

Biomethane Regions—a follow on project to Biogas Regions?

Biomethane Regions is a new project under the Intelligent Energy Europe programme and does owe a lot to the 2007-2010 Biogas Regions project. Many of the lessons learnt and work undertaken under that project will be used productively, but there are also a number of important differences. Some of our partners are no longer with us, some informal partners have been incorporated formally and some partners are completely new. The full partners to Biomethane Regions are:-

- Severn Wye Energy Agency and the University of Glamorgan - **UK**
- Styrian Energy Agency and Technical University of Vienna - **Austria**
- Rhone-Alps Energy and Environment Agency and the Association of Local Initiatives in Energy and the Environment in Brittany and Pays de la Loire - **France**
- The Economic Development Corporation for Schwäbisch Hall district - **Germany**
- Walloon Agricultural Research Centre - **Belgium**
- Knowledge Centre for Agriculture - **Denmark**
- Energy Agency for SE Sweden - **Sweden**
- Agricultural Institute - **Hungary**
- Agricultural Institute - **Slovenia**
- Energy Institute for **Croatia**
- Abruzzo Regional Energy Agency - **Italy**
- **European** Federation of Agencies and Regions for Energy and Environment



Staff from the partners at the project kick-off meeting

The Project Kick-Off Meeting

Severn Wye Energy Agency is the co-ordinating body for Biomethane Regions and is thus responsible for project administration and delivery. It has also meant that Andy Bull has put in a very considerable amount of work in submitting the application and negotiating its final approval. It is important that the first meeting of the project partners is productive, as it sets up the three years of the project work programme to be delivered on-time and in accordance with the performance indicators.

The meeting was held in Cardiff with the rather intense sessions filling two days, relieved by a short evening tour of the city and bay with dinner at the Wales Millennium Centre.

Training at the University of Glamorgan



The two day kick-off meeting was followed by a day and a half of training just up the valley road (the A470) in Pontypridd. The Biomethane Regions project partners were joined by other interested parties, including project developers from France and Germany, developers from the UK, a UK utility company, government policy officers, and university students and researchers. The training was delivered by Karl Puchas (LEA, Styria), Michael Harasek (Technical University of Vienna) and several members of staff at the University of Glamorgan.

Developers Thematic Group

The project includes the possibility of developers swapping experiences across the partner regions, and for the Biomethane Regions project to track some of the more ambitious proposals over the next three years. We took a break from training to undertake a meeting at a site owned by the Hardstaff Group near Merthyr Tydfil. This former peak-shaving gas storage facility is proposed as a centre of excellence for biomethane and gas use in vehicles, and there is no shortage of ambition. Keep watching this space!



The Advisory Group

A project advisory group is established with key participants that represent various sectors in the AD scene in Wales and western England. The first meeting will be towards the end of July in Pontypridd. If you feel that you would like to join the group and have something to offer than please make contact with Andy Bull.

The Role of Biogas and Biomethane in Local Environmental and Energy Strategies

Is your Council developing a strategy or action plan for the environment or seeking sustainable energy solutions for the area? Does it include a section on anaerobic digestion? Severn Wye Energy Agency (via this project) would be more than happy to provide input into such activities as we seek to remove the barriers to this technology, which has such high potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by producing indigenous fuel.



Biomethane Regions

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Explanatory Brochures Available

There are still plenty of printed brochures left from the Biogas Regions project that explain anaerobic digestion technology in a largely non-technical language. They are designed for public use and might, for instance, be valuable for planning committee that is faced with their first biogas planning application. The brochures are due to be updated as part of the current project but the changes are likely to be minor. If you would like a supply of brochures then just ask and they are yours (available at no cost to you).

Great Porthamel Farm Digester

Readers of the Biogas Regions newsletters will be familiar with the long-running saga of the Jones family's attempts to get planning permission for an anaerobic digestion plant at their farm near Talgarth in Powys. The story has finally been concluded in the High Court where the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority's attempt to have the decision of the Planning Inspector deemed to be procedurally flawed failed. The decision to allow the development to proceed on appeal was upheld, and site works have now commenced.

Presentations Available

If you know of opportunities for us to get the biogas and biomethane arguments over to new audiences, then we are very happy to oblige by giving presentations. We can provide presentations to planning committees or to groups of policy makers—or perhaps fill a slot on a more general seminar on renewable energy or measures that can be taken to reduce dependency on fossil fuels.

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