

5th World Water Forum

Theme 2. Advancing Human Development and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG)

Topics 2.2 and 2.3. Water for bioenergy or food?

Coordinator for Topic 2.2 *Water for energy and energy for water* is the international Hydropower Association (IHA) and coordinator for Topic 2.3 *Water and agriculture for ending poverty and hunger* is the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID). This is a note on a meeting held at the IHA offices in Sutton, near London on 29 August 2008 between Richard Taylor and Michael Fink (IHA) and Peter Lee (ICID).

Prior to the meeting, IHA were sent the parts of the discussion note and tentative session plan for a topic 2.3 session provisionally entitled *What may be the role and impact of bioenergy for local development and food production?* (Appendix I). This had been found acceptable to the Forum Programme Committee but with the suggestion that “*the proposed session on bio-fuels is proposed to become a thematic cross-cutting session which could focus on the water-energy-food/agriculture nexus. Coordination is therefore required with Topic 2.2 on this issue*”. Since then it has been proposed that this session should become a joint session, taking 1 hour from each of the topic budgets, but probably being longer than 2 hours.

The title above is provisional. [It could be the first question in 6.a below?].

This note is for consideration by the meeting of the Topic 2.3 consortium that will be held on 3 September in Montpellier, France.

1. The subject of bioenergy is emotive and bound to grab attention from the press, much of it likely to be against bioenergy (eg “a crime against humanity”, Tony Allen). Nestlé is known to be ‘anti’
2. It will be hard to obtain balance (eg “bioenergy is like cholesterol, there is good and bad...” Jose Moreira).
3. We need voices from the developing world and key regions, and not stray too far out of the ‘water box’, or away from the theme.
 - a. Africa – Forum of Energy Ministers in Africa (FEMA) [IHA contact]
 - b. Americas – Americas Forum in mid-October is too late, one name is Jose Moreira , National Centre for Biomass, Brazil
 - c. Asia, South – ICID to propose (biomass)
 - d. Asia, SE – ICID to propose (oil palm)
 - e. Europe – UNESCO Water & Energy Nexus, Paris 26-28 November (this is too late, but we should participate [Henri Tardieu?])
4. Bioenergy will crop up in other sessions (eg topic 2.2.1) and this needs to be coordinated through IHA or other ad hoc links (other themes).
5. The present session could start with a focus on the ‘bioenergy drivers’
 - a. Europe: tackling climate change
 - b. Elsewhere: import substitution

- i. Reducing dependence on oil imports
 - ii. Energy security and flexibility (Brazil)
 - iii. Providing an additional market for farmers.
- 6. The second part could be on the impacts:
 - a. Is bioenergy taking water and land away from food?
 - b. What is the impact on the poor?
 - c. Where is food and bioenergy NOT in competition?
- 7. Bioenergy is not just about ethanol production.
 - a. Some biomass/biogas energy utilises waste products (reducing pollution of water bodies) or food by-products (eg bagasse). [interesting to have Indian experience on biomass/biogas at village level, but needs to be in context]
 - b. Other biomass grown as crop (eg willow for thermal power in Europe), but how serious is the competition with food here?
- 8. The proportion of land and water diverted to bioenergy crops is not as large as many imagine (Brazil <2% agricultural land, mostly rainfed, SE Asia 20% oil palm etc, need the facts)
 - a. When oil prices were lower, many farmers moved out of growing sugarcane for ethanol (ie price driven, reversible but what about subsidies and inflexible investments?).
 - b. Some agro-forestry (ie long term investment) already has an eye to the 2nd generation market. Will this reduce the competition with food? How long will it take given the uncertainties of the technology and the investment in 1st generation plant?
- 9. Said that 1st generation ethanol plant uses a lot of water and is polluting [need the facts... Moreira?]
- 10. Virtual Meeting Space (VMS) is there and the Forum organisers would like us to use it to gather views from others, especially the regions, but will it be of much use for session development after 30 September? Is this only for dissemination? [a general question for the topics]
- 11. IHA and ICID have a key role, but they are there as the topic coordinators. IHA would wish others to be involved in the consortium as the 'doers'.
- 12. More important, the consortium will be led by a convenor, who would have the prime responsibility. Nevertheless, the IHA and ICID networks important for dissemination, so they should be there in the consortium.
 - a. FAO have great interest in the subject and should be in the consortium [but probably not as convenor, as they have many other Forum commitments].
- 13. IUCN have expressed interest, and they may be asked to take a 'management role' [possibly convenor]. ICID might also be considered [Henri Tardieu to be consulted]. Richard Taylor is to speak to Mark Smith about the IUCN position).

PSL

31 August 2008

Appendix I

Original proposal for a Topic 2.3 session

What may be the role and impact of bioenergy for local development and food production?

Type of session: parallel

Duration: 3 hours

Session officers:

- chairperson:
- moderator:
- reporters:

Context

Importance of the key question as formulated underneath:

- bio-fuels will provide least developed countries and poor farmers with new opportunities for employment to improve their economy and livelihoods;
- bio-fuels will raise the food prices - the poor will be the first affected;
- bio-fuels are detrimental for the environment;
- bio-fuels production will increase the stress on land and water resources.

Key issues:

- how rural communities can benefit from bioenergy crops?
- how to avoid conflict with food production by considering reversible crops from non-food to food production, and using marginal water and land?
- how to develop farming practices compatible with nature's balance?
- What may be the implications of bio-fuels policies and trends for the water resources, availability and allocation among uses (including by ecosystems) and thus on ecosystems and livelihoods?

Tentative session format Session III

Time	Item	Speaker/ actor
0 – 0.05	Opening and welcome	Chairperson
0.05 - 0.20	Introduction to session III and the Topic Scoping Paper	Consortium member
0.20 - 0.40	Some interesting video/presentation/other activity on the key question of Session I	To be proposed by the Consortium members
0.40 - 1.30	Panel discussion with the audience, based on written questions	Panel members: representatives of interested Consortium members Moderator
1.30 – 2.00	Break	
2.00 – 2.30	Six 5 minutes reactions on key question III of the Topic Scoping Paper by selected volunteers	Applicants
2.30 – 2.45	Intermezzo	Ideas are welcome
2.45 – 3.00	Draft formulation of recommendations on the key question III	Consortium member
3.00 – 3.25	Discussion on the recommendations	Chairperson

Organizations to be involved the development of Session III

Type of organisation	Name of organisation
Farmer Associations	International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID) International Hydropower Association (IHA)
International Agencies: UN Agencies	
Other Institutions	
National Governments	
Trade organizations	
Association(s) of agricultural producers	
Professional Associations	
Research Institutions	
Multilateral donors	
Environmental agencies / NGOs	
Bio-fuels production associations	IUCN
Local Government	
Universities	
National research Agencies	
NGO/CSO	
Local civil society	
Private sector	