Virtual Workshop: Socio-economic assessment of bioenergy value chains

November 24, 2026 – 9:00-10:30 ET / 15:00-16:30 CET

Background

Evaluating and communicating the socio-economic impacts of bioenergy systems present several challenges. Firstly, these impacts are often multifaceted and context-specific, involving diverse factors such as job creation, land use changes, food security, environmental quality, health and community wellbeing. Quantifying such diverse outcomes requires comprehensive, interdisciplinary approaches (e.g. field surveys, techno-economic assessment). Additionally, bioenergy systems can produce both positive and negative effects, making it difficult to provide balanced assessments that acknowledge trade-offs without oversimplification. Inclusive stakeholder engagement is also important to make sure a diversity of voices and concerns are considered.

IEA Bioenergy has established an inter-task project on the socio-economic implications of bioenergy systems for the 2025-2027 triennium. This virtual workshop aims to inform this work and ensure research aligns with real-world policy needs. Ultimately, our goal is to deliver a more consistent approach for evaluating the impact of bioenergy value chains on local economies, and better guidance on functional units for assessment to improve comparisons between different bioenergy systems.

Purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to build on our previous session at the 34th European Biomass Conference and Exhibition (EUBCE) in May 2026, where insights into priorities, challenges, and data requirements for socio-economic indicators were gathered.

This virtual workshop will focus on specific indicators that might be used to compare and contrast different bioenergy systems with themselves, and with other bioproduct or energy systems.

Preparation for the workshop

The project team will be focusing conversation on four indicator 'classes'. Attendees are encouraged to prepare for the workshop by considering indicators that would be useful in evaluating the following:

1. Impact on feedstock availability, efficiency of use
2. Impact on individuals (suppliers, employees, contractors, users)
3. Impact on regional economies (tax base, community benefits)
4. Impact on regional energy balance

Workshop agenda (ET/CET)

9.00/15.00	Welcome and introductions
9.05/15.05	Bioenergy synergies (Fabian Schipfer – IEA Bioenergy Task 44)
9.15/15.15	Socio-economic priorities for bioenergy value chains (Connie Miller – FAO-GBEP)
9.25/15.25	Discussion session on indicators
	During this period, the project team will present examples of indicators currently used and moderate a discussion among attendees about their utility as 'universal' indicators. Attendees are encouraged to suggest indicators here.
10.05/16.05	Discussion session on process
	We will set aside 15 minutes to discuss the process of selecting and applying indicators in specific case studies, including key considerations such as representation from rightsholders/stakeholders, timelines, and responsibilities
10.20/16.20	Plenary session and close