



Project ISABEL

Place: Greece, UK, Germany

Dates: January 2016 – December 2018

Type of Cooperation: transnational (European)



Partners:

Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL LTD, Greece

INSEAD Social Innovation Centre, France

Fachagentur Nachhaltige Rohstoffe e.V. (Agency for Renewable Resources), Germany

University of Surrey, UK

Global Biotechnology Transfer Foundation, UK

EuroEnergy Biogas West SA, Greece

White Research social research enterprise, Belgium

Lake Constance Foundation, Germany

Key number: 3 different European contexts, 3 international workshops, 1 goal

Project objectives:

ISABEL brings together and integrates the notions of **Social innovation, Community Energy and Biogas** in order to foster the development of Biogas Community Energy projects and support their uptake and enlargement. The project puts forth a simple concept by revolving around three key pillars (local production-consumption/community based governance/sustainable biogas as un public good) and unfolds through their application in 3 different European contexts, namely **Germany, United Kingdom and Greece**.

Operational objectives:

- Map and combine the concepts of Community Energy and Social Innovation and adapt them to the characteristics and requirements of biogas-based energy systems.
- Reposition biogas as a “public good” by understanding the current biogas context in Germany, UK and Greece, identifying local existing and prospective stakeholders and analyzing their perceptions towards biogas and community biogas
- Enable the co-creation and support the functioning and uptake of regional instances of self-organized Biogas Communities among local stakeholders and communities interested in biogas-related concepts.
- Empower regional and local actors to govern the local biogas production and consumption system and pave the way for the biogas communities’ upscale, using as a baseline Social Innovation and Public Participation approaches as well as digital tools and expert’s guidance.
- Assess the impact and public acceptance of ISABEL interventions, identify the key success and failure factors of Community Biogas and work towards the construction and maintenance of an enabling legislation environment that will favor the development and sustainability of regional Biogas Communities.

- Ensure the expansion of its core notions and approaches as well as the replication of its outcomes to other European regions through the communication of the project's experience, success stories and practices and the support of their implementation in other contexts.

Actions

- **Phase 1 – Understanding:** In this phase ISABEL utilizes specific activities that aim **(i)** at identifying the community energy and social innovation practices across Europe, **(ii)** map the biogas landscape in the 3 ISABEL targeted regions, and **(iii)** identify the bioenergy stakeholders' interests, thoughts and concerns around the core notions and the vision of the biogas community energy projects, while putting emphasis on their societal and environmental dimensions. The goals of this phase will be realized through activities such as interviews and regional consultation workshops.
- **Phase 2 – Supporting:** Here the main ISABEL concern is to re-brand biogas as a public good as well as to foster the development of regional biogas communities and empower them to govern and sustain their own biogas production and consumption systems. Key vectors of this phase will be several regional awareness and engagement events like info-days and meetings, the ISABEL on-line portal, crowdsourcing tools and mobile apps as well as regional co-creation workshops and social hack-days.
- **Phase 3 – Empowering:** In its final phase, the project firstly aims to elicit meaningful conclusions from the application of its concept and approach and its outcomes in the 3 ISABEL regions and then to ensure the sustainability as well as the expansion of its core notions and results to other countries across Europe. To this end, ISABEL will draft and provide to all relevant stakeholders the "ISABEL Recommendations, best practices and replication guide" and will organize 3 final international workshops.

Added value of cooperation

The comparison of three different contexts in Europe will allow partners to have a larger vision on the biogas landscape in Europe. Thanks to European funds (programme Horizon 2020) this project will lay the foundations for the development of biogas in Europe.