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# Role of biogas systems in circular economy, energy and environmental systems

Prof Jerry Murphy,

At: IEA Bioenergy webinar on Integrated biogas systems – sustainable solutions beyond energy

Date: December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022





# Prof. Jerry D Murphy

Director MaREI centre (2015)

Professor of Civil Engineering, UCC (2017)

Engineers Ireland Excellence award (2015)

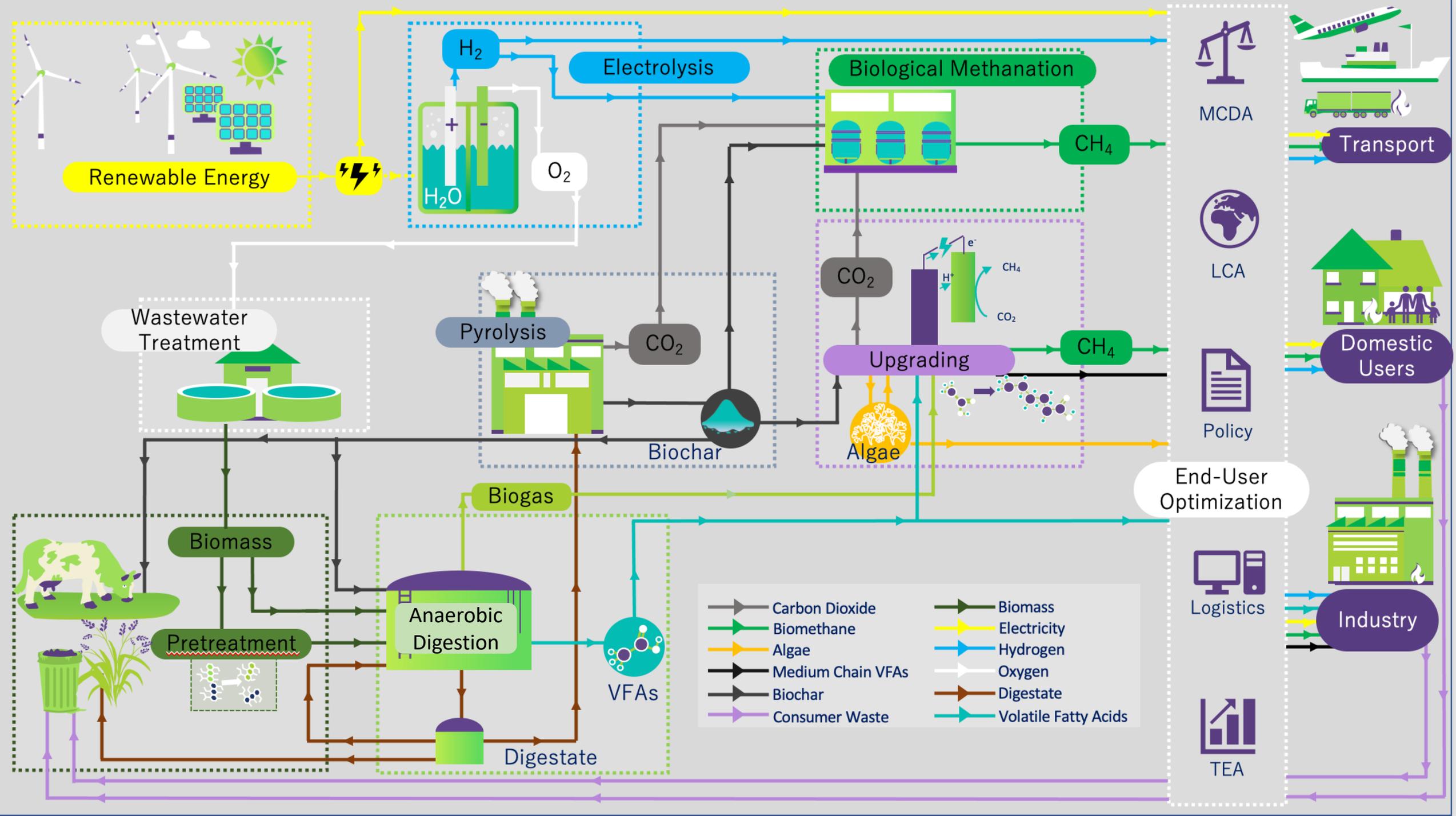
Biogas Task Leader IEA Bioenergy (2016 - 2021)

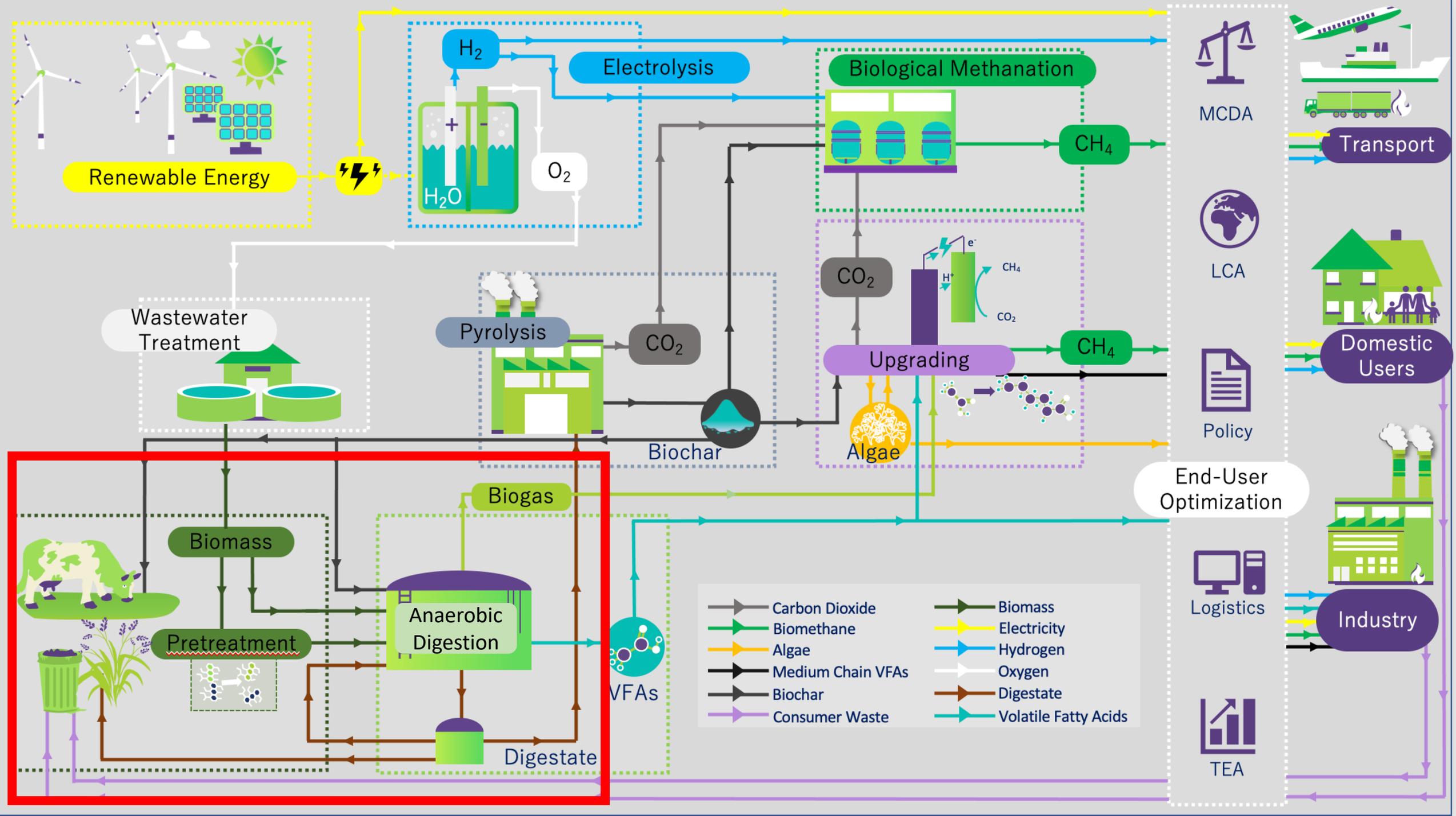
Marine Industry award for excellence (2017)

Adjunct Professor University of Southern Queensland (2018)

Fellow of the Irish Academy of Engineers (2019)

Advisory Board of German Bioenergy Research Centre (2020)





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Potential and utilization of manure to generate biogas in seven countries  
June 2021  
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In Australia, Canada, Italy and the UK  
August 2020  
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# The role of anaerobic digestion and biogas in the circular economy

## THE ROLE OF ANAEROBIC DIGESTION AND BIOGAS IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

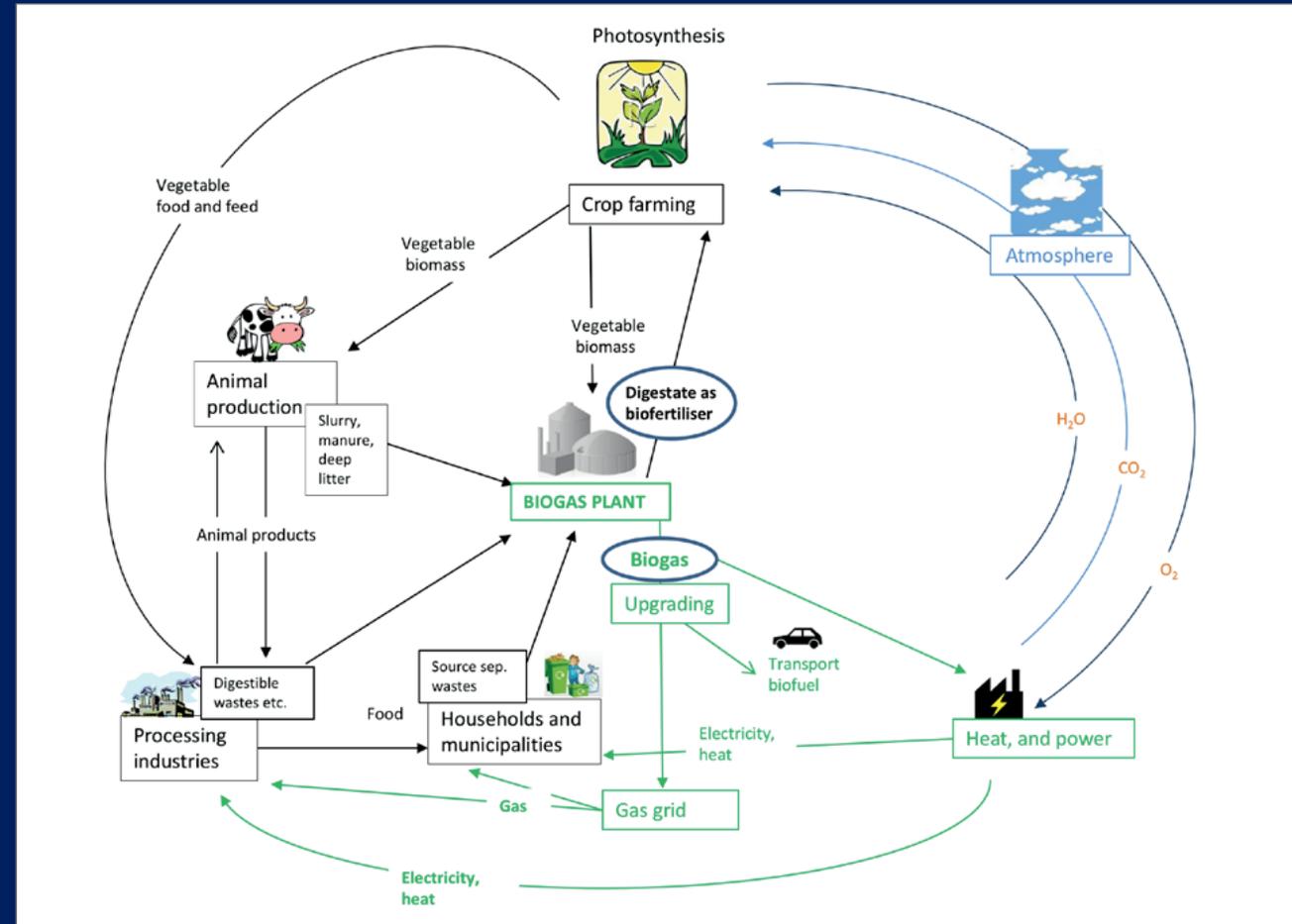


Figure 4. An example of how a modern co-digestion biogas plant fits into the circular economy (Source: Al Seadi et al., 2018)

