

## Message from the Editor

The theme for this edition of the newsletter is biofuels. Biofuels are currently a hot topic and with public participation around the draft Biofuels Industrial Strategy taking place recently, a number of concerns have been brought to light. Some of these have been highlighted in this edition.

I'd like to thank Liz McDaid from the African Sustainable Fuels Centre for her article highlighting the key areas of concern in the Draft Strategy.

Another theme that is receiving much attention at the moment is planning around the 2010 World Cup. The Transport Budget speech highlighted the transport focus areas and the need to an improved public transport system. We will be looking at transport planning for the World Cup in one of our next editions.

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## The Draft Biofuels Industrial Strategy – Comment by the ASFC

The African Sustainable Fuels Centre (ASFC) has provided us with their comments on the draft Biofuels Industry Strategy, with particular reference to the Feasibility Report that was developed to underpin the draft Strategy. It was noted in their review of the two documents, that the feasibility study provides various insights into biofuels, which in many cases fail to find their way in any substantive form into the draft Strategy. For more information, visit the [www.sustainable.org.za/transit](http://www.sustainable.org.za/transit) or [www.asfc.org.za](http://www.asfc.org.za).

The main areas of concern are the impacts on

- The **agricultural sector**, including the impact and price increases on other food sectors such as dairy, meat and other grain crops. Consumers may be forced to change their food preferences, because of crops being more feasibility as “fuel” rather than “food”.
- The estimated number of **jobs** talked about in the strategy is based on the assumption that new crops will be planted on new land. A more realistic number of 4300 direct jobs created for the biofuels producer and transport sector is given in the feasibility study.
- A far more detailed analysis of **water requirements** of the biofuels industry and its impact on the existing water users needs to be undertaken.
- The question of **food security** should be addressed in greater detail as there are contradicting statements about short term food price increases, and that this would have a limited impact on food security. Clearly if the state must make a choice between food or fuel, its priority must be to feed its citizens.
- The **National Biofuels Task Team** should be enhanced by including non-governmental representation who can input intelligently into the strategy

## Draft Biofuels Industry Strategy – Out for Public Comment

The Department of Minerals and Energy released the draft Biofuels Industry Strategy for Comment and embarked on a public participation process. The draft strategy proposes a 4.5% biofuels industry development. The strategy is based on the national blending specifications of 8% for ethanol (E8) and 2% for Biodiesel (B2). This is based on the existing crop production and proven crops in South Africa.

The draft Strategy proposes a mandatory blending of biofuels with petroleum-based fuels, to allow for market development. Research will need to be done to determine which crops are best suited for their respective environments, as biofuels production ability will vary from province to province.

The Biofuels Task Team will be reporting to Cabinet in May 2007 on the outcomes of the public participation process. For more information on the process visit: [www.dme.gov.za/energy/renew\\_bio.stm](http://www.dme.gov.za/energy/renew_bio.stm)

## What are biofuels

Biofuel is defined as any solid, gaseous or liquid fuel obtained from biomass; this may be in its natural form (e.g. wood, peat) or a commercially produced form (e.g. ethanol from sugarcane residue, diesel from waste vegetable oil).

Two types of biofuels are discussed in the draft Strategy, namely bioethanol and biodiesel. Bioethanol can be produced from traditional sugar-based crops, such as sugar cane, sweet sorghum and sugarbeet, as well as from starch-rich crops, such as maize, barley, wheat and cassava. Biodiesel can be produced from oilseed crops, such as soya, rapeseed (canola) and sunflower, from used cooking oils and from animal fats.

Worldwide national biofuels programmes were initiated primarily for supply security and to mitigate against massive trade deficits cause in 1973 by the oil price shock. Biofuels programmes are now gaining popularity, as apart from replacing imported crude oil, they reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. For more information:

[www.sustainable.org.za/transit](http://www.sustainable.org.za/transit)

## Transport Fuels as part of the Renewable Energy Target

The City of Cape Town has identified a target of 10% of its energy to come from renewable sources by 2020 in its draft Energy and Climate Change Strategy. Transport fuels are included in this target, although there is no specific target for biofuels.

The City's short-term measures for transport fuels are to keep up to date with international developments in cleaner forms of energy and modes. Long-term measures are:

- To pursue and support measures to replace fossil fuels with cleaner transport energy sources
- To support research to establish the feasibility and optimum means of introducing biodiesel into Cape Town.

The City of Cape Town would only support the production and use of biofuels if there is a positive net energy balance, i.e. the energy required to produce biofuels is less than the energy it provides, as a negative energy balance would be unsustainable.

The Strategy can be downloaded at

[www.capetown.gov.za/ERMD/Documents/Energy\\_Strategy\\_DRAFT.pdf](http://www.capetown.gov.za/ERMD/Documents/Energy_Strategy_DRAFT.pdf)

## Practical Tip

Find out if your diesel vehicle can run on biodiesel, then find a supplier who producing biodiesel from used cooking oil, which means one less waste product going to landfill.

## Editor's Choice

In today's technology-based environment, the internet can provide a wealth of information. One new way of presenting information is through web-based video "blogs", which allow people to submit their own videos to a website to be viewed by all. I've included a link to "StreetsBlog" which shows short transport related videos. One of the videos is Enrique Penalosa, the former Mayor of Bogota, talking about transport in an interview on the streets of New York. Visit StreetsBlog at <http://www.youtube.com/streetsblog>

## Policy Corner

On 27 March 2007, Minister of Transport, Jeff Radebe delivered his budget speech. The speech focussed on public transport improvements, including the BRT systems planned for many cities, with particular focus on the 2010 World Cup. Another key point was the need for improved road and public transport safety. For more information go to <http://www.dot.gov.za>

## Upcoming Events

Africa Roads 2007 will be taking place at the Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg from 21 – 24 May 2007. It focuses on providing solutions to the challenges facing the development and maintenance of road networks in Africa. For more information go to <http://www.terrapinn.com/2007/roadza>

## Sustainable Energy Africa (SEA)

Sustainable Energy Africa promotes sustainable energy approaches and practices through research, capacity building, information dissemination, project implementation, lobbying and networking. SEA manages the Urban TRAN:SIT Programme, which aims to build capacity in local government to develop more sustainable transport policy, strategy and implementation in South African cities

If you would like to contribute to this newsletter or if you have any comments or questions, please contact us at [lize@sustainable.org.za](mailto:lize@sustainable.org.za) or call 021 702 3622 and ask for Lize Jennings.

