



Newsletter IEA Bioenergy Task 37: 09/2020

Biogas in the UK and Ireland

The UK Renewable Heat Incentive will be extended

When UK Chancellor Rishi Sunak delivered his first budget, he outlined funding for several green initiatives. One of the key announcements made in the budget was the extension of the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), a move welcomed by the Biomethane community. The RHI scheme had been due to end in 2021, with many in the bioenergy sector wondering what, if anything, would take its place to ensure the UK moves away from fossil fuels. The announcement now provides a degree of clarity and certainty to protect and sustain 46,000 jobs and 700+ supply chain companies, as well as push on with new investment and renewable heat installation projects in the short term. The £100 million funding to replace fossil fuel heating in homes and small, non-domestic buildings and an extension to the RHI post-2021, albeit for 12 months will help to continue the success story of biomethane in the UK. Later, the government confirmed the extension of the domestic RHI scheme until 31 March 2022. It will also introduce a 3rd flexible allocation of Tariff Guarantees (TGs) on the non-domestic RHI scheme, which will ensure a 'smooth transition' between the RHI and future support mechanisms.

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NNFC annual report 2020 on AD in UK published

NNFC has published the seventh edition of its annual Anaerobic Digestion Deployment in the UK report. Only 7 new plants have commissioned since April 2019, adding a modest 3.4MWe of capacity and increasing biomethane flow to the grid by just over 2,000Nm³/hr. Despite 47 plants being under construction at this time last year, many are yet to reach or complete the commissioning phase due to the inclement weather conditions in the first quarter of 2020 immediately followed by the Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions. Despite the industry stalling over recent months, partly due to the closure of the FIT scheme and with the end of the RHI looming and additional time pressures on projects with a tariff guarantee, the future still looks promising. It was announced in the Chancellor's Spring Budget statement that the government is allocating an additional £10 million in 2020-21 to support the design and delivery of net zero policies and programmes, within which biomethane is expected to feature strongly. Subsequent announcements from BEIS this week have clarified support for biomethane injection to the gas grid, in the form of a Green Gas Support Scheme, is set to stay until 2025/26, with the Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation (RTFO) committing to support biomethane as far out as 2032.

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Biomethane demand increases by 800% in the UK

Demand for renewable biomethane compressed natural gas (Bio-CNG), the low-carbon and low-cost alternative to diesel for heavy duty vehicles (HGV), has soared 800% since 2017, CNG Fuels announces today, after adding two new refueling stations to its network with the support of Ingenious in the United Kingdom. The new stations in Warrington – Europe's biggest – and Northampton are capable of refueling over 1,000 HGVs a day, more than doubling the 600-a-day capacity of its existing stations at

Leyland, Lancashire and Crewe, Cheshire. The company is also planning to open an additional six to eight stations over the next 12 months as it expands its strategic network of HGV refueling stations in line with burgeoning demand. The station in Warrington can refuel up to 800 HGVs daily and serve 12 vehicles *simultaneously*. The Northampton station can refuel more than 350 HGVs a day. CNG Fuels has helped hauliers to save 55,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide since it began supplying Bio-CNG in 2017. This number is expected to rise to 90,000 tonnes by the end of 2020.

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Supply of biomethane to all Heathrow Airport terminals

Engie has announced an agreement with Heathrow Airport to replace natural gas with 100% green biomethane from anaerobic digestion to all meter points, across all terminals until March 2022. This agreement builds on an existing partnership where Engie has been supplying biomethane to Heathrow's Energy Centre, as well as natural gas to other areas. The biomethane is certified under the Renewable Gas Guarantees of Origin (RGGOs) Scheme as being wholly derived from anaerobic digestion. The agreement represents the largest forward green gas contract ever signed by Engie. In addition, Heathrow Airport has the option to purchase more green gas if their requirements exceed the estimated consumption over the contract period. The biomethane will be injected into the grid by a number of producers using a variety of different feedstocks – all within the United Kingdom

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Liverpool launches UK's biggest biogas-powered refuse vehicle fleet

Liverpool has launched the UK's biggest eco-friendly fleet of refuse vehicles powered by biomethane a compressed natural gas (CNG). The 20-strong fleet will help to cut Liverpool City Council's carbon footprint, as they produce 80% fewer carbon emissions and 90% less nitrogen oxide than the previous diesel vehicles. Each new CNG-fuelled wagon will cover more than 150,000 miles per year and has a Mercedes-Benz Econic chassis with a Faun Zoeller Variopress body and a load capacity of up to 10.5 tonnes. Liverpool Street Scene Services (LSSL), a subsidiary of Liverpool City Council, has invested £3.4 million (€4.04 million) in the new fleet. A CNG fuelling station has also been installed at LSSL's refuse collection depot. The purchase follows the recent announcement that Liverpool is on track to meet its climate change targets three years ahead of schedule. The city has achieved an 18% reduction in carbon emissions since 2012 and is on course to reach 35% by the end of 2020.