# Organic biogas improves nutrient supply



Table 1: Inputs to the organic biogas facility at Kroghsminde Bioenergy I/S, Denmark

Daily Feedstock expressed in t/d	
Organic grass silage	5t/d
Corn	4t/d
Organic poultry manure	1t/d
Horse manure	1t/d
Organic silage (horse bean, lupine, barley / ryegrass)	2t/d
Organic deep litter	9t/d
Organic cattle slurry	48t/d
<b>Total</b>	<b>69t/d</b>

Milk from 140 cattle farm assessed as GHG negative at -0.82 kg CO<sub>2</sub>/ l produced.

# Parkland grass cuttings to transport biofuel, Brazil

**BIOGAS IN SOCIETY**  
A Case Story

## BIOMETHANE DEMONSTRATION

Innovation in urban waste treatment and in biomethane vehicle fuel production in Brazil



**IEA Bioenergy Task 37**

IEA Bioenergy Task 37: November 2017



60 cars fueled from 400 ha of parkland campus





Technique	Capacity Nm <sup>3</sup> biogas/ hour	Green Gas Nm <sup>3</sup> biogas/h	Year of installation
PSA.	1200	840	1989
Water Scrubbing	1000	700	2012
Membrane	800	560 (plus liquid CO <sub>2</sub> )	2014

Table 1: Attero's gas refining installations at Wijster

# Pipelines to extend catchment of biogas



Figure 1: General view of Maabjerg BioEnergy Plant, (Photo: Maabjerg BioEnergy)

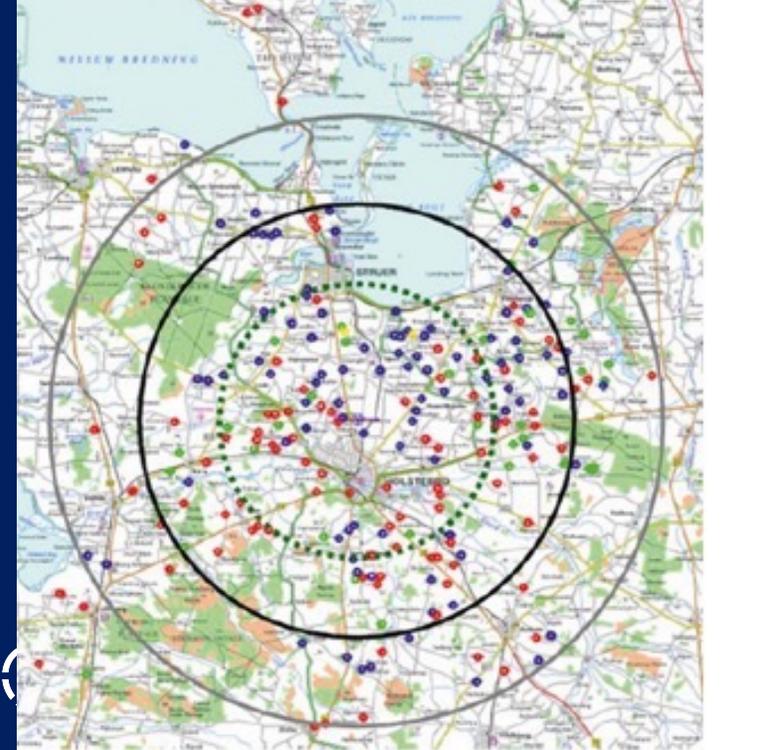
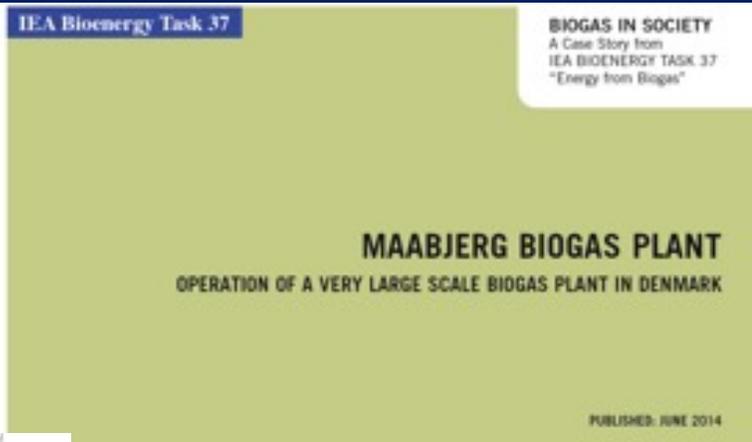


Figure 2: The area of animal slurry collection around the biogas plant, with the average radius of 20 km. Source: Maabjerg BioEnergy

Denmark set a target for 50% slurry digestion by 2020 and has already met this

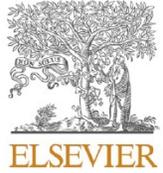
Pipeline systems consist of double pipes; slurry from collection tanks to digester and sanitized biodigestate from digester back to collection point. Piping system reduces the need for 50 – 70 deliveries per day and facilitates collection of diffuse sources of slurry

Table 1: INPUT	
Green line	tons/year
Animal slurry	460.000
Animal manure	20.000
Dairy waste	120.000
Potato pulp	15.000
Yeast cream	15.000
Abattoir waste	10.000
<b>Total green line</b>	<b>640.000</b>
Industry line	tons/year
Wastewater sludge	75.000
Flotation sludge	10.000
<b>Total industry line</b>	<b>85.000</b>
<b>Total input</b>	<b>725.000</b>

Table 2: OUTPUT	
Green line	tons/year
Liquid fertilizer (digestate)	550.000
Fertilizer fibres	40.000
Industry line	tons/year
Sludge (30 % TS)	10.000
Biogas utilisation	m <sup>3</sup> /year
Vinderup Varmeværk (District heating)	7.500.000
Måbjergværket (District heating)	3.500.000
Maabjerg BioEnergy	7.000.000
<b>Total industry line</b>	<b>85.000</b>
<b>Biogas total</b>	<b>18.000.000</b>

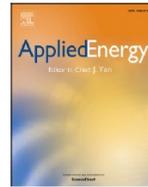
Source: Maabjerg BioEnergy



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Applied Energy

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/apenergy](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/apenergy)



## Alternative energy management strategies for large industry in non-gas-grid regions using on-farm biomethane

Dónal Ó Céileachair, Richard O'Shea, Jerry D. Murphy, David M. Wall\*

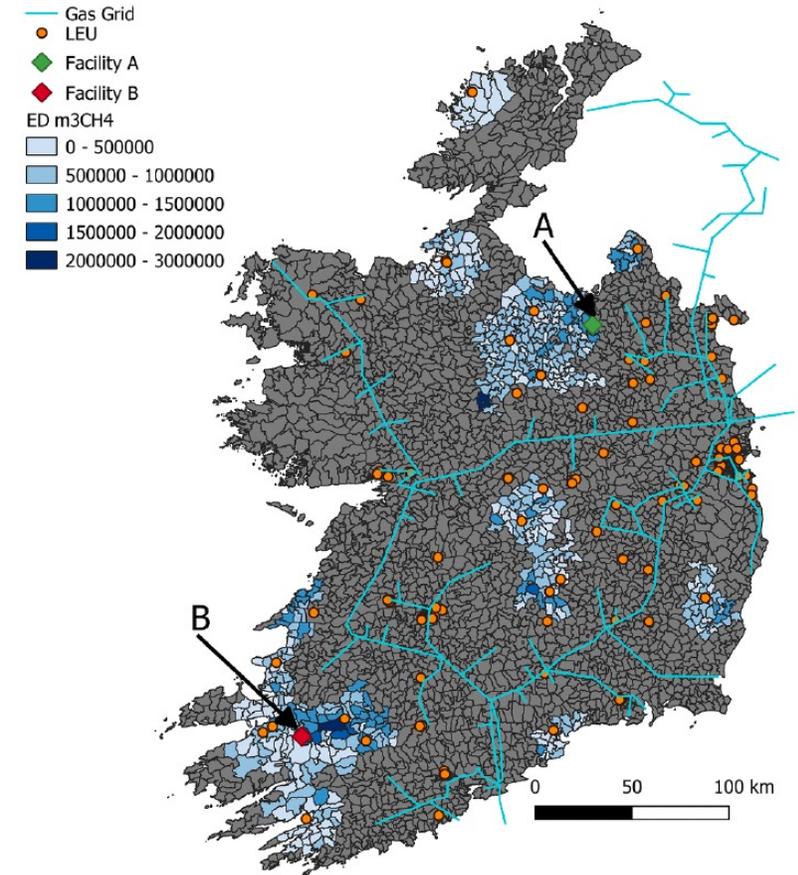
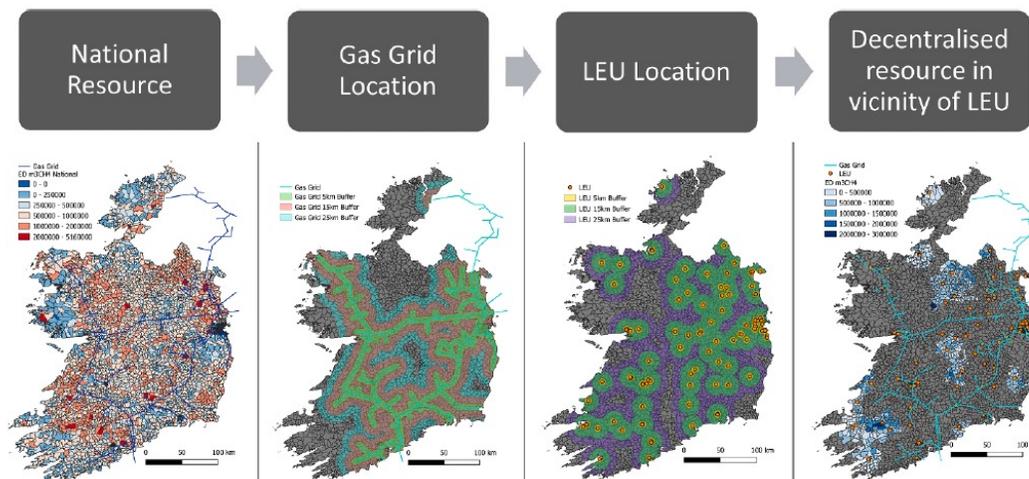
*SFI MaREI Centre, Environmental Research Institute, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland*

*Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering, School of Engineering and Architecture, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland*

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Decentralised biomass is defined as biomass in excess of 15 km from the gas grid.
- Over 17% of national on-farm biomass is decentralised but within 15 km of industry.
- On-farm biomethane resource is equivalent to 200% of industry gas use in Ireland.
- Industry heat demand in two studies can be met by biomethane produced within 2.5 km.

### GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT



**Fig. 9.** Gross biomethane resource in EDs more than 15 km from the gas grid and within 15 km of a LEU.



Figure 2: Biogas facility at Gösser brewery

Table 1: Inputs and outputs of biogas plant at brewery Gösser

Input		Output	
Brewers spent grains	13,621 t/a	Biogas produced	2.3 million m <sup>3</sup> /a
		Biogas to brewery (boiler)	3.3 million kWh/a
		Electricity (from CHP)	3.4 million kWh/a
		Heat (from CHP)	2.2 million kWh/a

# Production of food grade CO<sub>2</sub> from a biogas facility



## Production of food grade sustainable CO<sub>2</sub> from a large biogas facility

GO'CO<sub>2</sub> at The Korskro Biogas Plant, Denmark.

### Case Story

IEA Bioenergy: Task 37: 11 2020

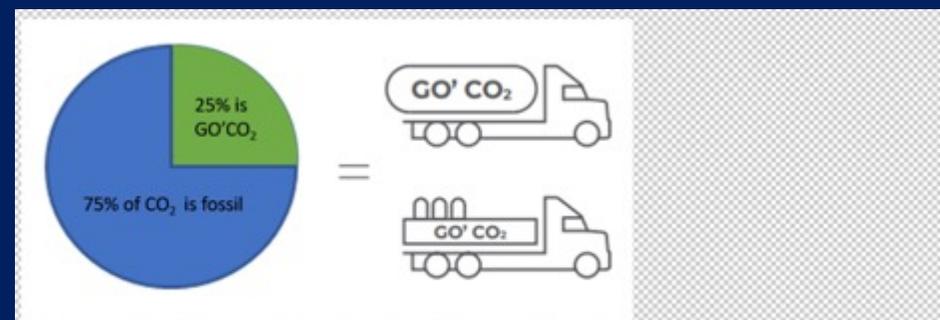


Figure 3: Up to 25 % of the CO<sub>2</sub> consumption in Denmark is covered by sustainable GO' CO<sub>2</sub>.

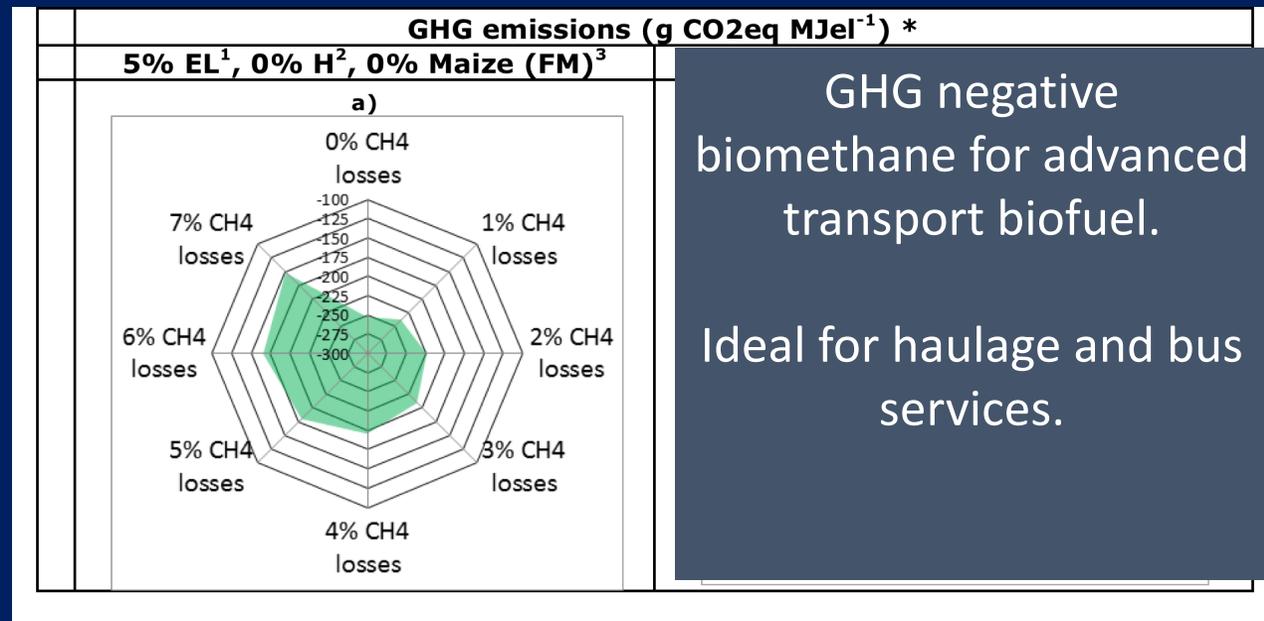
<b>Food industry</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooling food</li> <li>• Modified Atmosphere (MA) packing of minced meat</li> <li>• Supplement to soft drinks and beer</li> <li>• Stunning animals before slaughter.</li> </ul>	<b>Iron &amp; machine industry</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laser cutting</li> <li>• Welding in black steel</li> <li>• Shielding gas.</li> </ul>
<b>Healthcare sector</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laparoscopy (surgical procedure)</li> <li>• Dry ice for sending samples</li> <li>• Cooling eggs and sperm in fertility clinics.</li> </ul>	<b>Pharmaceutical industry</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pH control</li> <li>• Dry ice for the transport of stem cells</li> <li>• Controlling oxygen levels in cell culture.</li> </ul>

# Fugitive methane emissions from biogas plants



Open slurry storage emits 17.5% of methane.

At 2% methane slippage: biomethane from slurry GHG negative (-250 g CO<sub>2</sub>/MJ)



California Air Resources Board awarded a Carbon Intensity score of -255 gCO<sub>2</sub>e/MJ for a dairy waste to vehicle fuel pathway.



## Integration of biogas systems into the energy system

Technical aspects of flexible plant operation

IEA Bioenergy: Task 37

August 2020

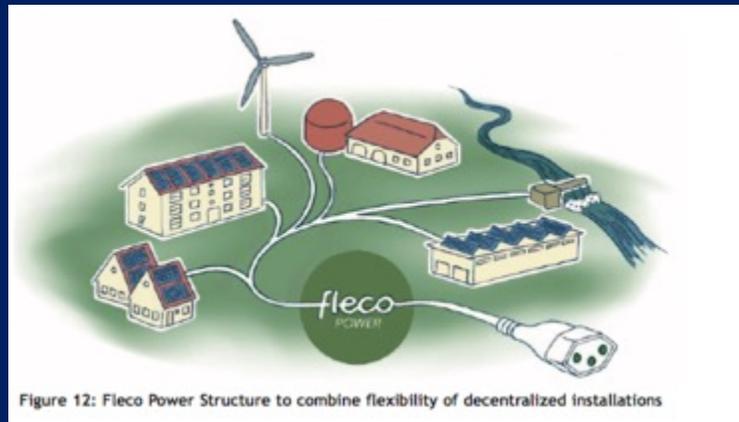


Figure 12: Fleco Power Structure to combine flexibility of decentralized installations

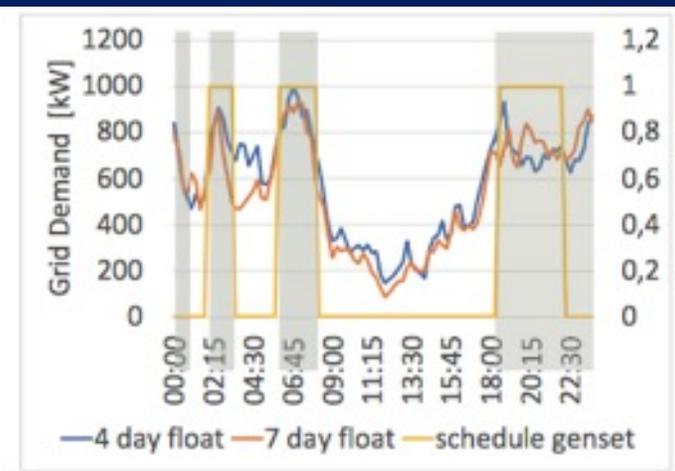


Figure 14: Example of a 1-day flexibility control time course of a biogas installation in Switzerland in Autumn. grey: peak load time windows. blue/red: Historical load curves of electricity demand. yellow: biogas CHP timetable

Bioresource Technology 216 (2016) 238–249



ELSEVIER

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Bioresource Technology

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/biortech](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/biortech)



## Modelling a demand driven biogas system for production of electricity at peak demand and for production of biomethane at other times



R. O'Shea, D. Wall\*, J.D. Murphy

MaREI Centre, Environmental Research Institute (ERI), University College Cork (UCC), Ireland  
School of Engineering, UCC, Ireland

### HIGHLIGHTS

- A biogas model incorporating production of electricity and biomethane is proposed.
- Demand driven biogas, facilitates intermittent renewable electricity.
- A demand driven biogas system can ramp up hourly electricity by a factor of 4.5.
- The biogas model suggests sending 21% of biogas to electricity and 79% to upgrading.
- The grass silage should be fed 127 min in advance of producing electricity.

