

Sustainable bioenergy from Nordic/Baltic forests and fields

The Nordic/Baltic region has abundant natural resources in forests and fields that can produce large quantities of biomass for energy, which in turn can be refined into liquid, gaseous and solid fuels and used for a multitude of end purposes. With large land surface and relatively low population density, and at the same time favourable natural conditions, the Nordic countries have unique potentials to deliver bioenergy that can help remedying pressing climate threats on a regional and European level.

Our region has a strong bioenergy business community that has developed many globally leading spearhead technologies. The market is well developed with trading companies and logistical solutions. We have leading research and development institutions, and we have a favourable political climate with politicians who support the growth of renewable energy.

To summarise: the Nordic/Baltic region is a world leader in developing modern bioenergy.

Still there are threats at the horizon. The use of forests and agricultural land for bioenergy purposes is today often questioned by politicians, media, non-governmental organisations, and even some researchers. They question the sustainability of bioenergy. They question the climate benefits of using biofuels and biomass for energy. They see only problems, where we see opportunities.

A number of proposals have been put forward that threaten to hamper the development of bioenergy. Some of these proposals can lead to unnecessary bureaucracy and new administrative burdens. Yet we believe that bioenergy can be used in a sustainable way, and our solutions must be both environmentally and economically sound. This can be supported by good legislation and basic certification, but overly detailed regulations will create more problems than they solve.

The multifunctional Nordic managed forestry model can deliver both large quantities of forest products and bioenergy, as well as climate benefits through carbon sequestration and storage.

We, the Nordic/Baltic bioenergy conference participants, ask the Nordic and Baltic political leaders to recognise the promises and benefits of bioenergy, and at the same time be aware of the threats to our sector, and continue to give support to the development of sustainable bioenergy as a central part of a renewable energy supply. With good political support we can continue to deliver solutions to pressing climate threats, develop new businesses, create jobs, and earn export incomes to the Nordic and Baltic countries.