

INTEGRATED SPATIO-TEMPORAL TECHNO-ECONOMIC APPROACH FOR
MODELING MULTI-SECTORAL BIOENERGY DEPLOYMENT

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ABSTRACT

Although aspects of long-term planning are commonly taken into account in current analyses of bioenergy policy scenarios, spatial representations of the bioenergy supply chain are often overlooked. Multiple questions such as where, when, and how bioenergy is deployed thus have not been sufficiently addressed within a single modeling framework. Moreover, techno-economic models that can capture the dependencies of bioenergy supply chain variables among end-use sectors still need to be explored. This thesis presents a spatially and temporally explicit techno-economic supply chain optimization model that allows the assessment of bioenergy deployment at a higher system level from a multi-sectoral perspective. This thesis also presents applications of the model in the context of developing low-carbon pathways for a developing country having an economy reliant on fossil fuels and agriculture, with Malaysia serving as a case study. The model was developed in the generic algebraic modeling system, with ArcGIS applied for spatial processing and Python applied for database management. The first part of the thesis presents the model application for assessing long-term cross-cutting impact of implementing bioenergy in multiple energy sectors up to 2050. The findings suggest that integrating substantial capacity of bioenergy in Malaysia's energy sectors could help save up to 37% of the annual emission avoidance cost of meeting the long-term emission target. The findings also suggest that the renewable energy policies could deliver more emission reductions than the decarbonization policies, but would require 30% more cumulative investment. The second part of the thesis discusses more detailed strategies on how biomass co-firing with coal can contribute to meeting short-term emission target up to 2030, which is related to multi-scale production of solid biofuels from palm oil biomass to scale up co-firing. The findings show that densified biomass feedstock could substitute significant shares of coal capacities to deliver up to 29 Mt/year of greenhouse gas reduction. Nevertheless, this would cause a surge in the electricity system cost by up to 2 billion USD/year due to the substitution of up to 40% of the coal-fired plant capacities. The third part of the thesis presents the model application to analyze the impact of the co-deployment of co-firing and dedicated biomass technologies in contributing to the bioenergy cost reduction under the impact of incremental decarbonization targets and supply chain cost parameter variations. The findings suggest that the multi-sectoral deployment of bioenergy in energy systems is key to meeting decarbonization targets at the national scale. By also considering biomass co-firing with coal in the biomass technological pathway, up to 27% of bioenergy cost reduction could be enabled in the main case. All the findings from this thesis are expected to inform the ongoing policies and initiatives regarding greenhouse gas reduction, renewable energy production, and resource efficiency improvement for managing environmental sustainability.

ABSTRAK

Walaupun aspek perancangan jangka panjang biasanya dipertimbangkan dalam analisis semasa berkenaan senario melibatkan dasar biotenaga, aspek ruang dalam struktur rantai bekalan biotenaga sering kali kurang diberi perhatian. Pelbagai persoalan seperti di mana, bila, dan bagaimana biotenaga dapat dibangunkan tidak dapat ditangani dengan cukup dalam satu kerangka pemodelan. Lebih-lebih lagi, model tekno-ekonomi yang dapat menghubungkan kebergantungan pemboleh ubah rantai bekalan biotenaga di antara sektor penggunaan akhir masih perlu diterokai. Tesis ini mengemukakan model pengoptimuman rantai bekalan tekno-ekonomi yang dilengkapi ciri-ciri pemodelan secara eksplisit dalam aspek ruang dan masa yang membolehkan penilaian pembangunan biotenaga pada tahap sistem yang lebih tinggi dari perspektif pelbagai sektor. Tesis ini juga mengemukakan aplikasi model dalam konteks pembinaan jalur rendah karbon untuk negara membangun yang ekonominya bergantung pada bahan bakar fosil dan pertanian, dengan menggunakan Malaysia sebagai kajian kes. Model ini telah dibangunkan di dalam pemodelan sistem algebra secara generik, menggunakan ArcGIS untuk pemprosesan ruang dan Python untuk pengurusan data. Bahagian pertama tesis membentangkan aplikasi model untuk menilai impak jangka panjang pelaksanaan biotenaga dalam sektor-sektor tenaga hingga tahun 2050. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa integrasi kapasiti biotenaga yang secukupnya dalam sektor tenaga Malaysia dapat membantu menjimatkan hingga 37% kos penghindaran pelepasan tahunan untuk memenuhi sasaran pelepasan jangka panjang. Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa dasar-dasar berkenaan tenaga boleh diperbaharui dapat memberikan pengurangan pelepasan lebih banyak daripada dasar-dasar berkenaan penyahkarbonan, tetapi memerlukan lebih 30% pelaburan kumulatif. Bahagian kedua tesis membincangkan strategi yang lebih terperinci mengenai bagaimana pembakaran biojisim bersama arang batu dapat menyumbang pada pencapaian sasaran pelepasan jangka pendek hingga 2030, yang berkaitan dengan pengeluaran bahan api bio dalam bentuk pepejal pelbagai skala dari biojisim kelapa sawit untuk meningkatkan pembakaran biojisim bersama arang batu. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa biojisim yang telah dipadatkan dapat menggantikan sebahagian besar kapasiti arang batu untuk menghasilkan pengurangan gas rumah hijau hingga 29 juta tan setiap tahun. Walaupun begitu, ini akan menyebabkan peningkatan kos sistem elektrik hingga USD 2 bilion setiap tahun disebabkan penggantian hingga 40% dari kapasiti loji pembuatan tenaga daripada arang batu. Bahagian ketiga tesis membentangkan aplikasi model untuk menganalisis kesan pembangunan bersama teknologi biojisim dan teknologi pembakaran bersama dalam menyumbang kepada pengurangan kos biotenaga di bawah kesan kenaikan sasaran penyahkarbonan dan perubahan parameter kos rantai bekalan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa pembangunan biotenaga dalam pelbagai sektor sistem tenaga adalah kunci untuk memenuhi sasaran penyahkarbonan pada skala nasional. Dengan juga mempertimbangkan pembakaran biojisim bersama arang batu dalam pilihan teknologi biojisim, pengurangan kos biotenaga hingga 27% dapat dicapai dalam kes utama. Semua penemuan dari tesis ini dijangkakan dapat memberikan maklumat tentang dasar dan inisiatif mengenai pengurangan gas rumah hijau, pengeluaran tenaga boleh diperbaharui, dan peningkatan kecekapan sumber untuk mengurus kelestarian alam sekitar.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AD	-	Anaerobic digestion
B5	-	5% palm-biodiesel
B7	-	7% palm-biodiesel
B10	-	10% palm-biodiesel
B20	-	20% palm-biodiesel
B40	-	40% palm-biodiesel
BAU	-	Business-As-Usual
BECCS	-	Bioenergy with carbon capture and storage
BioCNG	-	Compressed biomethane
BNM	-	Bank Negara Malaysia
BSM	-	Specialized bioenergy supply chain model
CAPEX	-	Capital expenditure
CCI	-	Climate Change Initiative
CCS	-	Carbon capture and storage
CEPCI	-	Chemical Engineering Plant Cost Index
CHP	-	Combined heat and power
CO	-	Carbon monoxide
CO ₂	-	Carbon dioxide
CPKO	-	Crude palm kernel oil
CPO	-	Crude palm oil
DEM	-	Digital Elevation Model
DML	-	Dry matter loss
EFB	-	Empty fruit bunch
EIA	-	United States Energy Information Administration
ESA	-	European Space Agency
ESM	-	Energy systems model
EU	-	European Union
FAME	-	Fatty acid methyl ester
FAO	-	Food and Agriculture Organization
FFB	-	Fresh fruit bunch