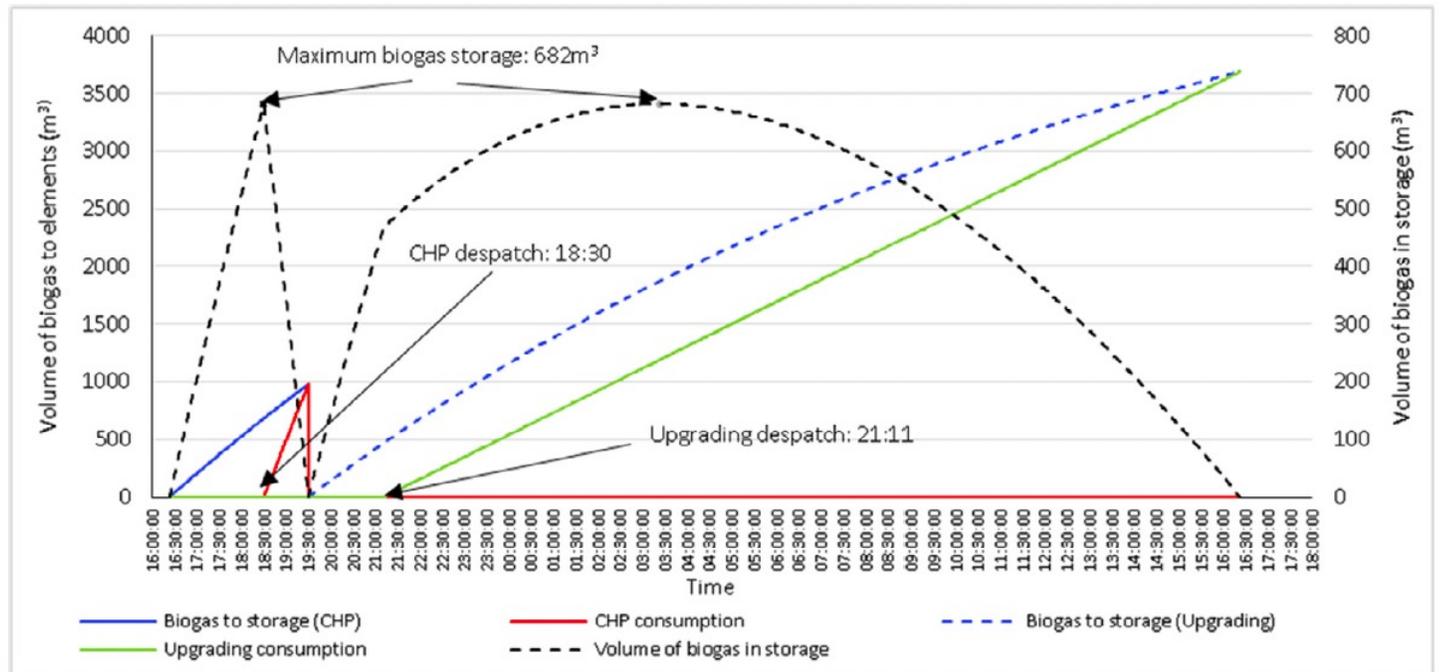
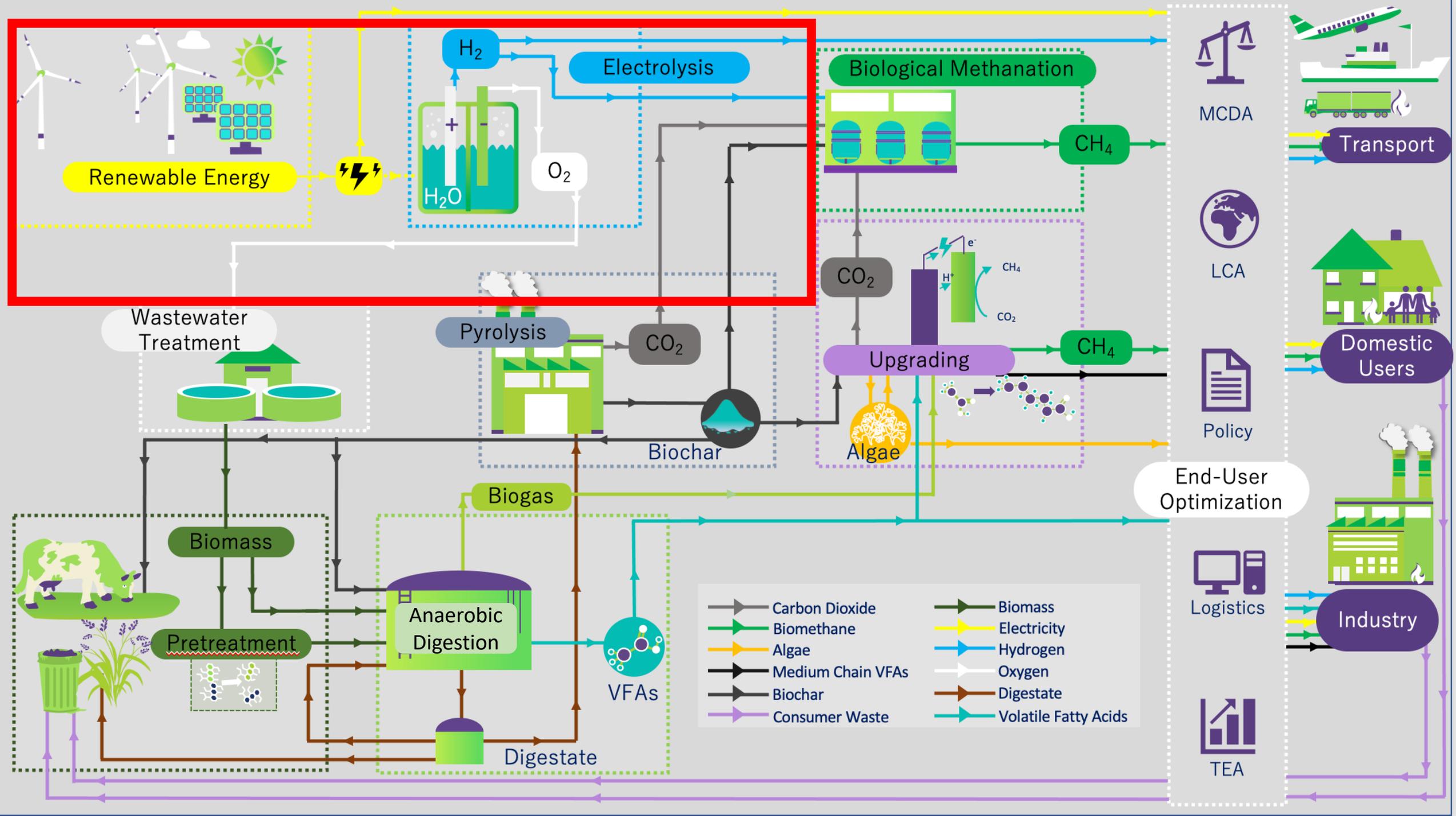


Fig. 4. Example of biogas flows in pulse fed reactor. Feedstock is grass silage, organic loading rate of 2 kg VS/m<sup>3</sup>/day, reactor volume of 4000m<sup>3</sup>.

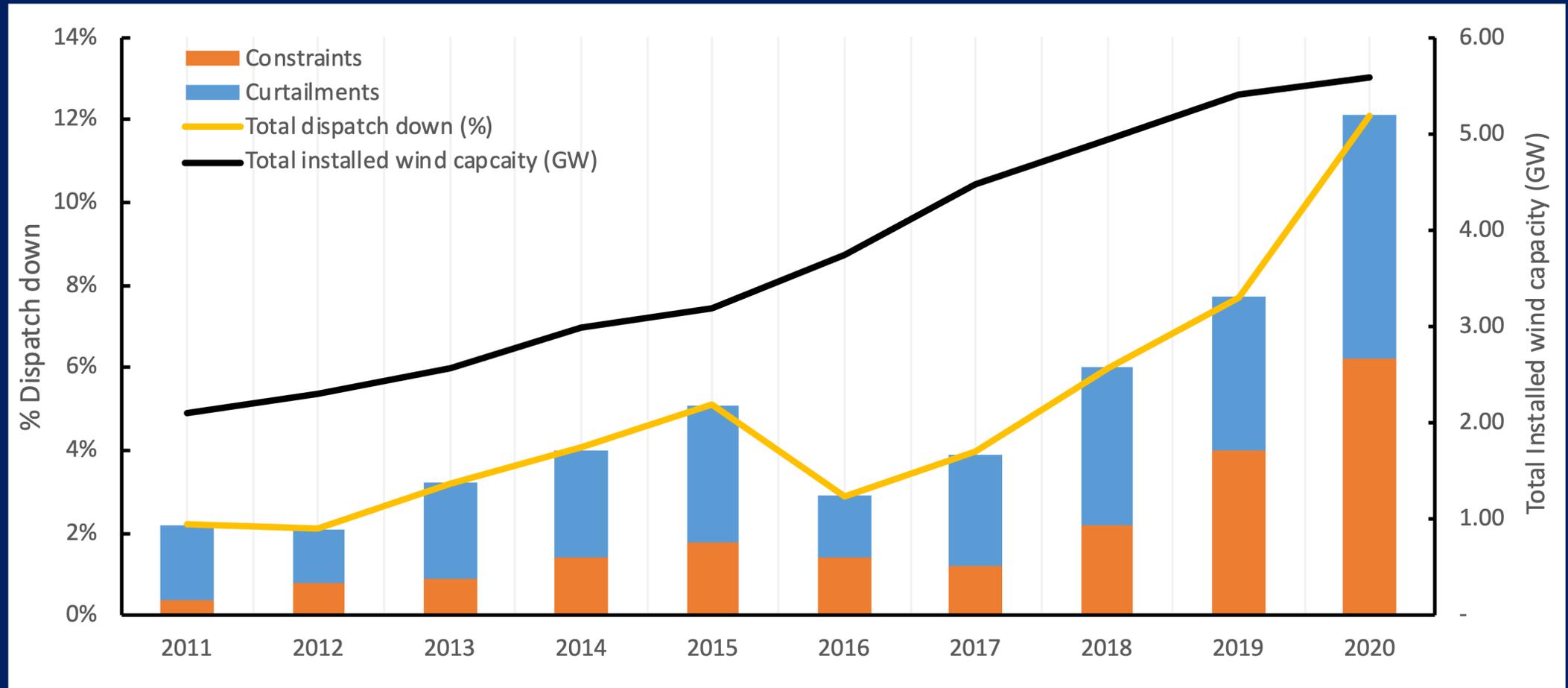




$$SNSP = \frac{\text{Wind generation} + \text{Imports}}{\text{System demand} + \text{Exports}}$$

- In the EU and US, up to twice as much energy is sourced from gas grid as electricity grid.
- Ireland has c. 8 GWe electrical capacity at 40% RES-E
- Ireland's electricity grid has already experienced and sustained some of the highest system nonsynchronous penetration (SNSP) in any national electricity grid
- Ireland targets a further 7 GWe of offshore wind by 2030 leading to 80% RES-E.
- Target of 2GW hydrogen
- Dublin Declaration 260 GW offshore wind by 2050
- This level of intermittency on an island grid is extremely challenging and may lead to periods of over production, negative pricing, instability and requirements for storage.

