

Press Release September 17, 2024

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Together with Renera, Methagora successfully achieves its innovative Virtual Pipeline Concept for the first time.

Methagora and Renera proudly announce that the innovative virtual pipeline concept is being implemented for the first time in France. This milestone was made possible thanks to the long-term Biomethane Purchase Agreement (BPA) between the two companies.

Basel (Switzerland), Villeurbanne (France), 17.09.2024.

The partnership between Renera, the largest independent Swiss biomethane trading company, and the anaerobic digestion expert Methagora is bringing to life a ground breaking project. For the first time, Methagora's award-winning Virtual Pipeline Concept is being realised, facilitating the production of biomethane in small, off-grid farms.

Through this project, biogas plants located within a radius of up to 100 kilometres capture gas from the farm's waste, generating additional revenue for the farms and supporting their participation in the circular economy. Each of them will be producing biogas from agricultural waste. This biogas will be purified into biomethane, compressed into a tank and transported by road to a designated point for grid injection. «By transporting the compressed biomethane, which has a higher energy value, instead of the raw feedstock, the CO₂ emissions of the biomethane production are significantly reduced», comments Georg Meier, Head of Trading at Renera.

The project required major investment, including the installation of equipment on the methanisation units and the construction of an injection site within the hub. A hub is a group of anaerobic digestion sites that work together to produce biomethane and consists of satellite sites (also known as 'daughter sites') linked to a central site ('mother site'), where the gas is injected into the network. For this project, each of the five plants previously used as Combined Heat and Power Systems (CHP) needed to be equipped for upgrading the biogas to biomethane and the subsequent compression of the biomethane over 200 bars into compressed natural gas (CNG).

«The long-term BPA with Renera made these investments possible. We are excited to have found with Renera a partner who is valuing innovation and sustainability as much as we do», states Florent Thouminot, General Manager of Methagora. The first injection of the hub into the gas grid is planned for the end of 2024. With an expected yearly biomethane production of 35 GWh this project is the first combination of several plants in a joint hub in the European Union and contributes effectively to reducing carbon emissions and advancing the transition to renewable energy sources.

This collaboration is a promising first step, paving the way for future cooperation between Methagora and Renera, and other parties in the biomethane sector.

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The Virtual Pipeline Concept

Taking up the challenge of rethinking the biogas market model, Methagora developed the innovative concept of the virtual pipeline, as a result of a field trial that lasted several months. The trial enabled Methagora to confirm its economic, technical and logistical assumptions. By aggregating the gas produced by multiple decentralised biogas production units, a hub is formed. The gas is collected from agricultural methanization sites, all located within 100 kilometers of a central reference site. It is compressed and transported by trucks. At its delivery point, it is decompressed and can be used directly by end-users such as industries, at a CNG station or injected into the grid to be distributed.

This concept, for which Methagora received the innovation award at Expo Biogaz in Strasbourg in June 2024, offers not only a new trajectory for farmers' projects but also genuinely greener energy to those who are committed to the environment, both in France and beyond its borders. The solution is suitable for a wide range of biogas plant facilities and offers new long-term economic visibility to agricultural farmscale biogas units - regardless of their age, whether they produce energy via CHP or biomethane upgrading, and irrespective of their proximity to gas network infrastructure. The farmscale biogas plant market is reacting enthusiastically to this innovative solution, enabling Methagora to develop 3 hubs by 2025, and around a hundred in Europe by 2030.

About Methagora

Methagora belongs to the Seya Group, which comprises five entities dedicated to supporting and developing agricultural methanization and biomethane. Methagora's ambition is to take biomethane production to a new level, to develop the production and use of this green energy in France and beyond. Methagora is an expert in anaerobic digestion, working with farmers and industrialists towards a convergent model of energy transition.

About Renera

Renera is a Swiss group of companies operating throughout Europe and headquartered in Basel. Its main activities include development, energy services and trading in the field of renewable energies and energy efficiency. Renera supports energy suppliers, stakeholders in the real estate industry, authorities and private individuals in implementing the energy transition. The group currently has around 200 employees at locations in Switzerland, Germany, Italy and Romania.

As part of the Renera Group, Renera Trading AG actively bridges the gap between biomethane buyers and producers across Europe. Leveraging its strong network of biogas plant partners and biomethane off-takers, along with its expertise of the European market, Renera covers the whole value chain from green gas production to trading and off-taking.

About Biomethane

Biomethane is a sustainable energy source that does not require any adaptation of end-uses or gas grids. Produced through the anaerobic digestion of organic matter such as agricultural residues and food waste it can be used for heating, electricity generation, and as a vehicle fuel.

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Further information about the long-term Biomethane Purchase Agreement

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Further information about the innovative production model

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