

Report back to The Funding Network

1. Name of your organisation and date funded by TFN:

Biofuelwatch – funding by TFN confirmed 30th June 2011

2. What does your organisation do?

i.e. What are its aims and objectives? Have these changed since receiving TFN funding?

Our aims and objectives have not changed since well before we received TFN funding. Our overall aim is to raise awareness of and work to stop the negative impacts of biofuels and large-scale biomass on ecosystems, communities, and climate, while supporting adequate responses to climate change. Within that overall aim, we continually adjust our specific work priorities in response to policy and industry developments.

3. When was your organisation first established?

2006, however we were unfunded and entirely volunteer-run until autumn 2008.

4. Since receiving funding from TFN how has your organisation changed?

Has your annual turnover changed?

Has the number of beneficiaries reached changed?

Can you quantify any other changes? Eg ...number of employees, number of projects, geographical scope.

Since July 2011, we have had a dedicated UK biomass campaigner, and we now have paid UK staff for 8 rather than 5 ½ days a week. We have had four additional grants since then, both for our UK and US work.

There has been an appreciable increase in our outreach, e.g. contacts with other UK-based NGOs/organisations, subscribers to our email lists, and participation in email alerts.

Our overall approach to our UK bioenergy campaign remains broadly the same – a combination of supporting grassroots campaigns against power station plans, networking between them and policy work at the national level.

5. Can you describe/measure the impact that the specific TFN funded project/work has had? What actual change did the funded project generate? What proportion of the project/work did TFN fund (eg all/x%)? What evidence do you have for the success or failure of the funded project?

The main focus of the project was the UK Government's consultation and decision over future renewable electricity subsidies (Renewable Obligation Certificates and ROCs). We have been campaigning to stop subsidies for biofuels and wood-based bioenergy electricity because of their serious impacts on forests and other ecosystems, land-grabbing in the global South and negative impacts on the climate. We call for renewable energy subsidies to support only true renewables which are sustainable and help mitigate climate change, such as appropriately sited wind, solar and tidal energy. The Consultation closed in January 2012, however DECC has not yet announced its decision so we do not know whether they may have been concessions (perhaps over bioliquids) as a result of our campaign. Sadly, media reports suggest that the main reason for the delay is opposition to wind power, especially by 100 Conservative MPs, not concerns over the impacts of bioenergy. Furthermore, DECC has since published its Bioenergy Strategy which is highly supportive of big energy companies' investment in biomass, especially as a means of keeping polluting, old and inefficient coal power stations open beyond 2015.

In Scotland, policy developments have been more hopeful although the Scottish Government has not yet announced its decision over future ROCs for biomass either. However, there has been growing concern about ROCs for big biomass power stations amongst MPs and those have been publicly

acknowledged by the government. Furthermore, the Scottish Energy Minister has openly criticised DECC's support of large-scale subsidies for biomass electricity.

We had never expected to achieve substantial UK-wide policy changes over biomass, given the strength of industry lobbying by the big six energy companies and Drax in particular. What we had hoped to achieve was to create a much higher level of awareness of the impacts of subsidies for biomass electricity and we are confident that our project/campaign has had genuine success in that respect.

6. Could you give us an estimate of how many people have been reached by the TFN funded project/work and by how much?

- ⤴ Several direct mailouts in relation to the campaign supported by TFN have gone to all our list members – their number has increased from 3,200 to over 3,700 over the past year. They have also been circulated on various other lists, including Rainforest Rescue's UK list with over 3,000 subscribers and through the ActionAid biofuels web pages.
- ⤴ As part of the project, we made contact with a wide range of different social and environmental NGOs/organisations in the UK. We built up new ongoing working relationships with several of them.
- ⤴ Through our supporters, we have communicated our concerns about subsidies for biomass and biofuel electricity to a large number of MPs.
- ⤴ We developed the text for a House of Commons Early Day Motion on bio-electricity subsidies and had it tabled by Caroline Lucas.
- ⤴ We held a public meeting in London in October 2011 which was attended by around 80 people. At the event, our biomass campaigner presented alongside a speaker from ActionAid Tanzania, the Friends of the Earth agrofuel campaigner and AirportWatch (speaking about aviation biofuels).
- ⤴ We organised a national protest outside the Department for Energy and Climate Change in October 2011. This was attended by campaigners from the Isle of Wight, Trafford, Bristol, Brighton, Eastbourne, Port Talbot, Newport (Wales), Portland (Dorset), Southampton and Edinburgh as well as London.
- ⤴ We initiated an Open Letter to DECC and the Scottish Government against ROCs for biomass and biofuels, signed by 87 organisations from 25 countries. We also initiated a separate Open Letter specifically against ROCs for biofuels, supported by ActionAid UK, Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Friends of the Earth Scotland, Greenpeace, Sumatran Orangutan Society, War on Want and World Development Movement.
- ⤴ We had articles about the campaign published in the Ecologist (two separate ones) and New Internationalist.
- ⤴ In Scotland, we were invited to speak at an evidence session about ROCs in front of a parliamentary committee.
- ⤴ Also in Scotland, we co-organised a protest against ROCs for big biomass outside the Scottish Parliament. 35 MSPs joined the protest and two parties with elected members issued press releases in support.

7. Did receiving the money from TFN make positive difference to your organisation? If yes, in what way? If no, please specify why not?

Were there changes in non-financial support/leverage i.e volunteering hours, relationships, contracts, trustees or media coverage? Did it help to get other grants/donors?

Yes, it enabled us to implement a dedicated campaign against renewable electricity subsidies (ROCs) for biomass and biofuels. This campaign helped to increase our networking/contacts and wider outreach. We were also pleased to have articles published in the Ecologist and New Internationalist, thus reaching a wider audience than before. We were contacted by one funder as a result of the TFN application and have since been awarded a £5,000 grant by them.

8. Do you have any other comments regarding TFN funding?

We hope that there will be more funding rounds that include campaigning and perhaps also ones that will also consider supporting longer-term core funding.

