

RES-e Regions: WP 4: Specific technology promotion

Technology selection for Upper Austria: Biogas

Background

The biogas market development in Upper Austria took quite a time to emerge. Some years ago only few plants, often in bad quality, were built. Presently, there are 35 biogas installations in operation with a total capacity of 2.75 MW. The typical installation size in the past was about 100 kW. However, due to favourable financial support in the years 2003 and 2004, the short term perspective for further increase is very high.

Current situation

From 2003-2004 a new funding scheme was in operation which offered attractive conditions for biogas plants ("Bundesökostrom-Verordnung", a national feed-in tariff and an investment subsidy by the region of Upper Austria) - all geared at triggering investments to increase the electricity production of these installations. The positive financial framework and increased information & awareness raising activities led to increased implementation activities and presently 40 plants are under construction (+10 MW).

Barriers

Previous plants were often lacking quality and too small to be profitable. Due to increased information activities, the recent trend is towards larger installations (250 kW on average) operated by farmers' co-operatives. The challenge for these new plants is to ensure a high quality approach in order not to ruin a new market by faulty installations. Increased efforts will be necessary to monitor the implementation process to ensure well functioning plants. Additionally many plants don't have a strategy to utilise the produced heat efficiently which is a prerequisite when trying to achieve high efficient plants.

Opportunities

The Upper Austrian support programme for RES-e and the recent feed-in tariffs for electricity from biogas presented a promising framework for the installation of new biogas plants.

Target Groups

Target groups of the project activities are farmers, businesses, technology producers, plant operators (present and potential), energy consultants etc.

Actions needed

To ensure highly efficient and successfully operating plants, it will be necessary to monitor the implementation process closely. The project activities will therefore focus on the implementation process of the biogas plants now under construction.