

27th Meeting of the GBEP Steering Committee

Online 13.30 – 14.30 CET time (UTC +1)

Tuesday, 22 November 2022

Co-Chairs Summary

The GBEP Steering Committee held its 27th meeting on 22 November 2022 online due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Paraguay, Spain, United Kingdom, Sweden, Viet Nam, ECOWAS/ECREEE, FAO, IEA Bioenergy, IICA, IRENA, and WBA participated in the meeting as Partners and Observers.

Amb. Alexandre Ghisleni (GBEP Co-Chair, Brazil) chaired the meeting. Ms. Emily Marthaler (GBEP Co-Chair, USA) sent her apologies for not being able to join due to a last-minute change in her flight schedule.

Opening and Welcome Speech

Zitouni Ould-Dada (Deputy Director, Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, FAO) gave a welcome speech. He thanked the Government of Italy and the Italian Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security for their renewed trust in GBEP with the commitment of new financial support for the next biennium. This will allow GBEP to continue advocating for bioenergy towards low carbon solutions, decarbonization and promotion of the sustainable development goals. He welcomed and thanked all GBEP Partners and Observers for their valuable participation and support, and invited them to follow the Italian example in order to further strengthen GBEP's long-term role. In doing so, he stressed the need to discuss and establish an internal mechanism to regularly replenish the GBEP initiative in the years to come. He emphasized that FAO continues to be highly committed to the work of GBEP, especially in light of the UN high-level dialogue on energy, UNFCCC COP27 decisions, as well as upcoming COP 15 discussions on biodiversity. He wished GBEP a successful Steering Committee meeting for a stimulating discussion regarding the work that lies ahead.

Amb. Alexandre Ghisleni thanked Partners and Observers for their continued work and renewed the gratitude for the funds provided by the Italian Government. He highlighted the importance of access to modern, sustainable, reliable and affordable energy towards Net Zero, as well as of social and economic development. He acknowledged the role of GBEP as a key international forum, and stressed its crucial expertise in building sustainable value chains, while allowing sound assessments through its sustainability indicators. These valuable assets are now being applied in the work of the Biofuture Platform on biomass quantification and sustainability governance, supported by GBEP and IEA Bioenergy.

He stressed the collective responsibility to discuss and achieve the long-term sustainability of GBEP, through a project-based financing model and regular replenishment.

Amb. Alexandre Ghisleni took that opportunity to invite Ms Silvia Massimi, representative of the Italian Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security, to take the floor. Ms. Massimi stressed the continued commitment of Italy to GBEP's mission, recognizing the international importance of bioenergy for sustainable development. She retraced the Italian's role within GBEP: in 2005 Italy proposed the GBEP initiative in the G8 context, became one of its founding partners in 2006, and played the role of co-chair for 14 years. Since its establishment, GBEP's international role has become increasingly relevant for the agenda of the Italian Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security, and she reconfirmed the firm commitment to it. She warmly thanked GBEP for the invitation and for the opportunity to address her words to the GBEP family.

Amb. Alexandre Ghisleni officially adopted the meeting's agenda.

GBEP Co-Chairmanship 2023-24 and GBEP Membership

Amb. Alexandre Ghisleni, referring to the GBEP co-chairmanship for the biennium 2023-2024, mentioned that the Government of Italy is considering the possibility to accept the role as GBEP co-Chair for the next biennium. A final decision will be taken further to additional internal consultations. In light of this and considering that the current co-chairs – Brazil and USA – are available to continue with their roles until a final decision on this matter will be taken, Amb. Ghisleni proposed that the GBEP Secretariat will continue its bilateral consultations with Italy and with the two current co-chairs, with a view to update the GBEP Partners and Observers via email in the next few weeks/months.

Proceeding to the GBEP membership, Amb. Alexandre Ghisleni welcomed the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) as new GBEP Partner. He also expressed special appreciation to IICA for their collaborations in the context of the 9th Bioenergy Week held in Paraguay and for the webinar on bioeconomy organized during the meeting of the Task Force on Sustainability, earlier that day.

Mr. Hugo Chavarría, Director of IICA's bioeconomy programme, expressed his appreciation for the membership and for the warm welcome by the GBEP Steering Committee, and highlighted the various possibilities of collaboration between IICA and GBEP in the Latin America and the Caribbean region.

GBEP Programme of Work

On behalf of the co-chairs of the Working Group on Capacity Building for Sustainable Bioenergy (WGCB) and of the Task Force on Sustainability (TFS), Maria Michela Morese (GBEP Secretariat) gave an overview of the conclusions of the technical meetings held.

❖ Working Group on Capacity Building for Sustainable Bioenergy (WGCB)

The 14th meeting of the WGCB, co-chaired by Argentina and ECOWAS/ECREEE, was held on 21 November 2022. The next steps for the WGCB in 2023 were decided as follows:

Activity Group 2 “Raising awareness and sharing of data and experiences from the implementation of the GBEP Indicators” will continue to collect and disseminate information on the implementation of the GSI, while also backstopping the piloting of the Rapid Implementation Framework Handbook. The GBEP Secretariat will continue organizing relevant dissemination events while also finalising the BIKE project (August 2023) and share the results within the GBEP network.

Under ***Activity Group 3, “Study Tour for capacity building and training”***, the 10th Bioenergy Week to be held in 2023 (tentatively in October), will be hosted in Viet Nam and will focus on the Asia and Pacific Region. The 11th Bioenergy Week is planned to be held in Europe or in Africa in 2024; further discussions will follow.

