

Stakeholder Outreach Meeting

Tamil Nadu, India

17 June 2009

NGO Discussion 17th June

Presentations were given by Natasha Schwarzbach (BSI), Maryline Guiramand (TWG Leader Social) and Peter Turner (TWG Leader Agronomy).

General discussion followed, below are the comments and questions received from participants:

Scientific metrics and social metrics how can they work together?

Is there any involvement of policy makers in India?

There are approximately 400 self-help groups in India for small scale farmers - they cover tea, coffee etc.

WWF uses a verifier model for cotton and they sell to Marks & Spencer, Nike.

Certification model - who will pay the premium? For example - Government fixes the price, there is a trade price, but the cost has increased eg, 100 ruppee - Govt, 140 Trade, 150 (*who pays the extra 10 ruppee?*)

Who will be the beneficiary of ethanol processing?

How will growers be selected for verification or monitoring?

What are benefits to membership of BSI?

How do co-op factories comply with BSI?

Written contracts are not available from farmers as sugarcane employees are often seasonal.

Workers - how do you monitor the indicators?

Instead of ILO standards, we will rely on regional labor law

Cane yield - range may be defined country wise.

Aquatic oxygen demand, toxicity, pollution are too difficult to measure. Hence it may be easier to monitor the process.

1. No incentive for growers to join as price is set by government unless there is a mechanism for growers to receive the benefit somehow. WWF comment premium - models don't work in India
2. Legality for small holders. Work via Self Help Groups (or Mill arranged teams.) all members would commit to obey the law.
3. UNFCCC -should consult this for guidelines on parameters /levels
4. Phani - biochar carbon sequestration - check up on this again
5. Water quality - Chemicals measurement - impossible on farms but practice records could be used, diary. Include reference to list of banned chemicals specifically
6. Dr Vinod Goud Special Project Scientist ICRISTAT - Sustainable Sugarcane Initiative (with WWF) some good figures in Indian production etc. Water use 1500-3000l/kg cane - Need to consider how this practices manual can be used for achieving BSI - as for Australia, (Mossman, NWRM) SA (SusFarms), Florida, Brazil, Mauritius Note lower plant population - water saving - wider row spacing - intercropping, Saving on seed from 4-5 tons to 0.5 tons
7. Water measurement - very difficult with flood and multiple crops, etc but WWF chap indicated it could be estimated

Main points of meeting - generally accepted most indicators - just issue of growers not being able to comply with social or agriculture indicators themselves - but through national structures access to medical help is covered and self help groups or mill through service centres could provide a mechanism for keeping some records of farmer purchases and yields and field sizes etc but not of actual amounts applied.

After general comments were received the group then went through the Standard line by line, the comments and suggestions are below.

1.1.1 OK higher of the national and international

1.1.2 Legislation is in place in India. There is no problem of title to land

2.1.1 Child labor is not an issue in sugarcane unlike for cotton

2.1.2 Forced Labor - Said it is OK in India. Might be some problems of debt bondage in the North linked to the feudal system (e.g. children marriage)

2.1.3 The dynamics of the labor market has to be taken into account (some migrants, farmer groups)

2.1.4 Discrimination - definition as per ILO includes cast, ethnic.

2.3 Health & Safety

Farmers take care of first aid and they have access to medical services.

PPE might be an issue at farm level.

2.3.3. Not possible for farmers unless different indicator for farms vs. mill

Mill should take responsibility for compliance in most of 2.3 indicators, suggested that the mill take 90% responsibility. Discussion was held on potable (quality) of water and how this would be measured.

2.4.1 - Question mark over availability of local minimum wage

2.4.2 - The food basket data can be used for the cost of living.

2.5.1 - Generally, there are no farm employment contracts, however EID Parry are unique in this area.

2.6 No problem with this indicator, however this could be a problem in the future.

3.1.2. Will need to adjust yield for local standards - probably regional differences as well (consider rewording to > 75% of national average for the relevant national category)

3.1.3 Biomass not relevant for most growers

3.2 Refer to Pollution Board for Indian standards

4.1 - In India natural habitats are well protected and often not near agricultural areas. BSI auditors will need to source information by checking Service Centre records.

4.2 - GPS maps are available for India- Sugarcane is grown only in agricultural areas.

5.1 - As training is more difficult at the farm level, it was suggested that in the guidance document information should be shown as to how and what the mill can do to improve training at farm level.

5.2.1 Difficult for farmers to measure water in flood irrigation fields - although WWF have a method of estimating this which is not expected to be possible to audit (note drip irrigation will be feasible).

5.3 Discussion needs to happen with breeders.

5.4.1 Energy use on farms very difficult to measure (except that again if service centre sources machines and operators for each practice this may be feasible).

5.6 Indian cane farmers not paying anything for research - all services from the mill are free.

5.8 There are many public grievance/complaint mechanisms that exist. Government has established a discussion forum mechanism in communities ("stakeholder group") which could be applicable as compliance - but verifying a number would be difficult. The auditor needs to check the National Fact Sheet.

5.9 Number of farmers leaving the system could be an economic indicator

PARTICIPANTS

Pramod Pukarathi

Rajesh Kumar- Solidaridad

Vinod Goud - ICRISAT

Murli - WWF in cane since 2003 - working on water in sugarcane - separate to ICRISAT project

Phani - Consultant to the sugar industry in economics and logistics in the following areas - molasses, sugar and ethanol (promoting Ethanol to replace fuel - but require Govt and Policy makers to support the concept).