# Yearly breakdown of dispatch-down levels into constrain and curtailment on island of Ireland



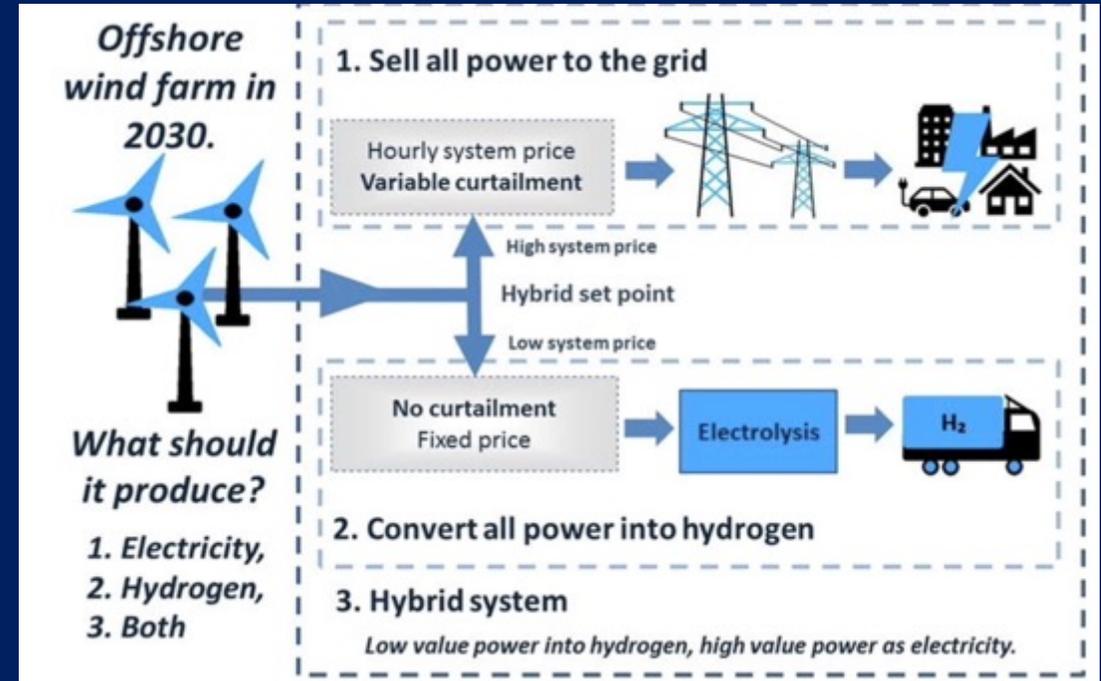



Applied Energy  
 Volume 265, 1 May 2020, 114732

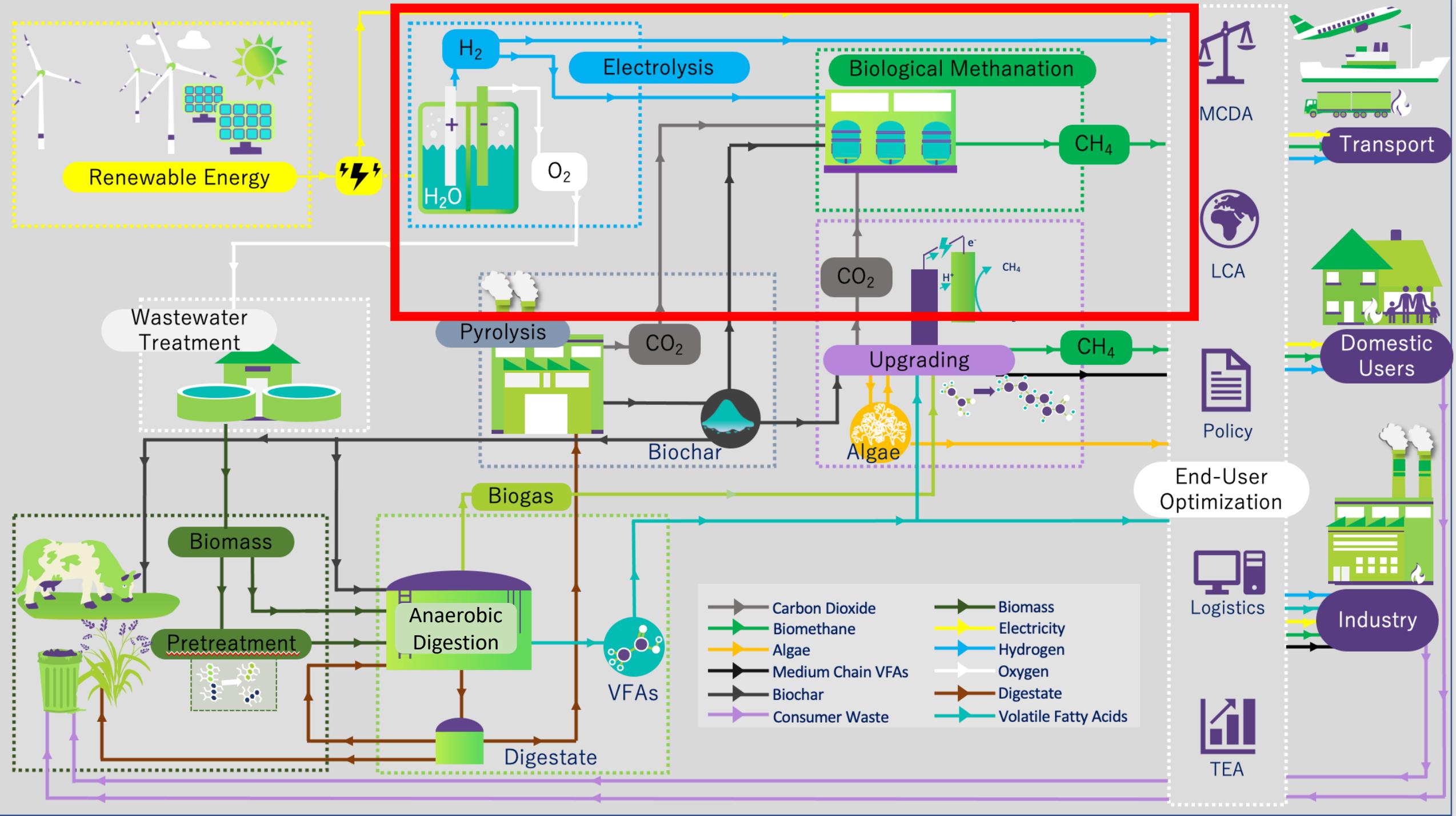
## Hydrogen from offshore wind: Investor perspective on the profitability of a hybrid system including for curtailment

Shane McDonagh <sup>a, b, c, d</sup>, Shorif Ahmed <sup>a, d</sup>, Cian Desmond <sup>a, b</sup>, Jerry D Murphy <sup>a, b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> MaREI Centre, Environmental Research Institute, University College Cork, Ireland  
<sup>b</sup> School of Engineering, University College Cork, Ireland  
<sup>c</sup> Gas Networks Ireland, Cork, Ireland  
<sup>d</sup> Loughborough University London, London, England, United Kingdom



- Levelised wind farm cost of 4.23c/kWh<sub>e</sub> gives levelised H<sub>2</sub> cost of 11.3c/kWh (€3.77/kg).
- Round cycle electricity to H<sub>2</sub> back to electricity (at 60% electrical efficiency) equates to 18c/kWh<sub>e</sub> which is expensive
- As a transport fuel, 11.3c/kWh equates to ca. €1.13 per L diesel equivalent. Even better if used in a fuel cell (greater efficiency than IC engine 50% vs 40%), equates to ca. €0.90/L per L diesel equivalent





Audi E-gas at Wertle, Germany - Catalytic Sabatier process



Food waste  
biomethane



Production of  
hydrogen in 6MW  
electrolyser



Production of  
methane via  
Sabatier



1000 Audi NGVs

Bioresource Technology 225 (2017) 308–315



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Bioresource Technology

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/biortech](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/biortech)



Study of the performance of a thermophilic biological methanation system



Amita Jacob Guneratnam<sup>a</sup>, Eoin Ahern<sup>a</sup>, Jamie A. FitzGerald<sup>a,d</sup>, Stephen A. Jackson<sup>d</sup>, Ao Xia<sup>c</sup>, Alan D.W. Dobson<sup>d</sup>, Jerry D. Murphy<sup>a,b,\*</sup>



## Reactor performance

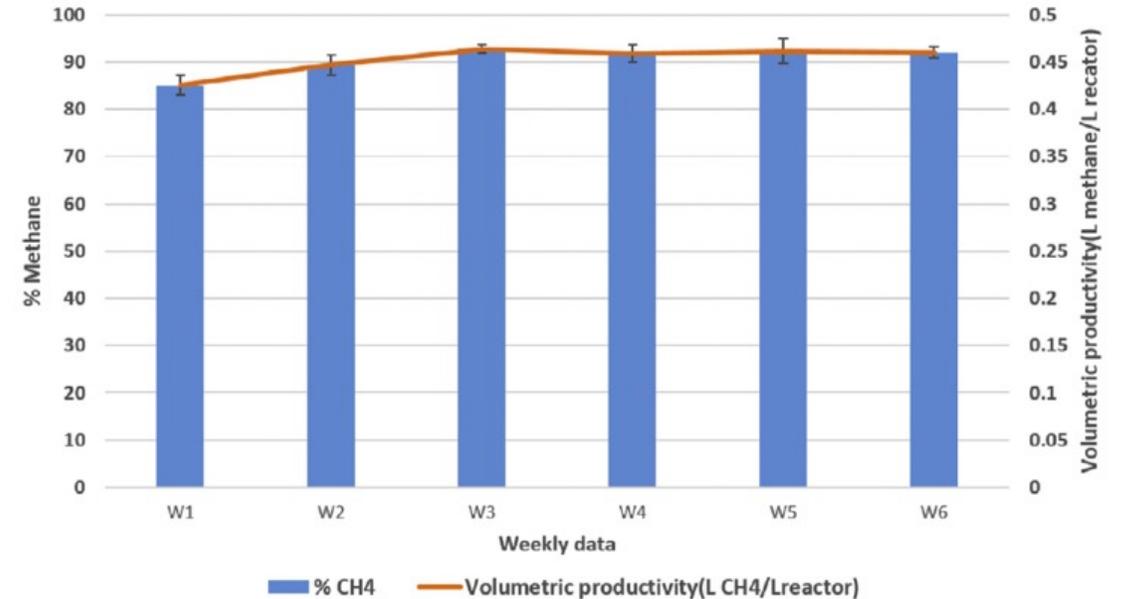


Fig. 3. Methane composition and volumetric productivity at 65 °C (fresh inoculum) for 24 h.

