**EKOenergy's criteria for renewable gas**
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Ecolabels are a commonly used tool to help consumers choose climate and nature friendly products. This text contains the criteria for EKOenergy's ecolabel for renewable gas. The main elements are the sustainability criteria and the rules about how to track the renewable gas.

This text has been developed between February and November 2016. The development process followed the recommendations of ISEAL's Standard Setting Code.
http://www.isealalliance.org/our-work/defining-credibility/codes-of-good-practice/standard-setting-code

# CONTENT

# I.  Introduction

*EKOenergy*

EKOenergy is an international network of environmental organisations promoting sustainable renewable energy. We started in 2012 and since our start we have developed an intensive cooperation with consumers, the energy sector, public authorities and many more. Our most visible tool is the EKOenergy label for sustainably produced electricity. The label is on the market in more than 10 countries and is growing rapidly. The ecolabel for gas is meant to support our efforts for a 100% sustainable and renewable world.

See www.ekoenergy.org for more information.

*General objectives*

We want to be a tool for consumers and sellers to communicate in a concrete and positive way about their commitment to a 100% renewable and sustainable world. To guarantee the stable development of the renewable energy sector, it is important that different promoters understand and strengthen each other, even if they have different concerns and starting points: the producers, the suppliers, the consumers, the climate policy specialists, the nature conservationists, the consumer organisations. EKOenergy wants to play a role in bringing these stakeholders together and in giving them tools to make concrete steps forward.

*Principles behind the EKOenergy label for renewable gas*

Activities connected to production of the renewable gas shall minimise negative impacts on biodiversity, ecosystems and the environment. The use of the gas shall contribute to climate change mitigation by achieving a significant reduction of lifecycle GHG emissions compared to fossil fuels. EKOenergy does not make own life cycle analyses, but uses a wide variety of existing reports and analyses to favor the types of resources and the ways of production with the least impact and to exclude those with considerable negative environmental impacts.

The production of the gas shall use best available technology. It shall not compromise food security and social justice.

# II.    Criteria

## 1.    A label for the sale and consumption of renewable gas

### *1.1    Renewable gas*

The EKOenergy label for gas can be applied to all gases (gaseous under standard Temperature and Pressure) that are produced from renewable primary energy sources.

EKOenergy certified gas is always 100 % renewable. It does not include an offsetting of the emissions caused by natural gas. Although we see offsetting as a valuable approach, with this label we want to promote renewable energy.

### *1.2    A label to help final consumers*

The ecolabel is a label to help consumers find the most sustainable choice and to communicate about it.

In the case of gas sold to the end consumer, it is up to the final seller to make sure that all requirements have been fulfilled. Only sellers who have signed the licence agreement for the sale of EKOenergy certified gas can market (i.e. advertise and sell) EKOenergy-certified gas.

EKOenergy also allows the unbundled sale of tracking certificates. In that case the seller selling tracking certificates to the final consumer has to sign the Licence Agreement.

In the case consumers produce the EKOenergy certified gas themselves, they have to sign the License Agreement for the use of self generated EKOenergy certified gas.

## 2.    Consumer information

The EKOenergy network informs consumers about the environmental impacts of renewable gas production.

Suppliers of EKOenergy certified gas have to inform their current and potential consumers about the origin of the EKOenergy product they supply. This information has to include minimally:
- The country of production
- The bioenergy source used to produce biogas (in the case of power-to-gas the  origin  of the electricity must be mentioned)

It is recommended to inform the consumers about the production site of the delivered gas, if possible.

In case the gas product is a mixture of EKOenergy certified gas, other renewable gas and/or natural gas, the supplier has to clearly inform the (potential) consumer about the percentage of EKOenergy certified gas in the mixture.

# 3. Sustainability

## *3.1 General requirement: fulfill all legal requirements*

In order to be able to be sold as EKOenergy, the production devices where the gas originates from, have to fulfill:

- All legal requirements in force at the place of production, including rules and treaties guaranteeing social justice.
- All the requirements imposed by their permits.

