

POLICY BRIEF 2ND SEMESTER – CATALONIA

31TH MARCH 2017

Executive Summary

The **National Pact for Energy Transition** approved by the Government of Catalonia strengthens the importance of the biomass.

In this framework, the Interreg BIO4ECO Project, developing energy and land use policies, takes more relevance in the current scene.

Process

The development of the new energy model requires financing and governance. Thus, the **National Pact for Energy Transition** is a transversal agreement through dialogue of all political parties and representatives of civil society, to give the Catalan energy policy a medium and long-term stability, which will allow implementing a change of energy model.

The role of biomass is placed by the **Plan for Energy and Climate Change in Catalonia 2020 (PECAC)**. The PECAC sets strategic policies for energy saving and efficiency, in order to achieve a sustainable energy system, with renewable energy as a strategic option and as an opportunity for economic growth and qualified job creation.

One of its main objectives is to put in place measures to achieve the target of 20% of gross energy consumption based on a renewable source.

Under this plan, **energy uses of biomass as a renewable fuel** will be prioritized. The plan gives to the biomass a very important role, which must be the second renewable energy source in 2020 representing 16.6% of primary energy consumption.

In this regard, in Catalonia, the **Regional Strategy for the energetic development of forest and agricultural biomass** is currently in progress. This is the policy instrument addressed by the **BIO4ECO project**.

Activities and outputs of the project

BIO4ECO Project is based on **exchange activities**, which will allow the integration of lessons learned into the Action Plans elaborated by each partner.

- **Catalan local stakeholder group.** This working group was enlarged and strengthened during the Biomass Fair in the city of Vic. It debated the roadmap to achieve the target set by the strategy to promote the thermic use of forest and agricultural biomass: increasing the share of renewable energies up to 600,000 tons of biomass by 2020.
- **Study visits:** Sustainable use of forest biomass as a renewable energy source was discussed on a three-day international meeting, in Bansko (Bulgaria). During the second semester partners travelled also to Abruzzo Region (Italy) and had a first-hand experience on integral solutions for bioenergy policies and strategies.
- **Attendance and presence to seminars and congresses:** As part of the Biomass Fair of Catalonia, members of both the CTFC and the Executive Forest Agency of Bulgaria, had the opportunity to present the Interreg project BIO4ECO.

Furthermore, CTFC presented the **Regional Strategy for the energetic development of forest and agricultural biomass** at the 4th Congress of Energy of Catalonia.

Conclusions

The Catalan delegation of the BIO4ECO Project is in charge to improve its own political instrument. All the exchange activities carried out so far have led to the following conclusions:

- Energy Service Companies (ESCOs) should be actively engaged in developing and implementing regional integrated strategies for bioenergy rising.
- Governance at regional level should be refreshed through increased interdepartmental coordination and a more proactive approach to mainstream bioenergy development.
- Bioenergy could be an important step in the circular economy through an excellence study case in food industry.
- Transparency of the data related to air quality and bioenergy emissions is very important in order to improve social acceptance.
- Bioenergy represents a viable and optimal alternative in rural area and small municipalities.
- The agricultural component of the farms in relation to biomass production has a great potential.

- There is a need to provide technical assistance, information and financing for small actors, which, despite their interest, are unable to perform installations of biomass.
- In order to consolidate and strengthen the industrial market of bioenergy, quality, stable prices and regularity of supply must be guaranteed.
- There is a need for agents of employment and development for biomass
- The role of energy service companies and difficulties in the forestry sector has to be considered when getting permission for infrastructure related to biomass.
- The use of forests should be subject to a balanced approach that takes into account not only economic needs, but also environmental and social role of the forests.