FiT	-	Feed-in Tariff
FT	-	Fischer-Tropsch
GAMS	-	General Algebraic Modeling System
GDP	-	Gross domestic product
GHG	-	Greenhouse gas emission
GIS	-	Geographical Information System
GTMP	-	Green Technology Master Plan 2017–2030
HCl	-	Hydrogen chloride
HF	-	Hydrogen fluoride
HHV	-	Higher heating value
IEA	-	International Energy Agency
INDC	-	Intended Nationally Determined Contribution
IPCC	-	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRENA	-	International Renewable Energy Agency
ISO	-	International Organization for Standardization
IUCN	-	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JPPPET	-	Planning and Implementation Committee for Electricity and Supply Tariff of Malaysia
KRI	-	Khazanah Research Institute
LCA	-	Life cycle assessment
LHV	-	Lower heating value
LNG	-	Liquefied natural gas
LP	-	Linear programming
LSS	-	Large Scale Solar
LULUCF	-	Land use, land-use change, and forestry
MC	-	Moisture content
MCDA	-	Multi-criteria decision making
MF	-	Mesocarp fibre
MILP	-	Mixed-integer linear programming
MPOB	-	Malaysian Palm Oil Board
MSW	-	Municipal solid waste
NDC	-	Nationally Determined Contribution
NEM	-	Net Energy Metering
NKEA	-	National Key Economic Area

NO ₂	-	Nitrogen dioxide
NREPAP	-	National Renewable Energy Policy and Action Plan 2009
O&M	-	Operation and maintenance
OER	-	Oil extraction rate
OPF	-	Oil palm frond
OPT	-	Oil palm trunk
Petronas	-	Petroleum Nasional Berhad
PKS	-	Palm kernel shell
PM	-	Particulate matter
POME	-	Palm oil mill effluent
RE	-	Renewable electricity
RH	-	Rice husk
RPR	-	Residue-to-product ratio
RS	-	Rice straw
SO ₂	-	Sulfur dioxide
SREP	-	Small Renewable Energy Policy
SSR	-	Self-sufficiency ratio
UNFCCC	-	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UK	-	United Kingdom
US	-	United States

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

1.1.1 Roles of Bioenergy in Energy Systems Decarbonization

Climate change is one of these century's defining challenges, creating new impediments to the already existing development threats [1]. Anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are appraised to have contributed to global warming of between 0.8 and 1.2 °C above pre-industrial levels [2]. Without drastic measures taken, this global warming rate is expected to rise by an additional of 2.5–7.8 °C by the end of this century [2,3]. To mitigate the impact of climate change, countries of the world have pledged their commitments in the Paris Agreement to reduce their overall GHG emissions.

In meeting the climate stabilization target of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, large amount of biomass resources will be demanded to deliver significant bioenergy capacities for delivering energy system decarbonization [4]. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, reaching the climate change mitigation goal will necessitate up to 430 EJ/year of biomass use by 2100, as well as the phase-out in fossil fuel consumption and increased use of other renewables [5]. The ratio of bioenergy to global primary energy consumption would constitute to up to 50% by the end of the century from an average of 10% currently [6,7]. To meet this commitment, the contribution of biomass to meet future energy demands would be based on the utilization of both dedicated energy crops (e.g., miscanthus, switchgrass, jatropha) and residues (e.g., forestry residues, milling residues, agricultural residues) [8]. By 2050, global potentials of biomass (including energy crops and residues) that can technically be mobilized for bioenergy were identified ranging from < 50 EJ/year to > 500 EJ/year [5].

