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Biogas is booming in France – study identifies potential sites

The French market for biogas plants is growing like never before. Around 500 new biogas plants with an installed capacity of circa 200 MW_{el} will be commissioned by 2020. The new study of consultancy ecoprogram analyses the market and identifies more than 900 potential sites for the construction of new biogas plants.

At present, France has around 230 active biogas plants with an installed capacity of about 110 MW_{el} – almost 50 per cent of these facilities were commissioned in the past two years. This boom has started in 2011 when the feed-in tariff for biogas was increased. Especially agricultural biogas plants benefit from this subsidy. However, the fermentation of biowaste and waste from the agroindustry is also getting increased support. The very favourable French promotion system meets one of the largest biomass potentials for generating biogas in Europe.

With these preconditions, the booming French biogas plant market will even accelerate in the years to come. Around 500 new biogas plants with an installed capacity of circa 200 MW_{el} will go online by 2020, meaning that both the number of plants and the capacity will triple in this period – to 740 and 310 MW_{el} respectively. The total investment volume of the industry will increase to about 120 million EUR annually by 2020. Altogether, more than 800 million EUR will be invested in the biogas industry between 2014 and 2020.

This boom also creates new opportunities for developing biogas plants. ecoprogram's new market study has identified 900 potential locations for new biogas plants. Around 600 of these sites are large-scale agricultural enterprises. In terms of cultivated area and livestock, the French agricultural enterprises are among the largest in Europe. They thus provide ideal conditions for operating biogas plants; however, approximately only ten of these 600 large-scale agricultural enterprises have an operational biogas plant at their site.

Another 300 potential locations were analysed at companies of the food and beverages industry. Besides the agricultural feedstocks, these companies' organic waste provides the largest potential for generating biogas in France. The country's industry is leading in Europe, with 1,000 large-scale enterprises in the meat and milk sectors alone. Only 20 of the analysed 300 companies are already using their organic waste energetically for generating biogas.

The detailed investigation and current analysis of the French market for biogas plants is of interest for producers, suppliers, operators, disposal companies, associations, research institutes and consultants. The study "Biogas Plants in France – Market and New Site Potentials" can be ordered at: www.ecoprogram.com

As a respected industry expert, ecoprogram accompanies clients from Germany and abroad in dealing with implementation-oriented management issues in the environmental and energy technology sectors. ecoprogram focuses on strategy consulting, market and competition analyses as well as multi-client studies on different topics in the energy and environmental industries. For the survey about biogas plants in France ecoprogram was working with Envalys, a French consulting company from Paris. Envalys works within a network of engineers developing business strategies for companies of the biomass, biogas and the waste industry in France.