

SDC position on Biofuels:

The SDC recognises that biofuels may have a part to play in reducing transport related CO₂ emissions. However, this will depend on the appropriate safeguards being in place, including:

- Rigorous standards for sustainability of every source and supply of biofuels. The direct and indirect environmental, social and economic effects must be covered. Preferably, these should be agreed internationally in order to avoid the use of less sustainable fuels in countries with less rigorous standards than the UK.
- The sustainability standards must cover complex issues such as the risk of deforestation and societal impacts and should include a whole life-cycle analysis of greenhouse gas emissions, including land-use change.
- Incentives or subsidies for biofuels should be graduated to provide the greatest incentive for the greatest carbon savings.

Without these safeguards there is a risk that the increased use of biofuels for transport could result in limited reductions or even increases in emissions of greenhouse gases compared with the use of fossil fuel equivalents. In addition, unacceptable social and other environmental impacts are likely. In particular, before any further mandates for the use of biofuels are implemented, consideration should be given to whether a target driven approach sufficiently safeguards sustainability, or whether other policy instruments, such as incentives for greenhouse gas emissions savings from crops and waste, would be more appropriate.

Sustainable Development Commission

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