

## Conference announcement



Photos: Johannes Ravn Jørgensen, Aarhus University and Inge Stupak, University of Copenhagen

# Governing sustainability of bioenergy, biomaterial and bioproduct supply chains from forest and agricultural landscapes

17-19 April 2018, Copenhagen, Denmark

## Call for Abstracts

### General information

Agriculture and forestry produce a large range of goods for the welfare of society. The main commercial products are food, fodder and timber, but the future importance of large scale production of biomass for bioenergy, biochemicals and biomaterials is increasingly recognized. Management activities associated with both traditional and newer bioproducts span over large portions of productive regions and are one of the largest human impacts on nature and the environment. As the global population and its wealth increase, the challenge to find an acceptable balance between the economic activities and the impacts on climate, nature, environment and people also increases. Several of the social and environmental ecosystem services potentially impacted by bio-economic feedstock production systems do not have a market value and their protection and improvement will often depend on policies, regulation and governance.

In order to effectively reach goals for ecosystem services, it is important that the regulations are underpinned by scientific knowledge about the effects of management and mitigation measures. Collection of statistics, monitoring and modelling of sustainability indicators may also play important roles to ensure effective implementation and enforcement, as well as adaptation of the regulations to new conditions.

For the purpose of this conference, we define 'ecosystem services' as the economic, social and environmental benefits people obtain from ecosystems, while we use the term 'sustainability governance' to refer to a set of regulatory processes, mechanisms and organizations through which political actors influence environmental and social actions and outcomes. We find it useful to understand governance comprehensively as a range of mandatory or voluntary, public or private regulatory systems, with some examples being governmental regulations, international agreements and conventions, private certification systems, standardization, company policies, best management practices, and education programs.

Working with sustainability of bioenergy and the bioeconomy involves a high degree of complexity, as biomass is a dispersed resource in the landscape. Also, the supply chains often involve a large number of actors and multiple sectors, such as forestry, agriculture, waste and biogas.

## Aims

This conference aims at:

- Identifying lessons learned on how data and scientific knowledge may inform development of well-functioning, credible and legitimate sustainability governance systems for bioenergy and the bio-economy. This also includes their continuous improvement and adaptation to new conditions.
- Exploring and comparing the variety of approaches to sustainability governance that are emerging or exist in different geographical regions, for different biomass-based supply chains, as a basis for building theory on how trust and legitimacy of sustainability governance systems is granted and achieved.
- Being a forum for information exchange between researchers and individuals or groups that are 1) involved in developing regulations and standards, 2) implementing standards on-the-ground, i.e. economic actors mainly in the forest, agricultural and biogas sectors, 3) involved in monitoring and auditing implementation and enforcement, through which policy advice can be developed, and 4) interested in these governance activities.

## Themes

We invite presentations on research that examines, reviews, or analyses topics relevant to the conference theme and sub-themes, or build hypotheses and theory that address these. If possible, presentations should include a statement on how the governance systems for bioenergy and the bio-economy may be improved, based on the presented research. The applied scale of the research can be local, national, regional, international or global.

The conference sub-themes are intended to encourage submissions with broad representation of the various regions in Europe, North America and internationally.

### **1. Sustainability impacts of biomass production**

Impacts of biomass production and recovery on economic, social and environmental ecosystem services at all scales, from stand or field level to whole landscapes, including, for example, results from field experiments and modelling.

### **2. Policies and governance systems to assure sustainability of bio-based supply chains**

Policies and sustainability governance systems or complexes in specific geographical settings, including, for example, drivers of their emergence and development, roles of the involved actors, prescriptiveness of the systems' substantive or procedural rules, thresholds, robustness of document tracking systems, and levels of enforcement.

### **3. Data and methodologies to verify sustainable practices**

Availability and suitability of research, data, maps, models, tools and methodologies, and how such knowledge and information may support development of credible sustainability governance systems, their implementation, demonstration of compliance, examination of effectiveness on-the-ground, and guidance on their improvement and adaptation to new conditions.

### **4. Stakeholder perceptions and engagement in relation to sustainability governance**

Stakeholders and the public's roles in the developing sustainability governance systems, their perceptions of sustainability of bioenergy and the bio-economy, and communication and dialogues as a means to reach common understanding on such issues.

## Approach

The conference will seek to achieve its aims through:

- **Scientific presentations** by key experts, researchers from IEA Bioenergy, the SNS-NKJ and CAR-ES networks, and other researchers working on these topics.
- **Stakeholder presentations** by key stakeholders on the current status and developments in sustainability governance for bioenergy and the bioeconomy.
- **Discussions** that focus on how research may support policy makers, certification systems and other relevant actors in their efforts to improve governance systems that ensure sustainability of bioenergy and the bioeconomy.
- **Special issue:** Presenters will be invited to contribute to a special issue on the topic.
- **Policy advice notes:** Presenters and participants will be invited to contribute to several policy advice notes that will be published as an outcome of the conference.

We warmly welcome scientists, researchers, policy makers, actors from relevant economic sectors and industries, NGOs and other interested persons.

## Organizers

The conference is arranged by:

- IEA Bioenergy Task 43 "Biomass feedstocks for bioenergy markets".
- SNS-NKJ network activity "Effect of bioenergy production from forests and agriculture on ecosystem services in the Nordic and Baltic landscapes"
- CAR-ES III "Centre of Advanced Research on Environmental Services from Nordic Forest Ecosystems".

IEA Bioenergy Task 43 is funded by members of the IEA Bioenergy implementing agreement 2016-2018, and CAR-ES III is funded by Nordic Forest Research (SNS) 2016-2020, under the Nordic Council of Ministers. The SNS-NKJ network activity is jointly funded by SNS and The Nordic Joint Committee for Agricultural and Food Research (NKJ). These are all open networks that bring together bioenergy and forest researchers, respectively, from different parts of the world, with SNS-NKJ and CAR-ES focusing mainly on Nordic and Baltic countries. The aims of the networks are to provide scientific knowledge on bioenergy feedstock production (Task 43, SNS-NKJ) and forest management more generally (CAR-ES) for decision making within the land use sectors and for policy development.

## Call for abstracts

**Please submit abstracts to:** Inge Stupak (ism@ign.ku.dk)

## Venue

University of Copenhagen, Bülowsvej 17, 1958 Frederiksberg C, Denmark

## Registration and fee

Website with more information to come.

## Contact persons

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