Biomass has the potential to contribute to climate change mitigation due to its ability to remove carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere when managed in a sustainable way [4]. When biomass is used to substitute fossil fuels, the biogenic CO₂ captured in biomass is released back to the atmosphere, resulting in a neutral CO₂ emission cycle, therefore, avoiding the fossil CO₂ emitted to the atmosphere [9]. The CO₂ reduction potential that can be contributed by biomass may reduce when the emissions from its supply chain activities (e.g., cultivation, harvesting, processing, transportation) are taken into account [10]. However, studies have shown that many bioenergy production routes still provide significant CO₂ reduction potential although the supply chain emissions are included in the life-cycle CO₂ accounting [10,11,12]. To deliver large-scale biomass capacity to meet future demand, the potential mitigation services that these resources can provide must be optimally assessed.

The benefit of large-scale biomass-based routes compared to other renewables for delivering energy system decarbonization is the versatility of biomass resources that can be converted to varieties of value-added products for uses in different sectors such as power, heat and transport [13]. Also, for each of the biomass types, there are several production pathways possible. For example, biomass can be converted into different types of liquid or gaseous fuels such as biomethanol, bioethanol, biodiesel, biogasoline, biomethane and biohydrogen aside from its conventional uses for bioelectricity and bioheat production [14]. The multi-sectoral benefit of biomass to produce variety of products provides means of decarbonizing other sectors beyond power [13]; however, cost of pursuing advanced bioenergy routes is still high [15]. Although it is estimated that the cost of biomass energy would be reduced in future due to learning effect [16], decarbonization strategies should be planned earlier to avoid further ‘lock-in’ of energy system into fossil fuels [17]. For instance, according to Riahi et al. [17], if the near-term low-carbon energy target is not met by 2030, the long-term low-carbon energy commitment in 2050 would be increased by up to 200%, due to the delayed action to scale up mitigation efforts. Prioritization of the most cost-effective production routes deployed in different planning timeframes (e.g., short, medium, and long-term) should thus be defined in order to avoid or minimize this ‘lock-in’ impact [15,17].

While cost is an important indicator for evaluating the value of different biomass conversion routes within the energy systems [4], the decarbonization potentials are also affected by other indicators such as biophysical parameters (e.g., biomass properties), process specifications (e.g., energy efficiency), regional variations (e.g., land availability, yield), and the counterfactual scenario analyzed, among others, which influence the relative mitigation potential of each pathway [18]. Understanding the optimum usage of this limited resource in relation to the geographical context and the rate of decarbonization of the energy system is therefore crucial.

1.1.2 Bioenergy Planning for Multi-Sectoral Energy Decarbonization

To mitigate climate change by reducing GHG emissions, transition from fossil-fuel to renewable energy use is actively promoted around the world. The idea of the bio-based economy has gained much traction as a strategy to contribute to energy transition [19,20]. A promising approach is advanced bioenergy production which has the potential to decarbonize different emission-intensive sectors such as power, heat, and transport [21,22]. There will be increasing demand for agricultural products that provide sustainable sources of feedstock for bioenergy production during transition [23,24].

As agricultural production is typically distributed over large areas of land, the allocation of feedstock resources is commonly associated with high transportation costs. The retrieval of bioenergy feedstock at a higher system scale advocates for effective management of logistics systems to handle supply chain activities in a commercially viable way. Logistics are often interlinked with, for example, resource supply and availability [25,26], production scales and locations [27,28], intermodal transport [29,30] and supply chain configurations [31,32]. The cost-minimization approach has been frequently applied to examine the trade-off between the elements or variables of the supply chain.

Adopting a whole-system view in decision making is crucial in minimizing the risk of oversimplifying the representation of the problems. Spatio-temporal approach can potentially capture a system view of the energy supply chain while addressing several problems related to time-dependent, location-dependent, and techno-economic decision factors [33]. For instance, selecting suitable locations for bioenergy facilities can help reduce logistical costs [31] and provide integration benefits to existing industries [34]. Moreover, some local characteristics of the supply chain, such as feedstock availability and demand, both of which are highly influenced by spatial and temporal variabilities, can be addressed systemically in the planning [35]. Integration of higher system level studies with the appropriate technology details at the plant level can potentially improve the existing framework for solving bioenergy issues related to the intensive use of bioenergy resources for multi-sector energy purpose.