EKOenergy does not have the capacity to control this beforehand. However, abuses and doubts can be signaled any time to the EKOenergy Secretariat. The EKOenergy Board decides based on a process in which all involved parties will be actively invited to comment. As from the day of the decision of the Board, gas from installations not respecting these general requirements will do no longer qualify for the sales of EKOenergy.

## *3.2 Allowed types of renewable gas and specific requirements*

### A. Renewable gas made from biomass

*Eligible sources for biogas production*

Important notice: this list will be update when EKOenergy reviews its bioenergy criteria for electricity. One of the very likely changes will be a reduction of the maximum allowed diameter of wood residues, mentioned under the last (black) bullet point.

- biogenic wastes and residues, that cannot be used as food or feed, waste sources are acceptable if they fulfil article 4 and 11 of EU Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC
- agricultural residues, including crops residues [1]
- landfill gas
- sewage or wastewater
- anaerobic fermentation of manure

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[1] Crop residues are defined as an integral part of the commercial production of agricultural crops; these may include damaged or misshapen fruit or vegetables, trimmings and other plant parts which are not the intended end product, such as straw, leaves or tops. These can be collected from the field or from a packing unit, prior to leaving the farm-gate. [Environment Agency (2014, September). Retrieved October 15, 2016, from http://www.r-e-a.net/images/upload/news_270_140910_EA_Briefing_note_-_crop_residues_used_as_feedstocks_in_AD_plants.pdf

Agricultural residues includes also crops from excess production and biomass originating from intercropping cultivations which are not use as a food.

- organic residues of production processes (so called processing residues), e.g. residues from the food industry or forest industry by-products (e.g. bakery or brewery waste) and waste products like sawdust, bark...
- marine biomass (e.g. algae, seaweed, ascidians) from seawater with an excessive amount of nutrients (e.g. phosphor and nitrogen) resulting in eutrophication, which is harvested in order to protect the marine environment and support biodiversity
- biomass originating from nature management in accordance with a nature management plan approved by a national or regional nature protection agency
- residues of woody biomass, but excluding:
  - Stumps and roots.
  - Woody biomass harvested from protected areas: nature reserves designated by the public authorities, Natura 2000 areas and UNESCO World Heritage sites, unless it has been harvested according to a nature management plan approved by a national or regional nature protection agency.
  - Logs with a diameter breast height (DBH) of more than 20 cm. However, such logs can be used if they are not suited for any other industrial use because of root rot (Heterobasidion) or other pathogens. Other exceptions can be accepted by the EKOenergy Board.
  - Forestry products from countries where fellings in forests available for wood supply exceeds 80 % of the annual forest increment, unless it can be proven they come from a region where the fellings make up less than 70 % of the annual forest increment. The felling rate to take into account is the average of the available figures for the last 5 years.

*Implement a special rule in the case of use of both eligible and non-eligible biomass*

If a production device uses both eligible forms of biomass and non-eligible forms of biomass, the share of gas that qualifies must match the share of eligible biomass input.

*An ambition for future criteria reviews:*

In the coming years, we will further evaluate options to introduce criteria for the production process. These can include e.g.
- further differentiation between different sources based on type of production (e.g. intensive vs extensive production, organic vs non-organic…)
- criteria for the type of energy (electricity and fuels) used at the production unit,
- criteria about the use of the residues (digestate) of the gasification process
- measures to avoid gas leakage.

These elements are not included in the current criteria because they would lead to a very complicated and expensive auditing.

<u>B.     Renewable power-to-gas</u>

Power-to-gas (P2G) is gas which is created by the conversion of electrical power into gas.

Power-to-gas is certified if it is produced from EKOenergy-eligible electricity. It has to be tracked with tracking systems allowed for the tracking of EKOenergy electricity and the electricity has to fulfill EKOenergy's sustainability criteria.

# 4.     Climate

To ensure the additional environmental benefit of the certified gas, we will set up a fund system similar to the one we use with our electricity label. All the contributions shall be made according to the sold amount of energy.

Per MWh of EKOenergy sold, a contribution of at least €0.10 (ten eurocent) has to be made to the EKOenergy Climate Fund. The Fund money will be used to stimulate further investments in renewable energy and to increase the share of renewable gas in the world's gas consumption.