*Methanothermobacter Wolfeii*



Applied Energy 235 (2019) 1061–1071



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Applied Energy

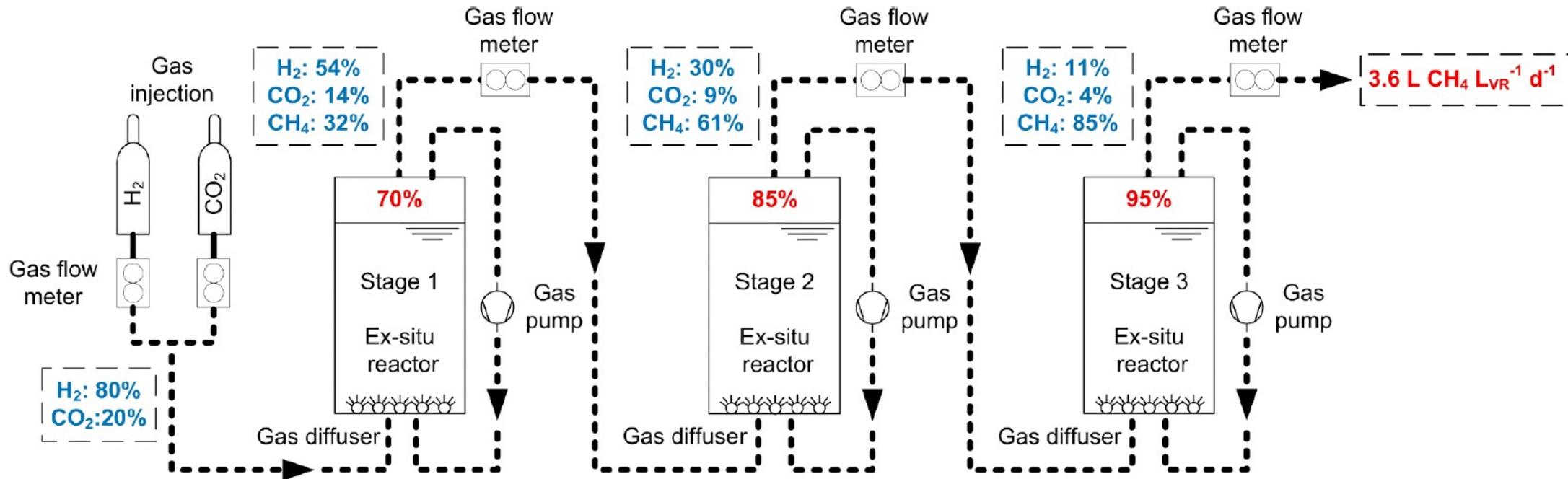
journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/apenergy](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/apenergy)



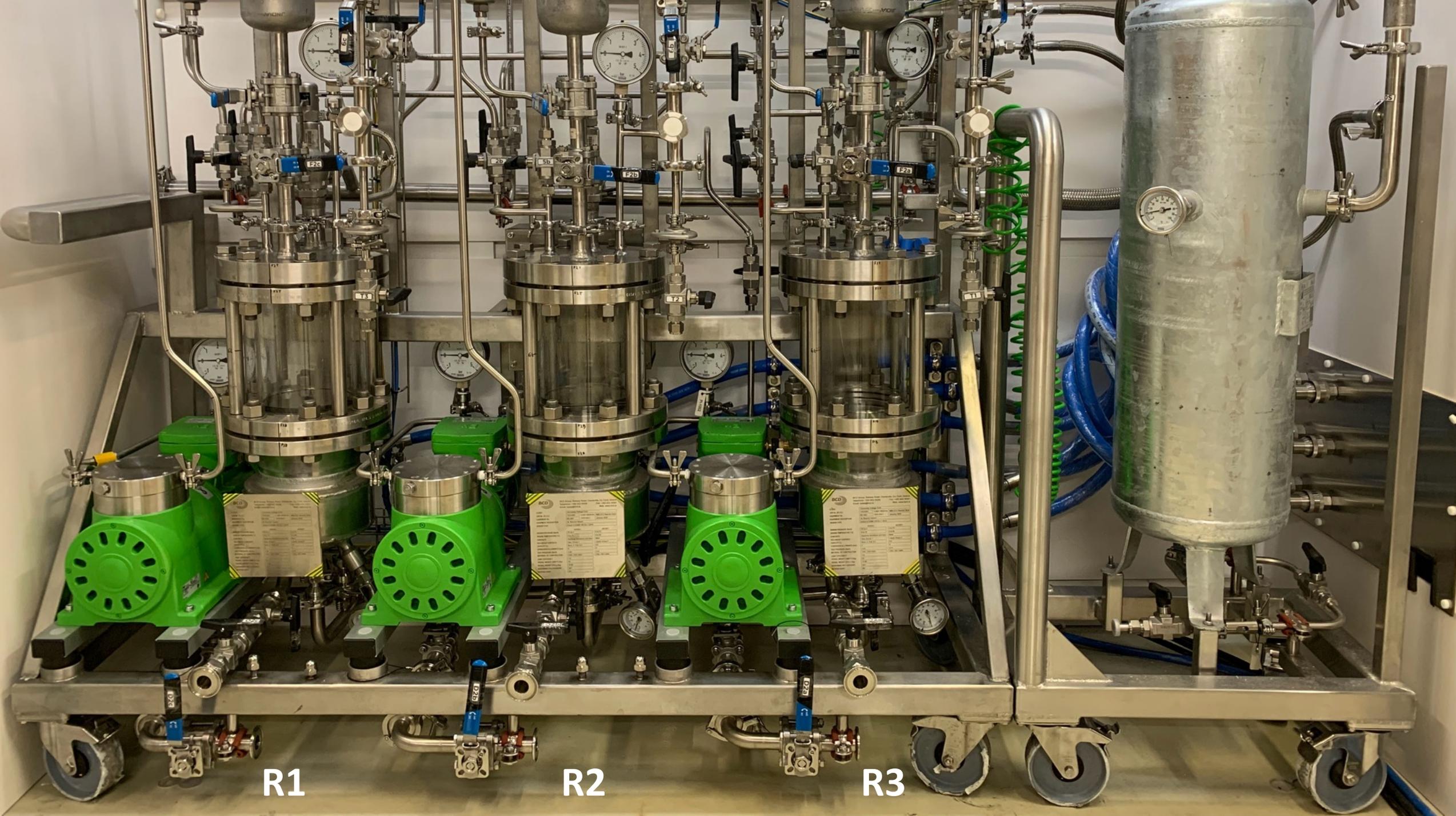
## Biological methanation: Strategies for in-situ and ex-situ upgrading in anaerobic digestion

M.A. Voelklein\*, Davis Rusmanis, J.D. Murphy

MAREI Centre, Environmental Research Institute (ERI), University College Cork (UCC), Ireland  
School of Engineering, UCC, Ireland



**Fig. 6.** Theoretic model and approach for a full-scale three-stage sequential ex-situ methanation unit at a methane formation rate of  $3.6 \text{ L CH}_4 \text{ L}_{\text{VR}}^{-1} \text{ d}^{-1}$ . The conversion of carbon dioxide to methane corresponds to 70% (after stage 1), 85% (after stage 2) and 95% (after stage 3).



R1

R2

R3

# Upgrading biogas to biomethane in biological methanation systems

- The final output  $\text{CH}_4$  concentration reached **97.1%**.
- Increase of  $\text{H}_2$  loading rate decreased the output  $\text{CH}_4$  concentration.
- Short periods of intermittent gas supply did not affect the biomethanation performance.

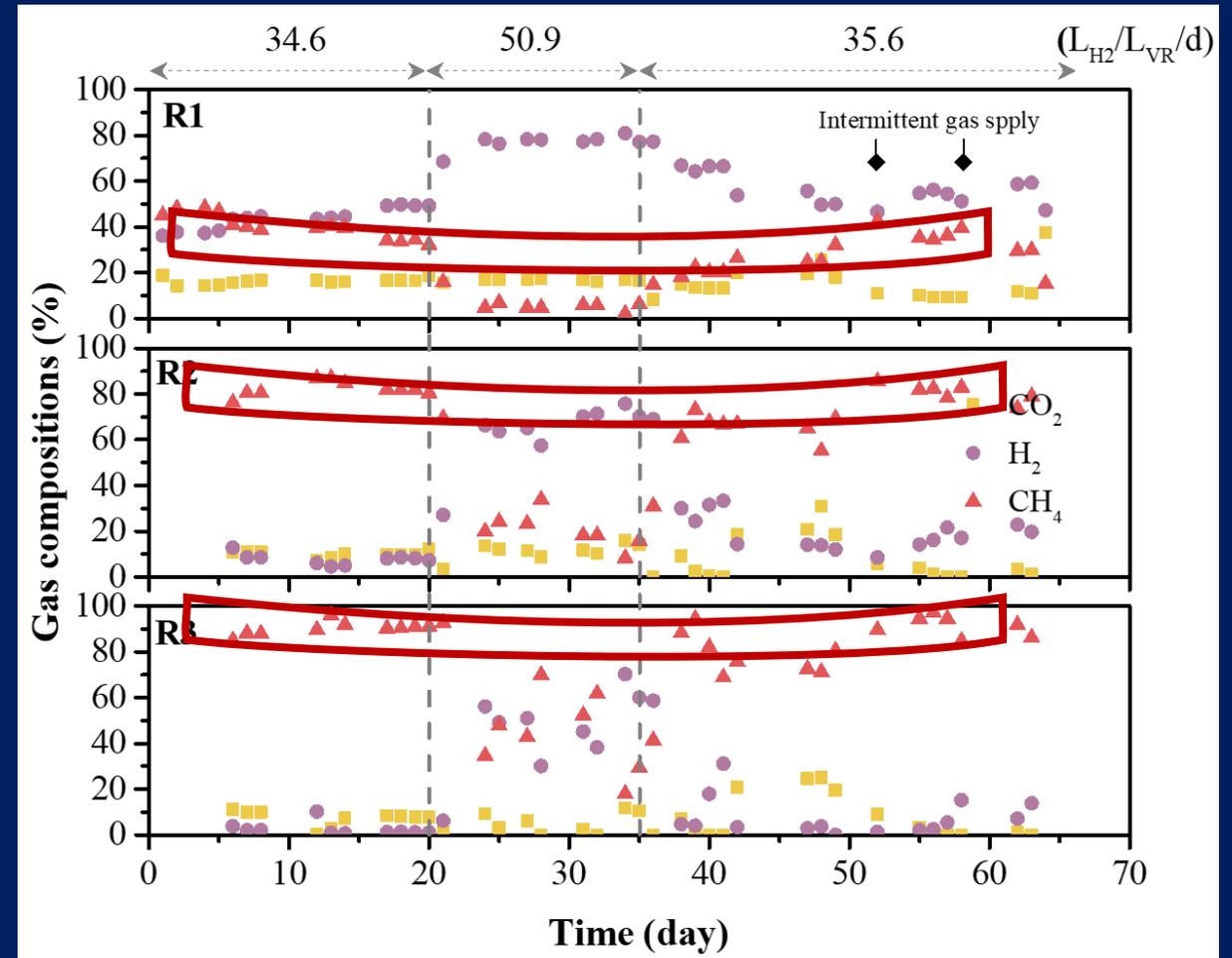
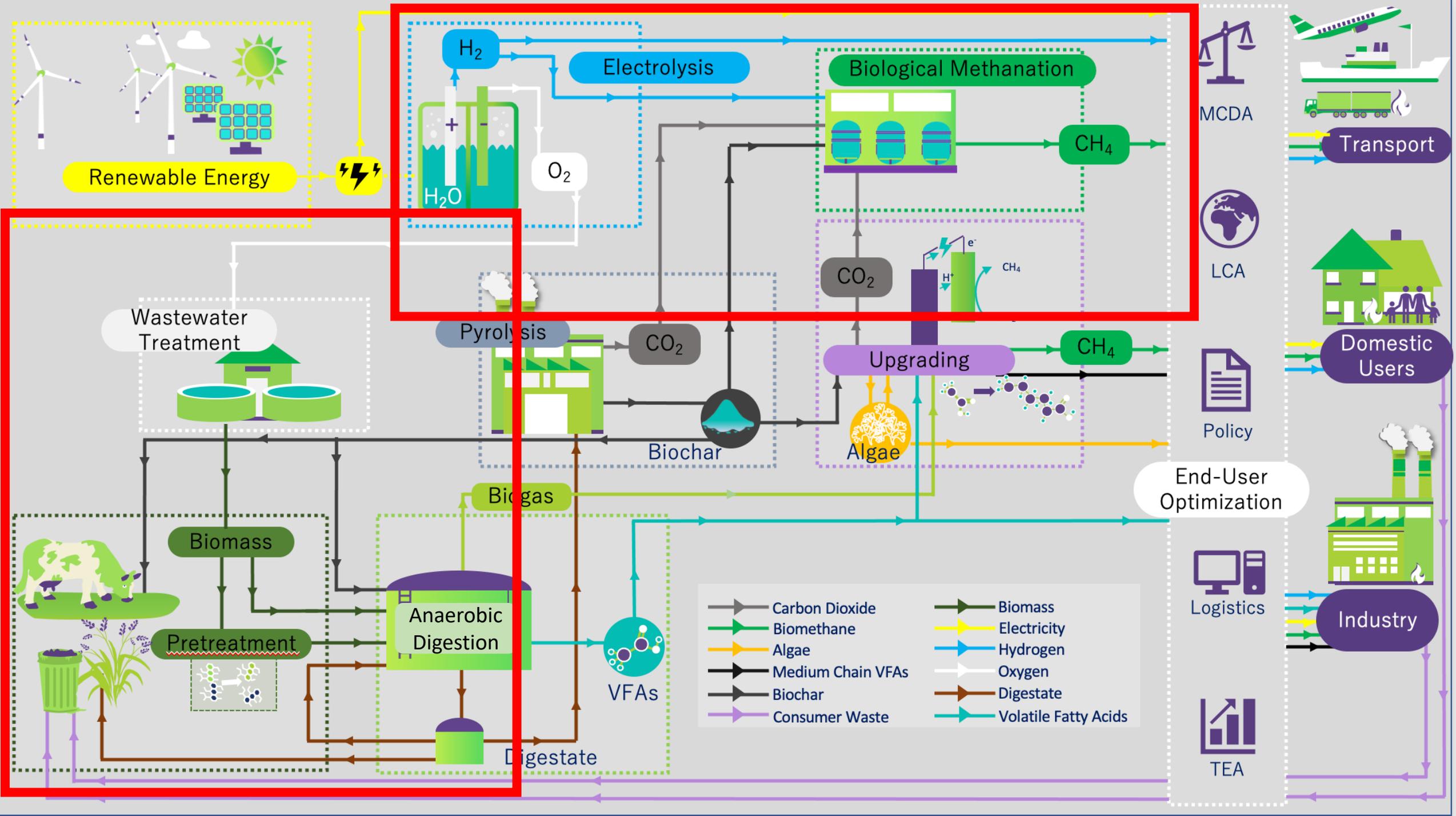