In recent years, several studies have been conducted to explore spatio-temporal bioenergy supply chain designs that integrate high spatial resolution with long-term planning objectives. Leduc et al. [36] presented an optimization model (the BeWhere model) with a spatial resolution of 0.1° (10 km x 10 km) that determines the optimal locations of forest biomass-based methanol production plants in Sweden for the 2005–2025 period. Johnson et al. [37] presented an integrated assessment to investigate the development of supply curves of biofuel (from energy crops and agricultural residues) with carbon capture and storage (CCS) in the United States (US) during 2020–2050 at a district-level spatial resolution. Samsatli et al. [38] developed an optimization model (the BVCM model) with a spatial resolution of 0.5° (50 km x 50 km) and multi-level temporal resolutions (i.e., decade, year, season) that incorporates a comprehensive biomass value chain pathway for the United Kingdom (UK) and covers multiple types of feedstock from waste and agricultural residues to energy crops and forest biomass. Leila et al. [39] investigated the spatio-temporal supply chain design of renewable diesel and biojet fuel in California for the 2020–2040 period at a district-level spatial resolution. Patrizio et al. [40] investigated the long-term socioeconomic impact of forest-based bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS) in the US for the 2020–2050 period using an integrated assessment approach (BeWhere-JEDI) at a spatial resolution of 0.5° (50 km x 50 km). Truong et al. [41] assessed the near-term CO₂ emission implication of co-fired paddy residues in Vietnam's coal plants for the

2016–2030 period using a recursive-dynamic modeling approach (BeWhere-Vietnam) with a spatial resolution of 0.2° (20 km x 20 km). Zhang et al. [42] presented a bottom-up assessment of a spatio-temporal BECCS design that includes the utilization of wastes, agricultural residues, energy crops, and forest biomass as bioenergy feedstocks for the UK for 2030–2050 at a spatial resolution of 0.5° (50 km x 50 km). Fajardy and Mac Dowell [43] applied the MONET modeling framework with its multi-level spatial resolutions (i.e., country, state) to investigate the efficacy of a multi-country collaboration in terms of delivering global CO₂ removal through BECCS deployment for 2030–2100.

Other than the reviewed studies pertaining to spatio-temporal bioenergy supply chain designs, much of recent work has focused on the application of energy systems models to provide insights into bioenergy policy scenario analysis. Such work has illustrated the significance of scenario analysis as a tool for informing long-term policy decisions at a system level. However, the supply chain boundaries considered were often spatially aggregated based on a single-node/coarser spatial representation. Several examples of the policy scenarios discussed in these studies were presented. Börjesson et al. [44] applied the MARKAL_Sweden model to the case of bioenergy in Sweden to analyze scenarios involving national targets on 80% CO₂ reduction compared to 1990 level by 2050 and 100% fossil fuel phase-out in the transport sector by 2050. Thrän et al. [45] applied the MILESTONE modeling framework to the case of bioenergy in Germany to analyze scenarios involving bioenergy provisions under different land use sustainability criteria and technology prioritization for the 2015–2050 period. Pan et al. [46] applied the GCAM modeling framework to the case of bioenergy in China to analyze scenarios involving BECCS deployment under net-zero and net-negative emission targets. Durusut et al. [21] developed a new techno-economic model (the BioHEAT model) that accounts for the co-dependencies of bioenergy among end-use energy sectors and incorporates consumer decision-making in the heat sector. The BioHEAT model was applied to the case of bioenergy in Ireland to analyze scenarios involving multiple policies adopted in the power, heat, and transport sectors, such as the implementation of a co-firing rate of up to 60% in peat-fired stations by 2030, a mandated renewable transport fuel target of up to 14% by 2030, and extension of the price support scheme for renewable heat to 2030 [22].

In the literature mentioned, there was only limited assessment of the long-term cross-cutting impacts of implementing bioenergy in multiple energy sectors (i.e., power, heat, and transport) in a spatially and temporally explicit manner. This is important because, in order to take advantage of the versatility of bioenergy in working with different energy carriers, there needs to be a strategy that can deliver multi-sector interactions to ensure effective allocation of resources to the right sector. Such a strategy could inform policy conflicts between the achievement of renewable energy and emission-reduction targets in the energy sectors. Although the studies conducted by Durusut et al. [21] and Clancy et al. [22] have presented the modeling insights for the decarbonization of multiple energy sectors from a policymaker's perspective, the energy system boundary was aggregated based on a single-node location representation, which might overlook the cost analysis details that a more comprehensive representation of the bioenergy supply chain network could provide. Furthermore, the bioenergy location-allocation network adopted in these studies were aggregated in which trade-offs between distributed and centralized configuration of facilities, transportation modes, and economies of scales were not considered. On the other hand, integration of seasonal temporal resolution into a long-term modeling approach, which is limited in the studies mentioned above (only addressed by Samsatli et al. [38]), should be explored further for the case of multi-sectoral bioenergy supply chain designs. The tactical/operational elements adopted in the supply chain configuration could improve cost quantification of the overall system by accounting for the resource storage cost. This would also improve the selection of bioenergy feedstock due to the trade-off between the seasonal reliabilities and the supply cost.

Overall, it can be concluded that the existing techno-economic models used for bioenergy planning at the national level have not been sufficiently addressing the important challenges in handling critical bioenergy issues, i.e., supply chain complexity, cross-sectoral bioenergy interactions between end-use sectors, spatial tractability of bioenergy supply chain, and temporal tractability of bioenergy decisions, in an integrated manner. Therefore, a new integrated whole-system model is needed to simultaneously address these research gaps in order to add new bioenergy insights into the existing body of knowledge based from a spatio-temporal, multi-sectoral, techno-economic perspective.

