

## Report clarifies concept of carbon neutrality for biomass energy

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) has released a report providing a framework for understanding the concept of 'carbon neutrality'. The report, *Issue Brief: Biomass Carbon Neutrality*, distils key aspects of the debate and underlines the need for a shared understanding of the concept in public policy.



Credit: G. Heath/scienceimage

Using biomass-derived fuels and materials instead of more fossil fuel-intensive alternatives is one approach to mitigating increases in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>. However, the benefits of using biomass have come under question, with the debate often centred on whether biomass is 'carbon neutral'. There is no widely accepted definition for 'carbon neutrality' and different people understand it to have different meanings.

Depending on how carbon neutrality is understood and applied, policies may favour or disfavour the use and development of forest products and may affect traditional as well as emerging uses of forest products and biomass.

To clarify the issue, the [WBCSD report](#) explains the biomass carbon cycle, illustrates the benefits of using forest products and introduces the basics of carbon accounting.

*Issue Brief: Biomass Carbon Neutrality* aligns with the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which noted that over the long term, sustainable forest management strategies that maintain or increase forest carbon stocks – while sustaining yield of timber, fibre or energy – will generate the largest sustained mitigation benefit.

Source: WBCSD

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