



SADC Framework for Sustainable Biofuels

Approved by the SADC Biofuel Taskforce 15 December 2009

Background

During the 2nd SADC Biofuel Taskforce meeting in Pretoria, 16 September 2009, the SADC Member State representatives responded to the call from the Energy Ministers Meeting in Maputo in April 2009, urging Member States *“to accelerate their initiatives in developing biofuels as a source of alternative and cheap environmentally friendly fuel but also for rural development and poverty reduction.”*

The Member State representatives also noted the need to achieve one of the principal objectives of the SADC Biofuel Task Force, to *“facilitate the development of competitive and sustainable biofuel production, use and trade regionally and internationally,”* and also to collaborate on the following:

- The policy, legal and regulatory framework necessary for the sustainable production and use of biofuels, and institutional capacity to develop this.
- Sustainability of biofuels production and use, including pro-poor and rural development.
- Strengthened capacity of national and regional organisations for enhancing regional cooperation and information-sharing on biofuels, including on sustainable development models.

The SADC Biofuel Taskforce has therefore commissioned the SADC Secretariat to *“...draft a set of sustainability guidelines and circulate these amongst Member States in November. Member State comments will then be discussed at a final workshop in early December and a final version of the guidelines agreed. The final guidelines will be presented for approval to the Energy Ministers at their meeting in Luanda in April 2010.”* (Minutes of 2nd Meeting of the SADC Biofuel Taskforce)

Objective

The objective of the SADC framework for sustainable biofuel production is to provide a set of basic guidelines for the development of sustainable biofuel strategies. These regional guidelines can in turn be adapted to meet SADC Member State requirements, e.g. recognising different legislative regimes, national development priorities, land tenure issues, and specific local conditions affecting

biofuels crop selection. A final goal would be for Member States to implement sustainable policies in line with the SADC framework for sustainability and mainstream these sustainable policies in biofuel relevant strategy documents (i.e. biofuel policy, poverty reduction strategy, green revolution strategy, food security strategy, budget planning, etc).

The once approved principles will be inserted in to user friendly chart outlining “desirable” and “undesirable” results of the sustainability principles as well as a section on proposed pre-requisites required to ensure that the desired impacts actually materialise. The chart will hopefully define institutional responsibility as well as facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of a sustainable biofuel development.

SADC hopes the guidelines will serve as an important basis for national biofuel policy developments, as well as communicating to the region’s citizens the importance which SADC attaches to sustainable biofuel development.

Format

There is much international concern about the potential adverse impacts of biofuels, which has in turn led to the need to develop *sustainability criteria* for biofuel production. While SADC acknowledges international initiatives to develop sustainability criteria in principle, its own framework for sustainable production and use of biofuels will have the form of broad recommendations describing **how regional biofuel production should adhere to environmental, economic and socially sustainable approaches.**

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of the SADC framework is the development of a biofuel industry that throughout the value chain promotes:

- respect for, and inclusion of, SADC citizens in the biofuel production,
- the protection and sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources, and
- a sustainable economic approach contributing to overall development and social well-being.

Specific Principles

1. Biofuel production shall follow **national relevant law and policies** and, where applicable, international law.
2. Biofuel production shall be guided by **free prior and informed consent** by relevant stakeholders.
3. Biofuel production shall contribute positively to **rural development** through:

- non-violation of human and labour rights, promotion of decent work and the well-being of workers
 - social and economic development of indigenous, local and rural people and communities
 - decentralized value-added processing and local participation in the entire value chain
4. Biofuel production shall contribute positively to local and national food security.
 5. Biofuel production shall respect formal and customary land rights and land use rights.
 6. Biofuel production shall contribute positively to national energy security.
 7. Biofuel production shall contribute positively to protect natural resources, ecosystems that provide essential services and biodiversity.
 8. Biofuel production shall contribute positively to availability and quality of water and air.
 9. Biofuel production shall not lead to deforestation or forest degradation and where possible contribute to rehabilitation of degraded land.
 10. Biofuel production shall contribute positively to climate change adaptation and mitigation.
 11. Biofuel production shall contribute positively in reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
 12. Agro-ecological zoning should provide guidance on what feedstock to use and where to plant them.
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