1.1.3 Multi-Sectoral Bioenergy Opportunities in Malaysia

In December 2015, Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted the Paris Agreement to address climate change [47]. Parties agreed to keep the increase in global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to stay below 1.5 °C. Many Parties also formulated and submitted Intended Nationally Determined Contribution or INDC [48] that outlines the near-term climate action plans to be taken under the Paris Agreement. After the Agreement entered into force in November 2016, the INDC for those countries that have ratified the Agreement were converted into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) [49]. The NDCs outlined have addressed a range of issues, related to avoiding, adapting or coping with climate change, among other things. Nevertheless, targets and actions for reducing GHG emissions are core components [50]. Limiting global warming based on this climate challenging goal will entail a dramatic transformation of the global energy system. Emissions reduction commitments for the near term which are highly needed in mitigating the GHG, raise an important question for the international climate policy on how it affects the interventions at the national level, and also, on how the developing countries will cope with the development of sustainable energy in the future.

Heavy reliance by Malaysia on fossil fuels for the next few decades (as shown in Figure 1.1) [51] will require the country to mitigate its GHG levels to meet its national emission reduction commitment under the Paris Agreement. This requires Malaysia to reduce the emission intensity of its gross domestic product (GDP) by 35% by 2030 on an unconditional basis relative to the 2005's level, with a further 10% reduction conditional upon receipt of international funding from developed countries [52]. The majority of Malaysia's GHG emissions are from the energy sector [53], suggesting the importance of the role of renewable energy in decarbonizing future energy systems. Policies regarding the development of renewable energy in Malaysia currently focus on two main strategies which are renewable electricity (RE) capacity expansion to achieve 20% of the electricity mix by 2025 [54] and mandatory road transport fuel blending with 20% palm-biodiesel (B20) starting from 2020 [55]. Achieving these targets within just a short timeframe could be challenging for

Malaysia, as the present RE mix is still less than 2% [56] and the 10% palm-biodiesel (B10) mix mandate was implemented only in 2019 [57]. There is thus limited time available to increase the capacities of renewable energy in the power and transport sectors.

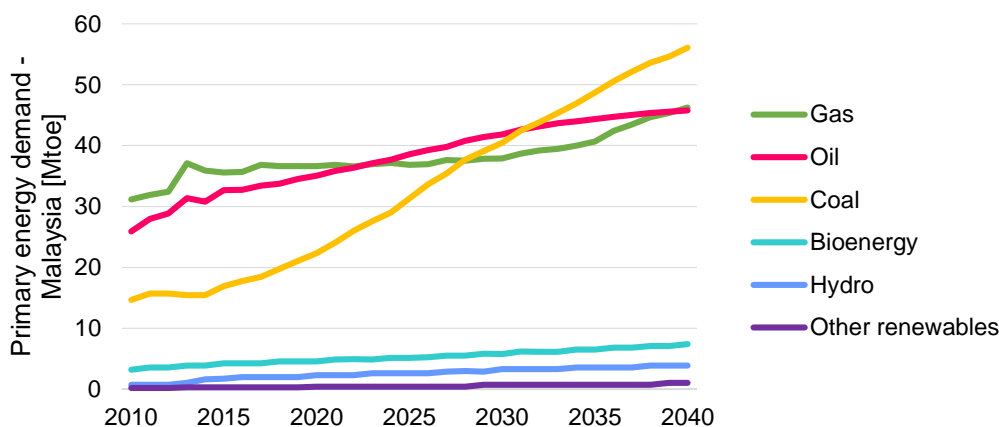


Figure 1.1 Primary energy demand projection by fuel for Malaysia under the business-as-usual case [51]

Bioenergy is considered one of the promising substitutes for fossil fuels in reducing GHG as it provides renewable carbon source for energy generation. The carbon content in biomass is derived from the atmospheric CO₂ which is sequestered during photosynthesis [58]. Further biomass conversion into bioenergy could result in net neutral (on the basis where supply chain emissions are excluded in the GHG accounting) or nearly net neutral (on the basis where supply chain emissions are included in the GHG accounting) CO₂ emissions as the CO₂ sequestered in biomass during photosynthesis is released back to the atmosphere during the final use of bioenergy (e.g., bio-based fuel consumption in internal combustion engine of a vehicle, biomass combustion to produce electricity and heat) [58,59]. Bioenergy, by leveraging the potentials of feedstock that can be mobilized from the agricultural sector, mainly palm oil resources, has the potential to increase capacity for renewables in Malaysia while mitigating greenhouse gases. Bioenergy resources can be converted into various value-added products for use in different sectors such as power, heat, and transport [21]. Although utilization of these resources offers a promising strategy for decarbonization across different sectors, careful attention is required to several issues at the supply chain level. Regarding resource supply, securing biomass for bioenergy

is still a major challenge for Malaysia, considering the widespread practices of biomass combustion for onsite cogeneration in mills [60] and mulching in the plantations [61]. This is added with the issue on limited biomass hubs availability at the local level for collection purposes [60] which could help in improving the reliability of supply. Freeing up the way biomass is currently used for applications that have higher economic potential, such as large-scale power and heat, transport biofuels, and biochemicals could be means of scaling-up bioenergy at the national scale, although it would make supply chain design more complex. This complexity is due to the various stages in the bioenergy supply chain, such as harvesting, collection, storage, transport, conversion, and distribution [62]. Thus, for any bioenergy deployment strategy to be viable, its deployment pathway must be configured for cost-effectiveness [31].

Discussions on the role of bioenergy in the long-term decarbonization of the currently dominated fossil fuel-based energy system in Malaysia are still limited. The consideration of both fossil fuels and renewables in the technological pathway to meet national energy demand is important to cater the energy price market competition in delivering decarbonization targets. Previous studies have provided several insights into the implications of implementing certain strategies to reduce future emissions [63,64,65] but lacking in the cost analysis details to inform policy. Among these studies, considerations of utilizing palm oil residues for bioenergy production to secure future electricity supply and reduce emissions have been discussed by Muis et al. [64] but only with respect to the Iskandar Malaysia region. On the other hand, the decarbonization pathways in these studies, although including both renewables and fossil fuels in the pathway, were limited to only one sector, either electricity or transport, overlooking the potential cost reduction opportunities in multi-sector collaborations.

