



WBA guidelines for new biomass associations

1 Introduction

Many Biomass Associations have been founded in many parts of the world over the last few decades. The growing role of biomass as an important renewable energy source is the main reason for this phenomenon. Today, energy from biomass is vitally important globally and in many countries it is by far the most important source of renewable energy. Biomass is used to deliver heat, electricity, transportation fuels and biogas for different purposes.

WBA supports the creation of new Biomass Associations worldwide. These guidelines are intended to support the initiative of persons in the creation of a new Biomass Association. It is based on the experience of several existing Biomass Associations.

2 Purpose and Activities of Biomass Associations

Biomass Associations have the purpose to facilitate and support the development of bioenergy.

This can be achieved through a broad range of activities: Exchange of experiences in meetings and working groups, organizing workshops and conferences, publishing info – leaflets, fact – sheets or position papers, developing proposals for government programs, training and education programs, realizing common projects, lobbying in favour of bioenergy development, motivation, informing about the advantages of biomass, public relation work, publishing newspapers, informing the decision makers about the possibilities and role of biomass.

3 Description of biomass associations

Biomass Associations are normally limited to a specific geographical area. This can be a region, a state, a continent or even a global level though most of them are national associations.

The subject: The subject of a Biomass Association can differ. Some associations deal with all forms of bioenergy such as biomass to heat, biomass district heating, and biomass to electricity, biogas, biofuels, energy crops, and biomass research etc. Others restrict their subject to specific sectors of the biomass industry. Both approaches can be successful. Yet, our experience has shown that a national association covering all aspects of the biomass industry has the advantage to be a stronger voice in negotiations with the government. These associations normally form working groups for the different sectors.

Size and members: The size of an association can differ widely from between 10 to 20 members up to 1000 or more. There are different groups of members:

- Individuals interested in bioenergy, for example farmers, forest owners, consultants, researchers, university professors.
- A second important group of members are companies doing business along the bioenergy value chain.
- Also other organisations or research institutes can be valuable biomass association members.

Financing: This is an important question for biomass associations to take very seriously. Typical sources for financing are:

- Membership fees
- Direct government support



- Support by donors or sponsors
- Projects financed within government or international programs
- Revenues from own activities such as conferences, publications, specific services

Cooperation with umbrella associations: At least on one continent, Europe, the national biomass associations formed an international umbrella association, called AEBIOM (Association Européenne pour la Biomass =European Biomass Association). It is based in Brussels, Belgium.

WBA, the World Bioenergy Association is the umbrella organisation on a global level to represent bioenergy towards global organisations such as IEA, UN, IPCC, FAO, UNEP, REN21, REN Alliance, IRENA etc.

The founding members were national associations. Since then, companies that are actively engaged on the continent or globally are also becoming members. These umbrella associations normally have 3 types of members: full members (biomass associations), company members and individuals. It is recommended that each national association join the umbrella association to better connect the bioenergy community globally.

4 Foundation of a Biomass Association

Each Association starts small. What is needed at the beginning is a group of persons passionate about bioenergy and willing to engage time and energy to create an association and to develop the bioenergy sector in the region. Normally such a group has a speaker who takes the lead. The next steps: elaboration of statutes, negotiations with possible financiers, set up of a working plan and a business plan, search for office space and a responsible staff member, depending on the level of financing. In the beginning phase, a financial support by a sector of the government – department of agriculture and forestry, environment or energy is of particular importance to get the association initially established.

Biomass Associations are normally organized as non – profit organisation, the legal status has to be chosen according to the national legislation.

5 Management of the Association

The Association must follow normal business laws and procedures of the region and respect international business legislation when operating outside of a national region. Some associations have a large board that meets, for instance, twice a year with most of the work carried out by the staff of the secretariat and the President throughout the year. Other associations might have a smaller board that can convene more frequently, 4 – 6 times a year to manage the organisation. According to the specific situation in each country or region, any Association must find the model that best fits the structure and operational requirements of the group.

5 Statutes of a Biomass Association

The content of statutes might partly be regulated by national law. Based on our experiences at WBA, following are recommended content:

1. Name, seat, regional area of activity

The Association is a non-governmental, non – profit member association with the seat and the name The area of activity is.....



2. Purpose

As example: To promote the increasing utilisation of bioenergy in an efficient, sustainable, economic and environmentally friendly way.

The Association deals with solid, liquid and gaseous biofuels.

It promotes the cooperation with other renewable energy sources in order to reach a renewable based energy system.

3. Activities to achieve the purpose

The Association will pursue a variety of activities to achieve the purpose such as the exchange of experiences in meetings and working groups, organizing workshops and conferences, publishing info – leaflets, fact – sheets or position papers, developing proposals for government programs, training and education programs, lobbying in favour of bioenergy, participating in projects, public relation work and others.

4. The financing of the Association

The Association finances its activities by revenues as follows:

- Membership fees
- Grants and subventions by public authorities or private sponsors and donors
- Revenues from events, publications and other activities
- Other revenues

5. Members

The Association consists of full members and could be:

- Individuals interested in pursuing the purpose of the Association
- Companies doing business with bioenergy or engaged in the energy business
- Other associations, public authorities, research centres working in the area of bioenergy, energy or climate policy

To become a member of the Association a written application has to be submitted. The board decides about new members.

The membership ends by the decision of the member, by death or by a decision of the board. The board can expel members, if they don't support the purpose of the Association or if they fail to pay any previously agreed membership fees.

The members have the right to participate at the GA, to get information about the activities on a regular basis, to vote actively and passively. They have the obligation to support the Association and to pay the membership fees.

6. Organisational elements

The Organisation consists of a General Assembly (GA), a Board, the President and Vice presidents and two auditors.

7. The General Assembly:

Consist of all members, meets at least once a year and is convened by the President at least 5 weeks in advance by sending the agenda to all members.

The GA has following functions:

- Examine and approve the annual report, the accounts and the balance sheets presented by the Board



- Determine the membership fees
- Elect the President, up to 3 Vice presidents, the board members and the auditors
- Change the statutes

The GA votes by simple majority of the present voting rights. Members have one vote each. Voting is open or by secret ballot, if requested by one member.

An extraordinary GA can be convened by more than 10% of the members, if the members articulate this wish.

8. The Board

The size of the Board is between 5 and 18 members. The President and the Vice presidents are members of the board.

The Board decides all issues not determined by the GA. Particularly the Board:

- Decides about the annual budget, working plan and business plan
- Accepts new members or expels existing members
- Decides about the staff of the secretariat and all personal and financial matters related to the staff
- Sets the agenda for the GA
- Governs the Association

The Board meets at least 2 times a year, alternatively: 4 times a year. It is convened by the president at least 3 weeks in advance. The Board votes by simple majority of the present voting rights. At least more than 40% of the board members have to be present.

9. The President, the Vice Presidents

The Association is legally represented by the President. The President can designate a Vice President to represent the Association in the event that the President is unavailable.

The President may create a secretariat, which executes the decisions of the Board or GA under guidance of the President

10. Auditors

Two auditors check the books of the Association once a year and report to the GA.

11. Elections

The members of the board, the President and the Vice President are elected by the GA for 3 years. They can be re – elected once. The vote is taken by simple majority. If one of these persons wants to be re-elected for a longer period than 6 years, the vote has to be taken with a 2/3rd majority. All members can become candidates to become a board member, President or Vice President. The secretariat has to invite all members 4 months prior to the GA to submit their candidacy for these positions. The board can elaborate a common proposal for the election or leave the election up to the GA. The GA can elaborate more detailed rules for the election.

12. Finishing of the Association

The GA has the right to dissolve Association.