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WP 7.3:
**Local implementation strategies for
biogas projects in Romania**

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Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Overcoming the specific barriers.....	3
3. Measures to be taken	4

1. Introduction

This work package is made in order to score the main long- and medium-term objectives, the ways of achieving them, and the involved resources within local implementation strategies for biogas projects in Romania.

Between these objectives the most important one is to overcome the specific barriers to the implementation of biogas projects in Romania, such as lack of considerations for the economic and ecological consequences, lack of proper dissemination and support from the local population, the high reticence encountered in this moment for the development of the new biogas plants.

Romania has an important potential for biogas production from primary production (including energy crops), agricultural wastes (both plant and animal sectors), and municipal wastes, unfortunately little known by authorities, policy makers, currant managers or potential investors, and local population.

Even if there is not a specific legislative framework on biogas, there are some legal considerations that could be taken into account, namely energy efficiency, promoting and developing RES and bio-fuels, waste management, reducing GHG emissions, which provides the legislative basis for the development and implementation of biogas projects.

2. Overcoming the specific barriers

Financial barriers

To create available funds for the development of the new infrastructures, supporting both the upfront costs and the long term economic benefits. The most appropriate way to support the implementation is to develop renewable scale applications for local communities with the possibility to develop at industrial scale only in such places in which this is economic, environmental and social accepted and needed on long term.

Several possibilities could be used as financial support for biogas implementation:

- 1) Possibility to use Third Party Financing (TPF) and/or Public-Private Partnership (PPP) for biogas projects;
- 2) Possibility to use specific financial products from commercial banks (several banks have special programs in order to support projects aimed at using structural funds for this kind of activities);

- 3) Possibility to use EC support (Structural and Cohesion Funding) – is there some Operational Programs related to biogas projects (Measure 123, financial support scheme XS 13 for agricultural projects).

Social and environmental barriers

➤ The appropriate place for building the facility NIMBY (not in my back yard), also considering other spatial and linear characteristics for an optimal solution (supply, biogas, energy, and fertilizer distribution).

➤ Both, the decline of the agriculture in general following the privatization, the decline of specific sectors (livestock – pig & cow complexes) and the fragmentation of the farm lands, can be overcome by stimulating farmers to associate in larger and complex units, that generate higher social and economic benefits, including the financial aspect (e.g. in accessing funds).

➤ The lack of information about the biogas in general and the economic benefits of using it must be overcome by a proper dissemination, from the local level (farmers and local administrators), to the consulting centers (like the existed County Offices on Agricultural Consulting – COAC / OJCA in Romanian), and the national / governmental and territorial decentralized structures one, including the update of the educational curriculum on these aspects.

Technological barriers

The low availability of new biogas technologies and the poor experience on this domain has to be overpass only by developing such facilities as an alternative for the waste water treatment stations needed (at national level, only 77% of the total discharged waste water flow is treated in the urban collecting networks), the municipal waste management (in order to reduce the land filling of biodegradable wastes), and the agricultural waste management.

The lack of cross-sectoral approach or any other linkages to other policies (including energy policy) and the lack of vision in developing of integrated policies is a huge barrier in the development of any projects including biogas, and it could be overpass by promoting and developing such projects (concerning RES, waste management, agricultural and agri-food sectors, urban and rural development etc.)

3. Measures to be taken

National Biogas target

The idea is to set of clear national biogas target as a part of RES target and develop financial support mechanism for its implementation.

Local to regional planning

Biogas potential could be utilized more efficient, if RES projects would be incorporated in regional and spatial planning. Small to medium scale biogas facilities should be encouraged so that they better use the decentralized energy potential, making available the energy to the local level communities at affordable prices and with low environmental impact.

Administrative measures

In order to overcome the administrative barriers on the permit procedure and establishment of grid connection, it is necessary to develop a roadmap or guide for permit procedure.

Biogas market

The process of transformation/changes in the energy market in Romania has started several years ago and is important to make the necessary efforts on delineating a biogas market.

An integrated strategy

The harmonization of the policies as an entire, in the sense of cross-sectoral approach is needed.

Legal measures

Legislative initiatives regarding this field, proposed both by local / regional authorities, and specialists.

Education

Our vision is not only to held several biogas courses, but to promote the inclusion of the theoretical aspects on different disciplines (within the ecology, agriculture technologies, industrial technologies etc.), and to plan / organize training and refreshing courses.