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SCOPE report on Bioenergy and Sustainability: Bridging the Gaps

São Paulo (Brazil), 14 April 2015 – Today, 14 April 2015, the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE) launches its report on Bioenergy and Sustainability: Bridging the Gaps. The report is a collective effort with contributions from 137 researchers of 82 institutions in 24 countries. It concludes that land availability is not a limiting factor and that bioenergy can contribute to sustainable energy supplies even with increasing food demands, preservation of forests, protected lands, and rising urbanisation.

The peer reviewed report "Bioenergy & Sustainability" is led by researchers associated to the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) Programs on Bioenergy, Biodiversity and Climate Change, and developed under the aegis of SCOPE and a Scientific Advisory Committee. It answers the question whether modern bioenergy technologies can make a significant contribution to our future energy demands with positive contributions to the environment, and to social development. In a total of 21 chapters the 137 international experts consider the latest studies on biomass availability, modern conversion technology, its environmental, economic and social impacts and highlights findings with case studies. Five cross cutting chapters discuss issues on energy, food, environmental and climate change security, sustainable development, innovation and the much needed science summarising the scientific research that would be needed to accomplish such sustainable innovation.

BE-Basic experts have contributed to 9 of the 21 Chapters with contributions from Hans van Meijl (Wageningen University), Luuk van der Wielen and Patricia Osseweijer (Delft University of Technology), and Andre Faaij (University Utrecht, presently Energy Academy Europe and Groningen University). BE-Basic director Luuk van der Wielen sees the report as an important contribution for policy development "this reports uniquely brings together the latest figures on land availability and technology options, while reflecting on realistic options to create positive impacts for the environment and social development. It provides balanced steering for policy for the research agenda as well as for governance".

The report concludes that land availability is not a limiting factor. Bioenergy can contribute to sustainable energy supplies even with increasing food demands, preservation of forests, protected lands, and rising urbanisation. It is projected that 50-200 million hectares of land would be needed to provide 10-20% of primary energy supply in 2050, while it is estimated that at least 500 million hectare are available without compromising the uses described above. If pasture intensification and the use of marginal or degraded land is considered this rises to 900 million hectares available land. As documented in the 21 chapters, the use of land for bioenergy is inextricably linked to food security, environmental

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quality, and social development, with potentially positive or negative consequences essentially depending on how these linkages are managed. Patricia Osseweijer, lead author of the cross cutting chapter on Bioenergy and Food Security is positive on the potentials "a number of case studies support the positive contribution that bioenergy can make to social development and food security. The report will greatly help to further develop such positive synergies and contribute to the global discussion on bioenergy".

The launch will be held at FAPESP, the research foundation of the state of São Paulo, Brazil, which supported the activity to which 137 authors from 82 institutions and 24 countries contributed. Further presentations of the report are planned at the World Bank in Washington and during the Sustainable Energy Week in Brussels in June 2015. The full report can be downloaded at <http://bioenfapesp.org/scopebioenergy/index.php>.

About SCOPE

The Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment is an international nongovernmental organisation founded in 1969. SCOPE is a cross-sectoral and trans-disciplinary network, connecting experts and institutions around the world. It is recognised for its authoritative, independent and influential scientific analyses and assessments of emerging environmental issues that are caused by or impact humans and the environment. It collaborates with inter-governmental agencies such as UNESCO and UNEP and with other partners in the development of its scientific program and outreach activities.

About BE-Basic Foundation

The BE-Basic Foundation is an international public-private partnership that develops industrial viable, safe and ecologically friendly biobased solutions for the Biobased Economy. Our aim is developing true innovative bio-chemicals, bio-materials, bio-construction concepts and biobased monitoring tools. Societal embedding of the products, services and processes developed by BE-Basic are essential and is addressed specifically. More information can be found at: www.be-basic.org.

About BIOEN, RGCC and BIOTA

BIOEN, the FAPESP Bioenergy Research Program, aims at articulating public and private R&D, using academic and industrial laboratories to advance and apply knowledge in fields related to bioenergy in Brazil. Research ranges from biomass production and processing to biofuel technologies, biorefineries, sustainability and impacts. The FAPESP Research Program on Global Climate Change (RPGCC) aims at advancing knowledge on Global Climate Change and guide decisions and policy in the field. The BIOTA-FAPESP Program (FAPESP Research Program on Biodiversity Characterization, Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use), aims not only at discovering, mapping and analyzing the origins, diversity and distribution of the flora and fauna of the biomes of the state of São Paulo, but also at evaluating the possibilities of sustainable exploitation of plants or animals with economic potential and assisting in the formulation of conservation policies on remnants of native vegetation.

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Notes to the editors

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