

Impact of EU Bioenergy Policy on Developing Countries

Project

Duration

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In order to meet its renewable energy targets by 2020, the EU is likely to increase its demand for biomass, not only for biofuel crops but also for woody biomass. A significant portion of this biomass will likely come from developing countries, particularly those in West and Central Africa, as well as Latin American countries. This demand can have significant negative impacts in these developing regions, including environmental degradation and threats to food security. In this brief for the European Parliament, researchers at Ecologic Institute analyze some of those main impacts, focusing particularly on woody biomass.

Impacts that have been analyzed within this briefing include

- Access of Rural Communities to Land and Water
- Food Security
- Local Energy Security
- Environmental Impacts and Land Degradation.

While clear links between the increasing EU demand for wood for energy generation and impacts in developing countries, both negative and positive, need to be drawn on a project level, the additional demand for biomass worldwide will have macro effects. The rising demand for woody biomass energy is likely to raise the global price for wood, thus adding pressure on forests and other ecosystems and driving land use conflicts. More specific risks include deforestation when natural forests are replaced by monoculture plantations and long term impacts on local food and energy security. Potential approaches to tackle these impacts include the development of binding sustainability criteria for other biomasses than those used to produce biofuels, increased efforts towards resource and energy efficiency and support for developing countries to build up good governance mechanisms.

The [study](#) [pdf, 1.4 MB, English] is available for download.

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