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Switching to biomethane "financially sensible", says GVN

Clean, low-carbon gas-powered heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) have overtaken fossil-powered trucks in the UK, according to the Gas Vehicle Network (GVN). GVN's 2018 statistics show that 55.5% of gas for transport fuel was biomethane; the organisation expects this to rise again in the 2019 figures. According to GVN, renewable gas-powered vehicles are an "obvious, sustainable choice for transport. Biomethane-fueled HGVs emit 85% less carbon into the atmosphere compared to a 'clean' Euro 6 diesel. The sector accounts for a disproportionate share (17%) of transport carbon emissions, but only 2% of vehicles on our roads are HGVs and buses, and they travel 6% of miles. The road ahead is clear for fleet managers and UK Government to achieve substantial carbon savings by 2025. Switch to low carbon powered heavy vehicle transport. In addition, thanks to the work of the GVN, the government has in place a fuel duty differential until 2032, making it financially a sensible decision to switch to gas from diesel.

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Scottish brewer invests £14 million in bioenergy project

The brewer of Scotland's best-selling beer has announced a £14 million (€15.5 million) investment in

green initiatives, including anaerobic digestion (AD) facilities. Tennent's lager, made at the Wellpark Brewery in Glasgow, announced its plans through a new marketing campaign with the tagline: 'Because life is bigger than beer'. Tennent's aims to become carbon neutral by 2025, according to a report by "The Drinks Business». To achieve this, the company has revealed it is installing a new AD and carbon capture plant at its site in Glasgow. It is hoped this will save the equivalent carbon dioxide emissions of 27,000 flights from Glasgow to London each year. The company has already installed a wastewater treatment plant that generates biogas, which is used to help heat the brewery. Currently, biogas only covers 5% of the brewery's energy requirements.

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[**CCC urges expansion of UK bioenergy crops in new land use report**](#)

This report presents the CCC's (Committee on Climate Change) first ever in-depth advice on UK agricultural and land use policies. The report assesses the way we use our land today and the changes required in how we farm and use land in order to deliver the UK Government's Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions target by 2050. The report bases on an extensive literature review. Recommendations include measures like increase of tree planting, encouragement of low-carbon farming practice and planting of energy crops, peatland restoration and reduction of food waste.

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[**Renewable gas at forefront of Gas Networks Ireland's 2050 plan**](#)

Gas Networks Ireland and its parent company Ervia say they will reduce Ireland's carbon emissions by a third with their Vision 2050 plan. GNI's vision plan is that by 2050, half of the gas on Ireland's network will be renewable gas (22 TWh of biomethane and 8 TWh of hydrogen). The other half will be 'abated gas', where carbon dioxide (CO₂) has been removed through carbon capture and storage (CCS). This will prevent CO₂ emissions from entering the atmosphere.

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[**Incentivizing biomethane in Ireland**](#)

Ireland's renewable energy targets for 2020 include 16% renewable energy; this can be broken down to 40% renewable electricity, 12% renewable heat and 10% renewable transport. Owing to the commercialisation of wind energy, the progression of carbon-free electricity generation is under way; however, this is not the case for heat and transport. Biomethane may be used as a direct substitute for natural gas and can be used to decarbonise heat and transport. The report describes a techno-economic assessment of biomethane feedstocks from urban, rural and coastal settings. In total, nine scenarios were investigated (a combination of the three feedstock groups and the three upgrading technologies). The levelised cost of energy and the incentive required to allow financial sustainability were assessed. The assessment showed that water scrubbing was the cheapest upgrading method. The optimum scenario was the combination of urban-based feedstock (food waste) with water scrubbing upgrading, costing €87/MWh, equivalent to €0.87/L of diesel. The incentive required was about €0.13/m³; however, if a power-to-gas system was used, an incentive of €0.40/m³ was required. This was expected as food waste attracts a gate fee. The report written by MaREI Center under the lead of Task 37 leader Jerry Murphy is published as part of the EPA Research Programme.

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