In order to be as efficient as possible, EKOenergy will not set up own initiatives, but make use of existing mechanisms and instruments.

Possible measures are (non-exhaustive list):
- Investment in renewable energy projects in poor areas. If the supported projects would lead to carbon allowances, these will be canceled (proportionally) in order to avoid double counting.
- Small scale renewable energy projects with a high environmental and social value added.
- The cancellation of European ETS allowances (or other emission right schemes), as soon as there are signs that there are shortages on the market.
- ...

# 5.     Tracking

Only gas which is properly tracked can be sold as EKOenergy. To ensure that the same amount of ecolabeled renewable gas that is sold is also produced and to avoid double counting, the ecolabeld gas needs to be properly tracked

## 5.1     *Which tracking system to use?*

If there is a tracking system in a given country, it can be used after the approval of the EKOenergy Board. The system will be approved if it is reliable, neutral, open to all interested market players and if double counting is excluded. Preferably there will be only one accepted tracking system per country or, as a second-best option, only one accepted tracking system per type of gas (i.e. biogas, power-to-gas, ..).

If there is no tracking system in a given country, the EKOenergy Board will evaluate the tracking solution suggested by the seller. The approval of such a system is temporary. Private tracking systems are automatically replaced by official systems as soon as these exist. .

A list of accepted registers will be available on www.ekoenergy.org.

### *5.2    International trade of tracking certificates*

Tracking certificates can be used to prove the consumption of renewable gas in another country than the country of production, if both countries are on the same gas market.

If there is a cooperation agreement between the importing and the exporting register, the rules of that cooperation agreement have to be followed.

In other cases, EKOenergy allows the cancellation in the (approved) register of the country of production on behalf of consumption elsewhere (if this is technically possible).

## 6.    Auditing and verification

### *6.1    Sellers*

Facts and figures that have not been checked by public authorities, have to be verified by a statutory auditor as defined in Directive 2006/43/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2006 on statutory audits of annual accounts. For non- EEA countries, the verification has to be done by an auditor complying with all the requirements of International Standards on Auditing and accepted beforehand by the EKOenergy Board.

The auditor has to check and confirm that
- the seller has a reliable and transparent bookkeeping of his EKOenergy sales.
- that the amount of tracking certificates canceled by the supplier (in registers approved by EKOenergy) match with the amount of sold EKOenergy certified gas.
- that the origin and type indicated on the certificates match with information given by the sellers to their consumers.

The audit will be based on a checklist provided by the EKOenergy Secretariat.

The audit must be delivered to the EKOenergy Secretariat, annually, and no later than June 30th (for sales of the previous calendar year).

All opportunities to simplify the verification process (in particular by making use of existing tools, procedures and checks) will be grasped.

*6.2      Producers*

The fulfillment of the criteria listed in this text will be checked at least once a year. In as far as possible, the data collected on behalf of the national registers will be used.

The verification includes:
- The total gas production.
- The total input of raw material for biogas production, its composition and the calorific value of each of the used fuels
- The amount and types of biomass input that is eligible for EKOenergy.

Data which cannot be proven through the tracking register has to be proven by other documents endorsed by public authorities (e.g. subsidy documents). If no official proves are available, these elements have to be checked by auditors accredited by national or regional accreditation authorities (IAF Members & Signatories).


# 7.      Fees and contributions

The final seller (the seller to the end consumer) pays
- the contribution to the Climate Fund, mentioned in Chapter 4: at least € 0.10 per MWh sold EKOenergy certified gas,
- € 0.08 euro (eight eurocent) to the EKOenergy network, to finance the network's activities and to support its actions to increase the demand for renewable energy. If during a calendar year, more than 250 GWh of EKOenergy is sold to the same end-consumer, this fee (€0.08) doesn't have to be paid for the part exceeding 250 GWh.

In the case of self-generation, these contributions have to be paid by the licensed consumer.


# 8.      Governance

Chapter 3 of EKOenergy's basic text 'EKOenergy - Network and label' describes the decision structure of the EKOenergy Network. See http://www.ekoenergy.org/ecolabel/criteria/official-text/  See also http://www.ekoenergy.org/about-us/governance/