Conducting assessment at a wider system level is important since it presents the opportunity to leverage the full potential of resources for bioenergy production. This can be represented by the Malaysia case, where expanding the focus of bioenergy planning to also include Malaysian Borneo on top of Peninsular Malaysia which has been the focus region of interest in the previous works could indicate greater potential of increasing renewable energy capacities in the country, provided by the latter region

has larger areas of oil palm plantations than the former [66]. Furthermore, the importance of considering higher system scale can be shown by the case involving main palm oil producing countries (e.g., Malaysia and Indonesia), where there exists the need to handle the complexity of resource trades between the regions within these countries, for example, the trades of palm oil resources between Peninsular Malaysia and Malaysian Borneo for the case of Malaysia and the trades of palm oil resources between Sumatra and Kalimantan for the case of Indonesia, due to the associated geographical boundaries of the regions within these countries which are separated by the coastal areas.

It must be highlighted that cross-sectoral policy interventions are essential for the long-term assessment of bioenergy deployment. This is important, as the promotion of bioenergy uses in one sector of the energy system can stimulate or decrease the uptake in the others, and this affects the allocation of resources and policies to support the future bioenergy. The mobilization of biomass from agricultural sector for the production of multiple value-added products, especially bioenergy, can be seen as a promising strategy to promote low-carbon energy production in Malaysia, and thus, to explore its potential, national system-level deployment of bioenergy becomes the main focus of investigation this thesis.

1.2 Problem Statement

The decarbonization potentials that bioenergy could bring are impacted by many system-level deployment challenges, particularly related to different aspects of bioenergy supply chain planning. From the reviews above, the bioenergy deployment challenges that need to be addressed include (1) supply chain complexity (i.e., feedstock-technology-production relation, supply and demand balancing, distributed versus centralized supply chain configuration, trade-offs between transportation requirement and economies of scales), (2) cross-sectoral bioenergy interactions between end-use sectors (i.e., bioenergy market price competition with fossil fuels, bioenergy interaction in energy systems, sectoral policy versus multi-sectoral

bioenergy policies), (3) spatial tractability of bioenergy supply chain (i.e., feedstock supply, bioenergy demand, candidate bioenergy facilities, competition of resources, infrastructure network expansion) and (4) temporal tractability of bioenergy decisions (i.e., long-term planning aspect for accounting strategic decisions, short-term planning aspect for accounting operational/tactical decisions). Although much studies have been conducted to analyze a variety of different bioenergy issues, the insights derived from their findings are still not sufficient to address all of these bioenergy challenges simultaneously under one integrated modeling platform. This calls for new studies to inform these knowledge gaps in research. Following are the specific research gaps identified on the existing bioenergy assessment at a system level:

- (1) Existing techno-economic models used for bioenergy planning were primarily based on the applications of energy systems model (ESM) (e.g., MARKAL, TIMES, MESSAGE, EnergyPLAN, BioHEAT) to address strategic bioenergy decisions and specialized bioenergy supply chain model (BSM) (e.g., BeWhere, BVCM, OPTIMASS, BENSIM, MONET, other bespoke bioenergy models) to address operational and tactical bioenergy decisions. ESMs have an advantage over BSMs in terms of their rich technological representations and long-term planning horizon for multi-sectoral analyses, making them suitable to be applied for informing broader energy systems and policy issues; however, their energy supply chain representations were often aggregated and single-node spatial representations were commonly used. Due to this aggregation, difficulties arise in recognizing the complex underlying impacts of the detailed bioenergy supply chain in ESMs, which could have been recognized more explicitly in BSMs. BSMs have an advantage over ESMs in terms of their detailed representation of bioenergy supply chain flow (i.e., cultivation, harvesting, transport, storage, pre-processing, conversion, distribution); however, most of the BSMs developed for application at the national level offer bespoke analyses based on targeted bioenergy issues and the broader cross-sectoral impacts of energy systems are often overlooked. It is therefore important to integrate the long-term multi-sectoral features of ESMs with the detailed bioenergy supply chain representation presented in BSMs in one integrated modeling platform so that different challenges in bioenergy planning mentioned above (i.e., supply chain complexity, multi-sectoral bioenergy interactions, spatial

tractability, temporal tractability) can be addressed simultaneously to deliver more well-rounded bioenergy assessment.

- (2) There is also a necessity in improving the establishment of spatially-explicit bioenergy potentials as exogenous inputs into the techno-economic models when applying spatio-temporal approach. Instead of relying on processed land-use data from other studies, the application of land cover assessment method based on a high-resolution spatial data processing approach could improve the establishment of exogenous feedstock availability, candidate bioenergy facility locations and energy demand profiles in the techno-economic model. As the existing works that combine land cover assessment methodology with either ESMs or BSMs are still limited in literature, incorporating land cover assessment methodology into the techno-economic optimization framework could help improve the geographical coverage of bioenergy potential that can be allocated for use in energy systems.

