Webwatch

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Global Bioenergy Partnership

<http://www.globalbioenergy.org>

The Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP) was created in 2005, following the pledges made by the G8 in the Gleaneagles action plan to support the development of biomass and bioenergy energy sources focused in developing countries. The partnership was launched in May 2006 under the auspices of the UN Commission of Sustainable Development (<http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/index.shtml>) on its 14th session. Since then, the GBEP mandate was reinforced in subsequent G8 meetings. Currently the GBEP secretariat is located at the FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, and supported by some national governments.

The main goals of the GBEP are to support and provide the instruments needed for the organization, coordination, implementation of research and development, and demonstration and commercial activities related with the production, delivery, and conversion of biomass for energy production. These activities are focused mainly in developing countries that are currently more dependent on biomass-based energy sources, aligned with the general goals of energy and food security, climate change, and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The GBEP also supports and encourages the exchange of information between public and private partners, the engagement of the private sector, and the incorporation of bioenergy specific initiatives in development plans and strategies, among other activities. Currently, GBEP list of partners includes many

UN agencies, developed and developing countries, and international organizations with interests in the area. GBEP develops its activities mainly through working groups, called task forces that focus on specific problems or areas.

The GBEP website was launched to support its activities, and in particular to serve as a global forum where practitioners, policy makers, and other stakeholders can exchange ideas and found relevant information for their activities. This way GBEP tries as much as possible to encourage all activities dedicated or directly related with the promotion and production of bioenergy. In order to fulfill these goals, there is a specific section, accessible directly from the main site, where the current GBEP's working program can be directly accessed, with subsections for working documents related to the various task forces, which can be freely accessed. In another section of the website it is possible to find a list of past and future events of GBEP, related with its main activities, with direct links in most of the cases. A news section gives information pertinent to bioenergy. For people interested in knowing more about the partners of GBEP or about bioenergy issues, there is a links section including a list of many public and private organizations working in the area. Of particular interest is the virtual library, a fully searchable collection of publications, reports, and other relevant information in the field, most of them freely available.

The site is easy to navigate and the information is easy to find, although no search facility is available. The site does a good job on presenting the activities of GBEP, and to disseminate its main activities and results. Even though there is a section restricted to partners, essentially public or private organizations, the materials available are valuable for a wide range of people with interests in the bioenergy area. As GBEP does not have a newsletter, constant visits are necessary to keep updated.

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Pew Center on Global Climate Change

<http://www.pewclimate.org/>

The Pew Center on Global Climate Change (PCGCC) is an independent non-profit and non-partisan organization, created in 1998 and currently based in Arlington, Virginia, USA. This organization aims to address, study, provide information, and develop solutions to the many problems directly or indirectly related with climate change, based on science and after a thorough analysis of all sides of the problem. All activities are funded through private donations or funding programs from a wide variety of partners, and the board of directors includes people formerly with government or executive positions in private companies, mostly Americans.

In order to accomplish the above goals, the PCGCC develops its activities on several key areas and with a wide variety of partners, either from the public or private sector. One important area of activity is the publication of analyses or reports, made by internationally renowned specialists, of various aspects of climate change, in a wide range of subjects including economics, environmental impact, science, business, technology, among others. Examples include the description and presentation of the basic concepts and the expected impacts of climate on economic sectors or in society. Also, it reports the implementation and market potential of existing or future renewable energy technologies. Other PCGCC activities involves influencing policy makers, business leaders, and other relevant stakeholders to the issues related to climate change, and how they can respond to the challenges posed by it. Also central to the PCGCC activities is the cooperation with private companies, both for the development of new policies and practical strategies to tackle climate change. With these goals in mind, the PCGCC has created the Business Environmental Leadership Council (BELC), a partnership of currently 46 large companies working and regularly meeting together to address climate change. Besides the BELC the PCGCC also works with other partners on specific problems/areas.

The simple and easy to navigate website presents and summarizes all the main activities of the PCGCC. Following the Center's commitment on the transfer of information, all reports are freely available for download at the website, most of them in the Publications and Reports section. In order to help people interested on specific topics, such as global warming, a direct link on the left menu directs to specific webpages, with links to relevant reports, publications, or external webpages. Two sections, named Press Center and Articles and Speeches, are devoted to the presentation of news of events and activities directly related to climate change and related issues. As in most

sections of the website, different pieces of information on specific subjects can be easily accessed from a menu on the right side. Specific sections are also available for the BELC, and to international or US settings.

A free e-mail newsletter can be subscribed at the side, as well a RSS feed, to keep updated with the Center's activities and the release of new reports or publications. Overall, the site does a good job of presenting all activities of PCGCC, and the variety of themes and information make it a worthy and comprehensive visit for diverse people, either specialists or not, interested to understand or deal with the problems entailed by climate change.

Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership

<http://www.reeep.org/>

The Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEP) is non-profit organization established during the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa. Its main goals are the market creation and development for all forms of renewable energy and energy efficiency, with a focus on emerging markets and developing countries. Currently, REEP operates as a partnership, with around 300 members including public and private organizations in many areas of activities. REEP operates through various regional secretariats around the world, with locally defined goals. Its activities are supported mostly by governments and by contributions from the private sector.

REEP develops its activities mainly in three main areas. One area is research and development, where it supports and funds projects aimed for interventions in topics that show potential for market development, with a focus in policy or regulatory frameworks, or new and innovative financial and business models. In the second area, REEP seeks to develop and supports networks of stakeholders and/or policy makers, through initiatives such as the Energy Efficiency Coalition (EEC), among others. In the third area, REEP aims as much as possible to disseminate knowledge, expertise, and learnings from different partners or stakeholders, through the listing of news, events, and publications. Directly linked with this area of expertise, REEP operates an internet search engine focused on the green energy area.

The website represents one of the cornerstones of REEP activities. From a simple initial webpage, people can access other areas of the site detailing REEP structure, history, and main activities, with online presentations of its activities. Particularly in this section extensive descriptions of past and ongoing projects can be found, with a description of partners, funding, and other relevant information. A

description of other areas of activity can be found as well. Other important area of the site is the “Accelerate to Market” section, where users can learn about law and regulations that may impact their activities, and access training material, manuals, and guidebooks to accelerate knowledge transfer and speed-up the development of their ideas, among others. Some of this information can be found in a more focused website, the REED Digital library, <http://toolkits.reep.org>. There, among other information, toolkits for the development of renewable and energy efficiency projects aimed for specific world regions can be found, as well as other valuable information in this area.

The site features a section of news and events, and a blog focused on the energy questions (<http://blog.reegle.info>). The search engine can be accessed through the link <http://www.reegle.info> and which aims to search the internet for information related to the renewable and green energy sector, as for example stakeholders with interests in the area. It provides specific and formatted information in various settings, e.g., geographically based or sector based, among other possibilities.

Through registration, users can access other parts of the site, and receive news about projects, funding, and other information. An e-mail free newsletter can also be subscribed at the site, to keep in touch with REEP activities. Although packed and full of information, the site is simple and well designed. A search facility can be used to find what one is looking for. This site does indeed a good job to appeal to a wide audience and to be one important stop in the sectors of renewable and energy efficiencies.

Roberts Environmental Center

<http://www.roberts.cmc.edu/>

The Roberts Environmental Center (REC) is a private Californian higher education and research institute of the Claremont McKenna College, which is located in Claremont, California, USA. It is named after George Roberts, a former student of Claremont McKenna College and the founder of the Kohlberg, Kravis Robert & Co private equity firm.

REC is specialized in teaching and research of environmental problems on the broader perspective of sustainable development. The Center’s main goal is to involve students as much as possible in real world environmental

issues, and to give them the expertise and the tools to examine environmental issues in its many perspectives, in particular, the scientific, economical, social, and policy dimensions. In particular, the institute is currently one of the leading specialists on the study of corporate environment and sustainability self-reporting, examining the performance, and reporting of a huge number of companies worldwide in a wide range of activity sectors.

The REC website serves to present all the activities of the Center, either education or research oriented. A significant focus is placed on the activities resulting from the environmental and sustainability reporting initiatives. For example, from the main menu available in all pages, it is possible to directly access sections with listings of publications, research activities, and activity reports of the Center. The evaluation reports are done using a methodology named Pacific Sustainability Index (PSI), developed with the assistance of external specialists from academia and industry, and presented, and thoroughly discussed in a specific section of the website. In other section, score sheets for diverse economic sectors, either industrial or service based, can also be found. The evaluation reports done for specific sectors or areas of activity can be downloaded for free, with the addition of new reports on a weekly basis. As a frequently updated site, it is possible to receive e-mail news of reports addition or of REC activities.

The site is well presented and easy to navigate, with a search facility to assist people in finding what they want in a fast increasing site. Although focused mainly on the study and analysis of corporate environment and sustainability reporting, the information available at the site, especially reports and publications, make it an important stop to people interested on these areas and related ones, such as sustainability indicators definition and calculation.

Final words

We will return on the next issue with a fresh selection of sites. If you know of sites that are worthy of being presented, send us all relevant information to the following e-mail address: amartins@fe.up.pt. Any suggestions will be considered with great attention for possible publication. In that case, the contributors “names will be acknowledge” in this column. Surf well.