

SUBJECT 5: BIOMASS POLICIES, MARKETS AND SUSTAINABILITY
SUBSECTION 5.5 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

**ADDRESSING FUEL POVERTY IN LOCAL INITIATIVES THROUGH
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ACTIONS**

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ABSTRACT: The Task on Socio-Economic Drivers in Implementing Bioenergy Projects (Task 29) is an international collaboration project within the IEA Implementing Agreement on Bioenergy with Canada, Croatia, Germany, Norway, and the United Kingdom as participating countries. The Task is investigating and giving profile to differing regional and national achievements in terms of social and economic benefits of biomass utilisation and drivers in implementing bioenergy projects. The Task addresses many relevant aspects of technology introduction and is currently focused on:

- Achieving local and regional influence on national bioenergy strategies and policies
- Innovative financial instruments enabling local project development
- **Addressing fuel poverty through implementing local bioenergy and hybrid renewable energy schemes**

Our paper will examine innovative approaches to addressing fuel poverty in disadvantaged groups through utilising bioenergy/ wood fuel primarily in small scale district energy schemes and new and innovative ways of utilizing firewood. Such schemes have a role to play in rural as well as urban settings although the challenges to achieving successful outcomes varies. Solutions should be governed by the ability to deliver significant social and economic benefit to users and as such will often comprise more than one renewable energy technology option. In particular, biomass has a good ‘fit’ with solar technologies in which case both heating and electricity needs can be met.

The paper will also consider the advantages afforded by the introduction of financial incentives in participating countries such as the FIT (Feed in Tariff) and the RHI (Renewable Heat Incentive) in the United Kingdom and similar initiatives in other countries. Such schemes offer opportunities for both the Landlord and Tenant to benefit from introducing ‘green energy solutions’ thus allowing the mainstreaming of bioenergy technologies.

Key words: bioenergy, fuel poverty, financial incentives, district energy schemes

1 INTRODUCTION

Biomass utilisation, bioenergy technologies, their market share, and research interests in these issues vary considerably between different countries. Nevertheless, in most of the countries socio-economic benefits of bioenergy use can clearly be identified as a significant driving force in increasing the share of bioenergy in the total energy supply. In most countries regional employment created and economic gains are probably the two most important issues regarding biomass use for energy production.

Within the international community there is considerable interest in the socio-economic implications of moving society towards the more widespread use of renewable energy resources. Such change is seen to be very necessary but is often poorly communicated to people and communities who need to accept such changes.

The Task on Socio-Economic Drivers for Implementing Bioenergy Projects (“Task 29”; duration 1 Jan 2010 – 31 Dec 2012) is an international collaboration within the IEA Implementing Agreement on Bioenergy. The International Energy Agency (IEA) is established within the framework of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to implement an international energy programme. IEA Bioenergy is an international collaborative agreement set up under the umbrella of the OECD, by the International Energy Agency (IEA). Work in IEA Bioenergy is directed by the Executive Committee and carried out through a series of Tasks, each having a defined work programme, budget and time frame. Each participating country pays a modest financial contribution towards administrative requirements, shares the costs of participating in specific Tasks and provides

in-kind contribution to fund participation of national personnel. In many cases the in-kind contribution from a country is the national bioenergy R&D programme or a part of the programme.

Uniquely, two Local (SAVE) Energy Agencies are also involved in this particular Task giving close contact with local communities relevant to the work programme.

The overall aim of this initiative is to promote the use of biomass for energy over fossil based competitor fuels in the participating countries through achieving a better understanding of the social and economic impacts of bioenergy systems at the local, regional, national and international level. The Task appreciates the fact that the promotion and implementation of bioenergy projects can be efficiently performed by supporting, educating and mobilising dedicated stakeholders (e.g., environmental and other interest groups, local communities, individuals, etc.

The specific aim of Task 29 is to achieve a better understanding of the social and economic drivers and impacts of establishing bioenergy markets at the local, regional, national and international level, to synthesise and transfer to stakeholders critical knowledge and new information, to improve the assessment of the socio-economic impacts of biomass production and utilisation in order to increase the uptake of bioenergy as well as providing guidance to policy makers. The participating countries are currently Canada, Croatia, Germany, Norway, and the United Kingdom. Austria and Ireland are also closely involved with activities.

The Task also deals with issues like: stakeholder involvement, local income, public acceptance, local NGO involvement, long-term support (e.g., rental of credits), technology transfer, technology diffusion,

distribution of benefits, fuel substitution aspects, policy aspects, education and capacity building, definition of collateral effects, market development in relation to timber and non-timber products markets (e.g. shift of income or changing in financial sources for sustainable development), institutional development, the nature and role of local and co-operative ESCOs (Energy Services Companies) in propagating community actions, and other means relevant to secure long-term success and to minimize leakage and maximize additionality of projects.

An integrated approach is being taken to investigating and sharing knowledge on these separate aspects. Typically, socio-economic implications are measured in terms of economic indices, such as employment and monetary gains, but in effect the analysis relates to a number of aspects which include social, cultural, institutional, and environmental issues. The problem lies in the fact that these latter elements are not always tractable to quantitative analysis and, therefore, have been precluded from the majority of impact assessments in the past, even though at the local level they may be very significant.

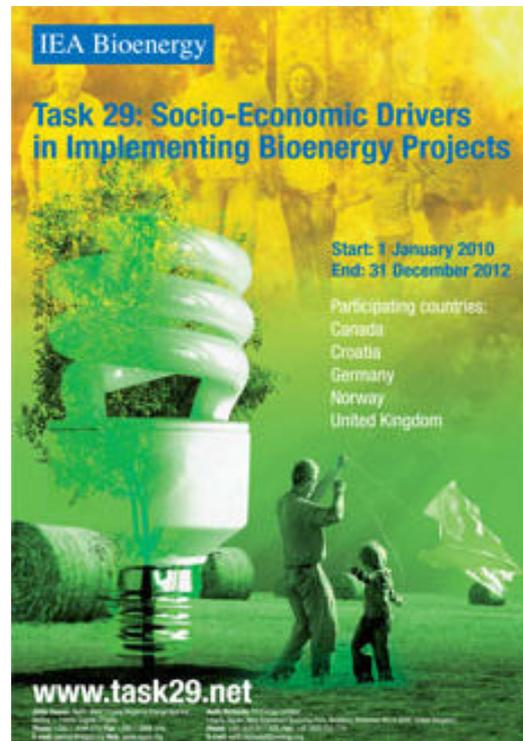
2 WORK PROGRAMME

The Task is investigating and giving profile to differing regional and national achievements in terms of social and economic benefits of biomass utilisation and drivers in implementing bioenergy projects. This includes educational activity.

For more information on current actions, meetings, site visits and conferences visit:

<http://www.task29.net/>

<http://www.aboutbioenergy.info>



Task 29 Poster



Task 29 Educational Poster