It must be mentioned that no study has previously been conducted to address the aforementioned research gaps outlined collectively. Given these gaps in literature, this thesis aims to bridge these three different fields of studies, namely ESM, BSM, and land cover assessment, that address different challenges in bioenergy modeling (i.e., supply chain complexity, multi-sectoral bioenergy interactions, spatial tractability and temporal tractability) at a higher system level. This thesis is motivated to fill the gaps by providing a novel methodological framework that focuses on a multi-sectoral approach for spatio-temporal techno-economic modeling and optimization of bioenergy supply chain. The assessment provided is expected to contribute new knowledge to the existing body of knowledge, based on an integrated techno-economic model developed and a series of novel cases modeled. The problem statement for this research is stated as follows:

Given the key issues outlined related to spatial, temporal, technical, economic, environment and policy elements of the bioenergy deployment, it is desirable to improve the existing assessment by developing a multi-sectoral approach to the modeling and optimization of bioenergy supply chain for generating near-term and long-term insights on the cross-sectoral energy decarbonization opportunities at a higher system level.

1.3 Research Objectives

The aim of this thesis is to expand the knowledge on the development and application of an integrated techno-economic optimization model for informing near-term and long-term insights on bioenergy deployment at a wider regional scale in a spatial and temporal explicit manner from multi-sectoral perspectives. The specific research objectives of this thesis are outlined as follows:

- (1) To develop an integrated techno-economic optimization model for multi-sectoral bioenergy deployment in a spatially and temporally explicit manner based on combining bioenergy supply chain optimization modeling and long-term energy systems planning approaches (**OBJ1**).
- (2) To perform system-level scenario modeling and analysis in generating near-term and long-term insights on the multi-sectoral bioenergy deployment and energy decarbonization for a period of up to 2050 (**OBJ2**).
- (3) To evaluate the impact of energy decarbonization targets, technology availability and supply chain cost parameter variations to promote cost-effective decarbonization of emission-intensive energy sectors at a system level (**OBJ3**).

1.4 Scopes of the Modeling Works

Based from the research objectives mentioned, the modeling and scenario analysis performed in the thesis are systematically methodologized based on the following scopes:

- (1) Analyzing the state-of-the-art methodology and knowledge on bioenergy supply chain modeling and long-term energy systems planning, including the associated features, shortcomings and potential improvements.
- (2) Identifying sets of candidate bioenergy feedstock, technologies, products, logistics and infrastructures required for the development of bioenergy supply chain pathway.

- (3) Performing data collection from various sources (i.e., scientific journals, technical reports/documents, governmental reports/documents, international organization reports/documents, international standards, online institutional datasets and national statistics) on the associated bioenergy feedstock, technologies, products, logistics and infrastructures, based from the spatial, temporal, technical, economic, environment and policy aspects of the developed bioenergy supply chain pathway.
- (4) Establishing the spatio-temporal input modeling database through a series of data processing workflow involving the use of high-resolution spatial data processing tools in geographical information system (GIS) for resource availability analysis, energy demand analysis, site suitability analysis, and transport network analysis.
- (5) Establishing the input modeling database for bioenergy technologies by performing techno-economic calculation to establish sizes, investment costs, operating costs, conversion efficiencies, and GHG emission profiles for each bioenergy technology.
- (6) Developing an integrated techno-economic optimization model that accounts for the current state-of-the-art methodology on bioenergy supply chain modeling and long-term energy systems planning, featuring the spatial, temporal, technical, economic, environment and policy aspects of the developed bioenergy supply chain pathway.
- (7) Developing and modeling scenarios on the near-term and long-term bioenergy strategies for the related cases involving integration of agriculture-based bioenergy from intensive palm oil-based sources in multiple energy sectors for cross-sectoral energy decarbonization at a system level.
- (8) Developing and modeling sensitivity scenarios to assess the sensitiveness of the bioenergy cost reduction potentials and bioenergy deployment with and without biomass co-firing toward variations in the decarbonization targets and the supply chain cost parameter values at a system level.
- (9) Analyzing the results generated from the modeling works and addressing the questions outlined.
- (10) Bioenergy feedstock: Agricultural-based bioenergy feedstock (i.e., crude palm oil (CPO), EFB, MF, PKS, OPF, OPT, POME, rice straw (RS), rice

husk (RH)) and livestock-based bioenergy feedstock (i.e., cattle, buffalo, sheep, goat, chicken and duck manures).

- (11) Energy sectors covered: Power (coal-based electricity production as a reference energy competitor), heat (industrial natural gas-based heat demand as a reference energy competitor), and transport (gasoline- and diesel-based transport fuel demands as reference energy competitors).
- (12) Bioenergy technologies: Biomass pre-processing (i.e., drying, pelletization), biogas pre-processing (i.e., biomethane, BioCNG), biogas-to-bioelectricity, biomass-to-bioelectricity, biomass co-firing, biomass CHP, biomass-to-biofuel and crop-to-biofuel.
- (13) Geographical boundaries: Malaysia (Peninsular Malaysia and Malaysian Borneo).
- (14) Spatial resolution: 0.25° (25 km x 25 km), multi-plant, multi-state, and multi-harbor.
- (15) Temporal resolution: 2020–2050 (5-year time step) and 2-month sub-annual time steps.
- (16) Software: ArcGIS [67] for spatial data processing, Generic Algebraic Modeling System (GAMS) [68] for mathematical formulation of the spatio-temporal techno-economic optimization model, Microsoft Excel [69] for database storage, and Python [70] for the automation of the modeling workflow.

