is to provide a means to carry out a first expedite implementation of the GSI that could provide a preliminary assessment of the sustainability performances of a given bioenergy value chain in a short time frame (e.g. to be completed in maximum six months).

The overall goal of the rapid implementation approach of the GSIs would be to obtain rapid yet robust indications on the sustainability situation of bioenergy at national/sub-national levels within six months, with the possibility to undertake more detailed analysis if deemed appropriate by national stakeholders.

The results of the rapid implementation of the GSI could be visualized using three criteria, showing for each indicator:

1. The ‘criticality’, i.e. the importance of the indicator within the national priorities;
2. The availability of information/capacity for measurement, which could be indicated using a traffic light analogy; and
3. Where possible, the quantitative outcome of a rapid indicator measurement using existing available data.

Please see Table 1 below for an example of the visualization of these criteria.




When viewed together, the three criteria of the rapid implementation could provide valuable information for the country. Not only would it inform on the preliminary results of the GSI, but it

would also highlight potentially critical aspects/needs that require further resources to research a specific sustainability indicator in depth. This exercise could serve as a means to prioritize resources for a more efficient and targeted assessment of the sector. Therefore, through a rapid preliminary implementation of the GSI, countries could, in a relatively short amount of time and with reasonable financial resources, gain i) a quick understanding of major trends in terms of sustainability performances of bioenergy at country level, and ii) an indication of the needs for further research and how to optimize a further in-depth assessment, where required, in terms of financial and time requirements.

The eventual data entry sheets for the GSI could facilitate the rapid implementation; if the two were used in combination, it could allow for an even quicker and standardized means for identifying data requirements and availability. Further to this, a dedicated tool could also be developed for the rapid implementation; this may expedite not only the data collection (for example, where it could be automatically inserted from available databases) but also the calculation. Such a tool could build on the tools developed under the FORBIO and BIOPLAT-EU projects, with a view to adapt it to measurements at national/sub-national level.

*Table 1: Example of possible visualization of the results of a rapid implementation of the GSI*

| <b>Indicator</b> | <b>Criticality of indicator</b> | <b>Existing data and capacity sufficient?</b> | <b>Indicator measurement quantitative result</b> |
|------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| 1                |                                 |   |  |
| 2                |                                 |   |  |
| ...              |                                 |   |  |
| 24               |                                 |   |  |

| <b>Legend:</b>                                |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Criticality of indicator</b>               | This could be measured on a scale of 0 to 5 based on a national multi-stakeholder evaluation (0 being not applicable and 5 being most critical). |  |
| <b>Existing data and capacity sufficient?</b> | Traffic light analogy for measurement process ( <i>not</i> measurement result of sustainability):  |  |
|   |   | Good existing data, methodology and capacity to carry out an accurate measurement of this indicator; provides a preliminary value that is estimated to be close enough to the one obtainable with a full in-depth sustainability assessment. |
|   |   | A preliminary value can be obtained (e.g. through a proxy approach or with estimated data values) but further data/capacity is required to measure the indicator using the comprehensive methodology and to a sufficient accuracy.           |
|   |   | No preliminary value can be obtained; an in-depth measurement is needed.   |