

PRESS RELEASE



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BTG advises European Commission on Sustainability of Biomass Production

Enschede, September 18, 2007 – BTG Biomass Technology Group BV is awarded an assignment from the European Commission to carry out a study on behalf of the Commission about sustainability aspects of biomass production. As to meet its ambitious CO₂-reduction targets, the EU plans to increase the use of biomass for energy and transport fuel production. The increasing demand for biomass could possibly lead to unsustainable production practices and increased food prices. BTG will investigate the possibilities of guaranteeing the sustainability of both biomass production in the EU and imported biomass. At the end of this year the study will be completed.

With more than 216 million cars on the road in the EU25, we definitely depend on biofuel imports to meet the EU target of 5.75% renewable transportation fuels in 2010, not to speak about the proposed EU target of 10% in 2020. Sugar cane, palm oil, soy oil are biofuel feedstock that can substitute petrol and diesel. Large-scale biofuel production might have negative side effects like deforestation, competition for land for food production, loss of biodiversity and soil quality.

On national level as well as European level action is considered to guarantee the sustainability of biomass used for energy and transport. In the Netherlands the commission 'Sustainable Production of Biomass' led by Prof. Cramer (present Minister of Housing and Environment) has formulated sustainability criteria concerning theme's like greenhouse gas savings, competition with food, biodiversity, prosperity and social well-being. Also Germany and the United Kingdom are active in developing sustainability criteria. Sustainable production of biomass and certification of biomass could increase the price of biomass. As to assure an equal level playing field between European countries, measures can best be taken on EU level.

The European Union is considering its options. On 18 June of this year, the European DG-TREN closed a stakeholder consultation on 'Biofuel issues in the new legislation on the promotion of renewable energy'. More than 120 reactions from NGO's, institutes, industry and citizens were welcomed. New EU legislation is in preparation promoting sustainable production of biomass for energy and transport.

BTG Biomass Technology Group BV is awarded an assignment from Directorate-General Energy and Transport (DG-TREN) to provide authoritative information on this subject. BTG has over 20 years of experience in advising companies, governments and international organizations in the field of bioenergy technology and policy. The study involves an in-depth analysis of existing biomass production sustainability criteria and certification systems that have been developed and/or proposed by various organisations at European and international level. The possible role of the EU will be investigated, considering technical possibilities, costs, barriers, existing trade agreements etc., resulting in practical recommendations to the European Commission.

Note for editors:

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