Activity Group 4 “Towards sustainable modern wood energy development” will hold a series of webinars on the links between sustainable wood energy and FLR, and on biohydrogen. A session during the 2023 Bioenergy Week will also be organized to include issues related to landscape governance for forest management and product utilization. The 2020 collection “Positive linkages between wood energy and forest landscape restoration” will also be updated with the best practices presented during the Bioenergy Week, together with a short brief that will be created based on the discussions during the Bioenergy Week session. It was also proposed to draft a stocktaking report on biohydrogen (making best use of existing reports like the 2019 one by IEA Bioenergy), including a collection of best practices with a view to support policy making. Finally, it was proposed that AG4 considers discussions on carbon accounting for woody biomass and/or estimates of woody biomass availability for bio-based fuels and for bioeconomy.

Activity Group 7 “Biogas” will host a further series of webinars in 2023 in collaboration with regional biogas initiatives on co-benefits of biogas for sustainable development, as well as organising a session during the 2023 Bioenergy Week and keep updated the 2020 GBEP stocktaking paper on regional analysis of biogas value chains.

Activity Group 8 “Advanced Liquid Biofuels” will hold a series of webinars (and a session at the GBEP Bioenergy Week 2023) on the sustainable growth of advanced liquid biofuels. Short news articles will be prepared on these webinars, to be published on the GBEP website, to include the main discussions and conclusions. On the basis of new experiences and contributions from the above webinars, the “Collection of experiences in Advanced Liquid Biofuels” will be updated.

In terms of the work on ***Youth***, the GBEP Secretariat will launch (early 2023) the call for papers for the 2023 GBEP Youth Award that will be assigned to outstanding research conducted by young researchers from the Asia and the Pacific region, and presented to the winning student in the context of the 10th Bioenergy Week. Other Youth Capacity development events will be organized as possible.

Linking Bioenergy with Food security and nutrition – Further to the literature review on the bioenergy-nutrition nexus, developed by FAO/ESN in collaboration with the GBEP Secretariat,

it was agreed to collect best practices to be included into the Literature Review. Furthermore, it was agreed to organize a side event at EUBCE 2023 and any other visibility opportunity that may arise.

Other Events and Activities in 2023 – The GBEP Secretariat will organize several events and will attend a number of conferences in 2023 for visibility and dissemination purposes. Furthermore, the GBEP Secretariat will renew the GBEP website. It was also agreed that the next GBEP Annual meetings will take place in person, in Rome, mid May 2023. The event would coincide with the celebration of the GBEP Anniversary (11 May 2023). Connected to this, GBEP will request to the United Nations to establish an “*International Day of Sustainable Bioenergy*” possibly on the 11th of May.

Partners and Observers were invited to suggest further activities for the 2023 Programme of Work for the specific Activity Groups by 20 January 2023.

❖ **Task Force on Sustainability (TFS)**

The 20th meeting of the Task Force on Sustainability, under the co-chairmanship of Italy, Japan and Egypt, took place on 22 November 2022. The conclusions from the meeting are as follows:

Workstream on the GBEP Indicators (GSIs), Rapid Implementation Framework (RIF), Data Entry Sheets

- Develop project proposals to integrate the implementation of the GSIs and/or RIF;
- Pilot RIF at country level; and
- Develop data entry sheets for all bioenergy pathways (in addition to the one from agricultural crops already developed in 2020).

Workstream on Bioenergy within the context of the broader Bioeconomy

- GBEP discussion of the IINAS and IFEU technical papers in an online workshop (February/March 2023) and in the next GBEP Annual meetings in mid-May 2023, with a view to finalize and publish them;
- Organize the joint workshop on “Sustainability Governance of the Bioeconomy” (as a joint effort between GBEP, Biofuture Platform, IEA, IEA Bioenergy and OECD), postponed several times due to the Covid-19 pandemic;
- GBEP Secretariat to finalize the infographic on “bioenergy in the broader bioeconomy”; and
- Argentina was nominated as new co-leader of the workstream, together with IEA/IEA Bioenergy.

Partners and Observers were invited to send further suggestions and input on the 2023 TFS work to the GBEP Secretariat by 20 January 2023.

GBEP funding arrangements

Maria Michela Morese gave an overview of GBEP funding arrangements since its establishment, stressing that 2022 represented the year with the lowest budget ever. The variety of contributors from GBEP members throughout the years were mentioned as key joint efforts and commitments to GBEP, to which Ms. Morese expressed extreme gratitude.

Amb. Alexandre Ghisleni took the opportunity, once again, to invite GBEP members to contribute to the financial support of GBEP. He proposed to add in the agenda of the next Steering Committee meeting a discussion point on how to guarantee a long-term sustainability of GBEP beyond the next biennium, to discuss and agree on an internal mechanism to facilitate a regular GBEP replenishment in the years to come.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Maria Michela Morese summarized the main points agreed by the Steering Committee and invited all Partners and Observers to send inputs and suggestions to the GBEP Secretariat by 20 January 2023.

In particular she reiterated that the 2023 GBEP Governing Bodies meetings will take place in person, in Rome, mid-May and the 10th Bioenergy Week will be held in Vietnam in October 2023 (further details on both events will be circulated by the GBEP Secretariat in due advance).