



Drax Independent Advisory Board
February 8th, 2022, Telcon Meeting
Timings: 14:15 – 17:15 GMT

Attendees

IAB: Sir John Beddington – IAB Chair (JB), Lord John Krebs (JK), Professor Sam Fankhauser (SF), Professor Virginia Dale (VD).

Apologies from Forest Research represented by Robert Matthews (RM).

Drax: Alan Knight – Group Director of Sustainability (AK), Emma Persson – Renewables Engagement Officer (EP), Richard Peberdy – Head of Sustainable Forests (RP), Kyla Cheynet – Sustainability Director Drax Biomass (KC), Michael Goldsworthy – Sustainability Manager (MG), Kevin Tam – Senior Carbon Analyst (KT), Tanisha Beebee – Government Policy Senior Manager (TB), Richard Harris – Senior Fuels Developer Lead (RH), Matthew Rivers – Director of Alternative Fuels Origination (MR), Selina Williams – Media Manager (SW).

Introductory session

1. The Chair welcomed and introduced the session. New membership on the IAB and the preliminary plans for the IAB to visit British Columbia were discussed, and the minutes and actions from the November 2021 meetings were agreed.

Towards Nature Positive: Nature Positive ExCom paper

2. AK introduced the Nature Positive paper for ExCom, discussing the new and emerging concept of nature-positive, its definition of “halting and reversing nature loss by 2030, measured from a baseline of 2020”, and AK presented the question of how this concept can be applied in practice at Drax – both at Drax’s energy generation and pellet sites – and sought comment from the IAB.
3. The IAB made the following comments and raised the following questions about Drax’s ambition:
 - a. Knowing what the metric is that determines if nature is positive or negative is essential.
 - b. Nature-positive does not just involve biodiversity, but also aspects such as soil, loss of water bodies, etc. and suggested that Drax use the UK Government’s nature-positive metrics once published.
 - c. Drax should use an evidence-based set of steps to restore nature (emphasising the importance of measures put in place to get to the outcome), and it would be useful to think of what the values of the metrics would be under counterfactuals, i.e. what would have been the outcome without Drax’s intervention.
 - d. Drax should read two papers to inform their thinking on this topic: McBride, A, Dale, VH, et al. (2011)¹ and Dale, VH, Efrogmson, RA, et al. (2013)².

¹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1470160X11000276?via%3Dihub>

² <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1470160X12003652?via%3Dihub>



- e. Ecosystem services can be a unified way of thinking about what good nature is in different locations. Drax should look at each country's or region's location-specific metrics. However, ecosystem services may not include biodiversity, and as such VD suggested two papers that Drax should read that discuss this topic in more detail: Joly CA, et al. (2015)³ and Dale, et al. (2018)⁴.
4. AK said that nature-positive is a growing topic and one that stakeholders are wanting to know more about, especially how Drax is implementing it. Questions such as what the metrics and baseline are and how Drax should decide these are ones Drax is considering. Local consensus building will be important in which Drax will engage local organisations to hear their needs and input. The IAB made the following responses to AK's comments:
 - a. The IAB agreed that engagement and collaboration with local organisations is crucial and suggested a paper which looks at engaging stakeholders and can be of value to Drax's approach at determining metrics: VH Dale and KL Kline (2017)⁵.
 - b. Drax should undertake scenario analysis in certain areas and should discuss and analyse these scenarios with local stakeholders.
 - c. The IAB agreed with Drax having the baseline year be 2020 and suggested that Drax also research how other baseline years compare to 2020 to find out what the scenario would have been during other years.
5. Drax took onboard the comments made and will include these suggestions when progressing the nature-positive work.

Towards Climate Positive: Climate Positive ExCom paper

6. AK introduced the Climate Positive paper that has been presented to Drax's ExCom, and outlined the main points, and specifically carbon targets, from the pre-reading that was circulated ahead of the meeting. One of the points presented was the use of absolute versus intensity targets (with "absolute target" referring to the total amount of emissions emitted and "intensity" target referring to the number of emissions per unit of output or product). The Climate Positive outcome is part of the new sustainability strategy, which aims to more clearly demonstrate Drax's plan for reducing its existing carbon emissions. AK asked the IAB for their input and thoughts. The group discussed the idea of Drax reporting on measures it has put in place to achieve Climate Positive as well as report the emissions themselves. The IAB suggested the following:
 - a. Drax should keep studying the intensity and absolute targets, not just the intensity targets as these two values can show different results, which AK agreed with stating that Drax will present both numbers as they are both needed and will also give an honest narrative of Drax's emissions.
 - b. Annual targets may be difficult to have in the long run as values can fluctuate substantially from year to year. However, AK noted that Drax is looking to take on the responsibility right now for each year, not just for 2030, so having an annual target therefore spurs the carbon reduction discussion and actions now.

³https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281111758_Biofuel_impacts_on_biodiversity_and_ecosystem_services

⁴<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0961953417303100?via%3Dihub>

⁵<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/bbb.1753>



- c. A similar approach to the nature-positive discussion should be taken, in which Drax has an open conversation with ENGOs that don't agree with Drax's carbon story, i.e. to open the dialogue on what ideas they have that Drax can work with.
7. Drax agreed with the IAB's comments and will include these suggestions when progressing the Climate Positive work.

Update on energy crops

8. RH and TB updated the group on the latest regarding domestic sourcing including upcoming reports and energy crop consultations. A summary of the NGO sweep, which was recently completed by consultants Robertsbridge, was also presented in which results showed that land-use competition and biodiversity were the main concerns for NGOs.
9. TB said that a report by WPI Strategy in partnership with Carter Jonas and National Farmers Union (NFU), looking at key opportunities and barriers for energy crops for BECCS in the UK will be published in early March.
10. The IAB queried how the Drax team will integrate nature-positive into this work.

Update on air quality

11. VF introduced Drax's initiatives looking at particulate matter and presented a recently completed third-party review on wood pellet manufacture and combustion.
12. The IAB noted this work and asked to be informed about future developments.

Conclusions and wrap up

13. The Chair thanked and closed the meeting.