Title

The assumption that all bioenergy, the burning of biomass such as wood or liquid fuels produced from agricultural crops, is carbon neutral has been proven to be false. Also, increasing biofuels and other biomass production for energy use could not only lead to an explosion of CO2 emissions but to a wider environmental damage, through the Direct and Indirect land Use Change processes. And BirdLife Europe has been one of the first NGOs to flag up these issues.

We are supporting our Partner organisations in assisting countries which are facing increasing land grabs, threatening local communities and wildlife habitats. A notable success has been our support to the BirdLife Partner in Kenya, Nature Kenya, in opposing the clearing of the Dakatcha forest for a jatropha plantation aimed at exporting biodiesel into the EU.

On Biofuels: in addition and in order to support our advocacy work, we have commissioned a series of scientific studies reports demonstrating why CO2 emissions and Indirect Land Use Change (ILUC) should be taken into account in biofuels production. BirdLife Europe has also developed a series of informative and educative communication outcomes to help understand the issue.

On Biomass: In order to support our push for sustainable criteria for biomass we have, among others, commissioned a scientific study showing the unsustainability of using biomass for energy purpose and we organized an event with US scientists in the European Parliament to raise MEPs' awareness on this issue.

Land Use Change and Indirect Land Use Change: Land Use Change consists in

using a land for another purpose. It becomes a problem when farmers decide to move from growing food crops to growing biofuels because it is financially more interested. Watch this explanative animation. The consequence is that either we lose in food production, either we report food production on other lands. Usually the report concern forests, grass lands or wetlands, which are crucial to store CO2. Also this process generates the destruction of natural habitats in forest, grasslands and wetlands, and drives a fast biodiversity loss in these areas.

Related topics

- Energy and Climate Change - our Policy work
- Bioenergy and Indirect Land Use Change - our Policy work

Climate Change section

- Supporting the deployment of Renewable Energy & engaging with the Energy sector for sustainable and pragmatic solutions
- Successfully pointing out the carbon risk from biofuels and biomass
- Back to Climate Change

Peter and Jane: a short film about biofuels

More information

- Video-animation: “Peter & Jane” Indirect Land Use Change from biofuel crops
- Study report (2013): Biofuels on the Dutch market - ranking oil companies in the Netherlands (CE Delft)

- Study report (2013): Sustainable alternatives for land-based biofuels in the European Union (CE Delft)
- Study report (2012): Optimising the "grandfathering" of existing biofuels production (Ecofis)
- Biofuels factsheet (2012): Drivers and impacts of Europe's Biodiversity Policy

---

Stichting BirdLife Europe gratefully acknowledges financial support from the European Commission. All content and opinions expressed on these pages are solely those of Stichting BirdLife Europe.