Fig. Gas compositions of the reactors in sequence (R1-R2-R3).

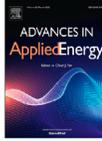


Advances in Applied Energy 8 (2022) 100109

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Advances in Applied Energy

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/adapen](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/adapen)



## Operation of a circular economy, energy, environmental system at a wastewater treatment plant

Davis Rusmanis<sup>a,b</sup>, Yan Yang<sup>a,b</sup>, Richen Lin<sup>a,b,c</sup>, David M. Wall<sup>a,b</sup>, Jerry D. Murphy<sup>a,b,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup>SFI MaREI Centre for Energy, Climate and Marine, Environmental Research Institute, University College Cork, Ireland

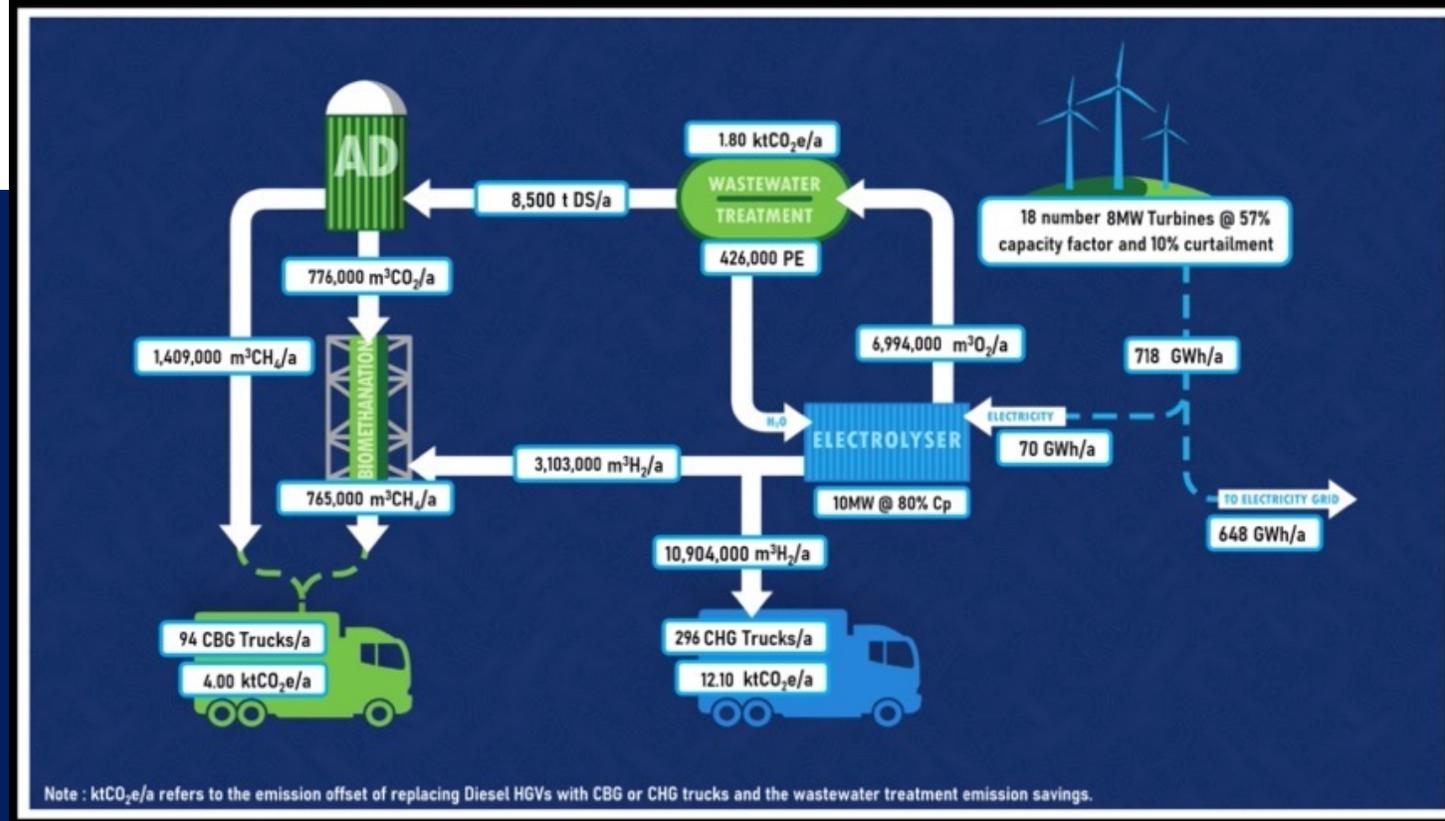
<sup>b</sup>Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering, School of Engineering and Architecture, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland

<sup>c</sup>Key Laboratory of Energy Thermal Conversion and Control of Ministry of Education, School of Energy and Environment, Southeast University, Nanjing 210096, China



## Highlights

- Curtailed electricity from a 144 MW offshore wind farm can supply a 10MW electrolyser.
- A 10 MW electrolyser can supply O<sub>2</sub> to a 426,400 person wastewater treatment facility.
- Only 22% of the H<sub>2</sub> is required for methanation of biogas from sludge digestion.
- Pure O<sub>2</sub> aeration can result in a 40% reduction in emissions at the treatment facility.
- Excess H<sub>2</sub> and biomethane could together fuel 390 heavy goods vehicles.





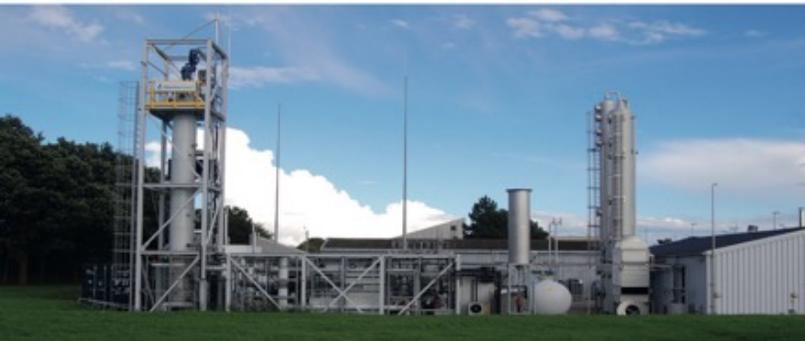
IEA Bioenergy  
Technology Collaboration Programme

## Integration of biogas systems into the energy system

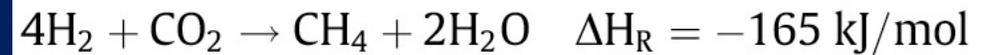
Technical aspects of flexible plant operation

IEA Bioenergy: Task 37

August 2020



### 1 MW BioCat Plant in Avedøre (DK)



# Potential to incorporate electrolysers at existing anaerobic digestion facilities

Applied Energy 235 (2019) 1061–1071

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect



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## Biological methanation: Strategies for in-situ and ex-situ upgrading in anaerobic digestion

M.A. Voelklein\*, Davis Rusmanis, J.D. Murphy

MaREI Centre, Environmental Research Institute (ERI), University College Cork (UCC), Ireland  
School of Engineering, UCC, Ireland