1.5 Thesis Contributions

The main contribution of this thesis is the addition of new knowledge in the fields of bioenergy supply chain modeling and long-term energy systems planning, focusing on the multi-sectoral approach to spatio-temporal techno-economic modeling and optimization of bioenergy deployment in multiple energy sectors through large-scale utilization of local bio-based resources from palm oil sources and other agricultural crops. An integrated modeling tool was resulted from this thesis which can be applied by policymakers, industrial players and researchers for generating interdisciplinary perspectives to inform policies and development at a national level,

especially from a low-carbon pathway development context. These perspectives are useful to inform the wider social debate on the options to decarbonize energy across multiple national sectors. The related sectors include the agricultural sector, regarding the opportunity to maximize resource efficiency of agricultural productions and operations through the effective uses of agricultural wastes for value-added purposes, the power sector, regarding the potential of bioenergy to increase the renewable energy shares in the power mix and substitute significant portion of fossil fuel-based base load, the industrial sector, regarding the use of waste heat from bioenergy production as an industrial heat substitute for natural gas, the transport sector, regarding the use of biofuels in supporting the existing biodiesel program, and the energy sector in general, regarding the range of GHG emission that could be mitigated at the national scale in the short, medium and long-term timeframes. The new knowledge resulted from this thesis can be used to inform the development of the next cycles of NDC's biennial update reports to the UNFCCC.

1.6 Thesis Outline

The structure of this thesis consists of seven chapters as shown in Figure 1.2. Chapter 1 presents the research background, problem statement, research objectives, research scopes and research contributions associated with the thesis. Chapter 2 reviews the current state-of-the-art in the fields of bioenergy supply chain modeling and long-term energy systems planning and highlights the literature gaps associated with the research questions of the thesis. Chapter 2 also provides the background information of the case study's country in terms of its agriculture, energy, and emission policies (particularly NDC). Chapter 3 describes the methodological framework used in this thesis and the specific workflow associated with the framework. Noted that the methodology presented in Chapter 3 addresses the first objective of the thesis. Chapter 4 then presents the application of the integrated spatio-temporal techno-economic optimization model developed for scenario modeling and analysis on the long-term agricultural bioenergy strategies for cross-sectoral energy decarbonization. Note that the scenarios analyzed in Chapter 4 address the second objective of the thesis regarding the long-term insights of multi-sectoral bioenergy deployment. Based from the specific

results from Chapter 4 which highlighted that co-firing would play a major role in near-term energy decarbonization, Chapter 5 presents the application of the model to investigate how multi-scale production of solid biofuels from oil palm biomass can scale up biomass co-firing with coal. Note that the scenarios analyzed in Chapter 5 also address the second objective of the thesis regarding the near-term insights of bioenergy deployment. The sensitiveness of bioenergy development in multiple energy sectors are evaluated in Chapter 6 and this addresses the third objective of the thesis. Lastly, the work is concluded in Chapter 7 with the main findings of the thesis together with the limitations of the research and the recommendations for improvement in future work. All the scientific publications related to the research presented in this thesis are listed in the appendix.

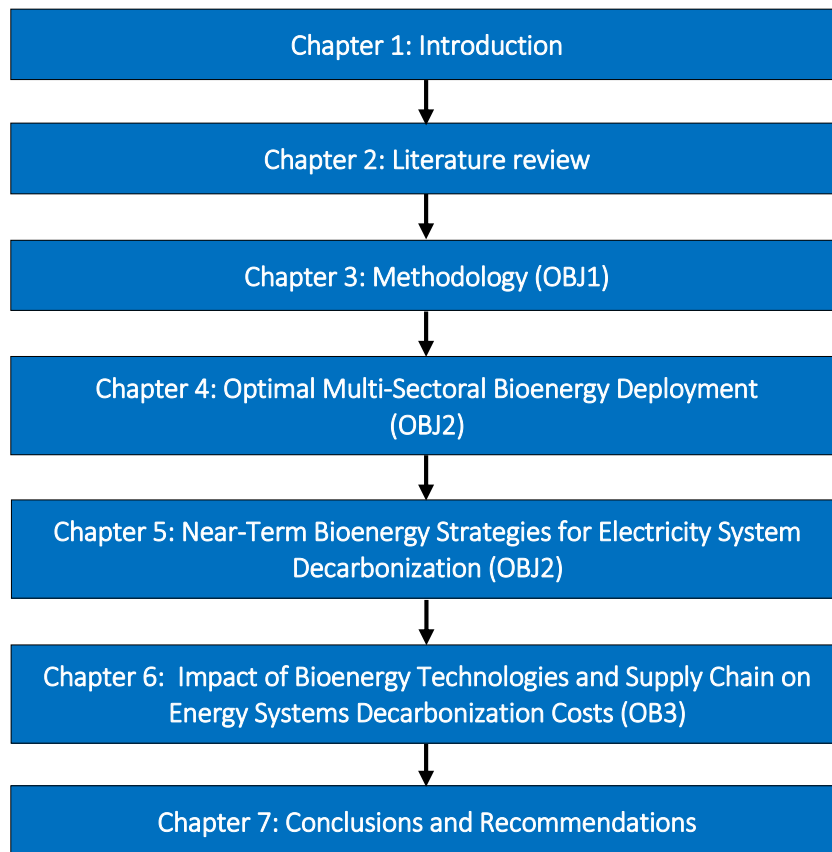


Figure 1.2 Thesis outline

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