**ELECTROLYSER**

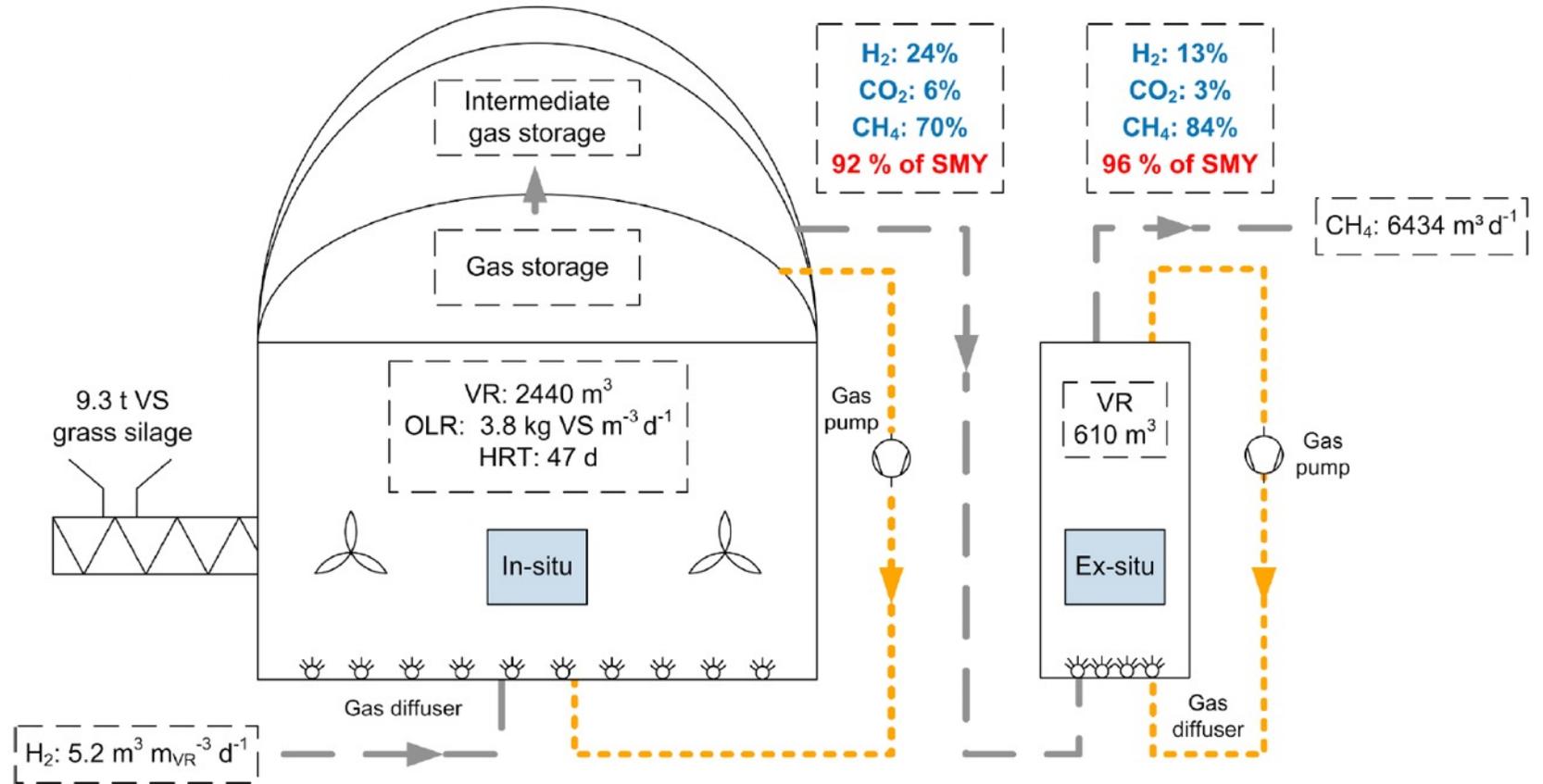


Fig. 7. Hybrid concept of sequential in-situ and ex-situ methanation with triple gas storage membrane on top of in-situ digester (SMY: specific methane yield, VR: reactor volume, OLR: organic loading rate, HRT: hydraulic retention time, VS: volatile solids).

# Greening the gas grid in Denmark

Denmark intends decarbonising the gas grid with 72PJ of renewable gas by 2035. Addition of P2G systems could see a resource of 100 PJ, in advance of gas demand.

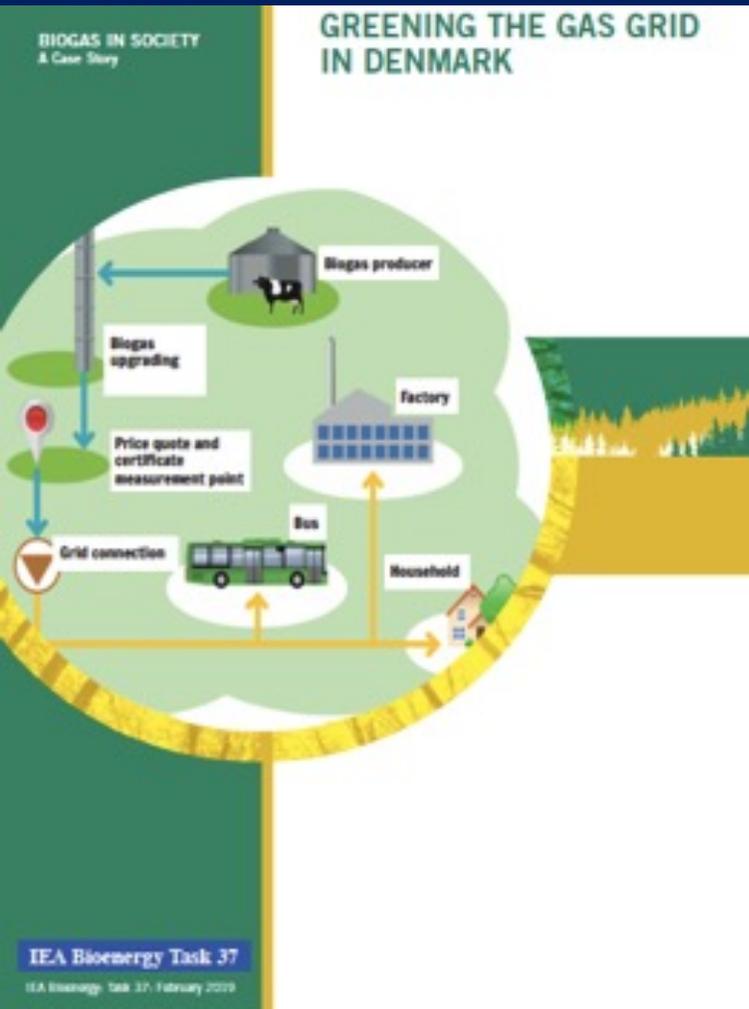


Figure 3: Holsted Biogas Plant, producing 20.7 million m<sup>3</sup> gas / year. Source: Nature Energy

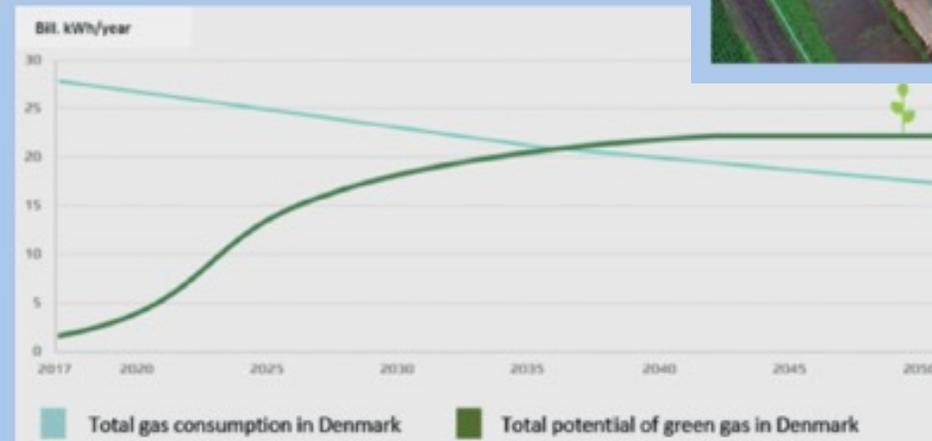
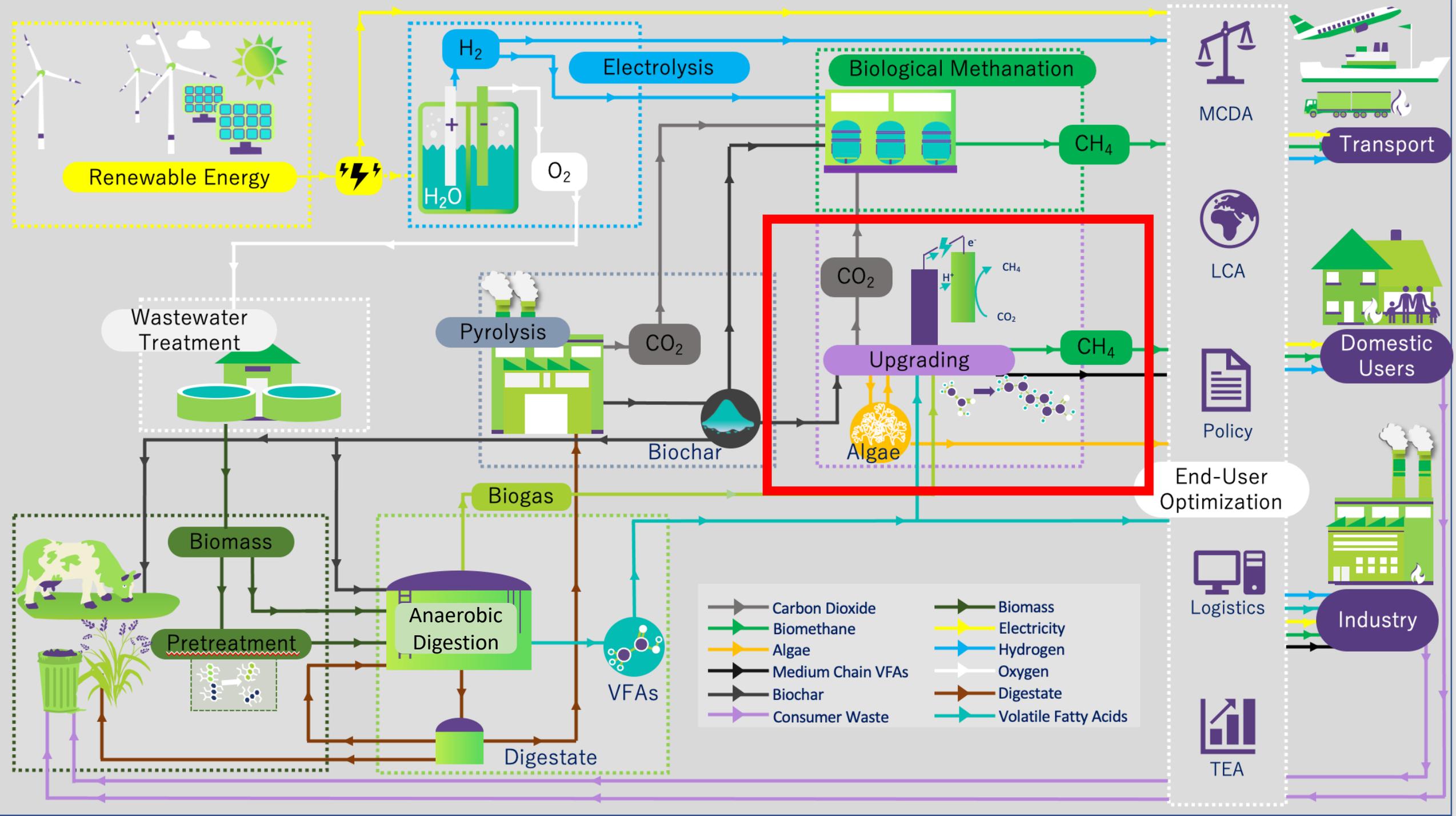


Figure 1: Gas consumption and potential of green gas in Denmark (from Green Gas Denmark)



Biotechnology Advances 37 (2019) 107444

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Biotechnology Advances

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Research review paper

How to optimise photosynthetic biogas upgrading: a perspective on system design and microalgae selection

Archishman Bose<sup>a,b</sup>, Richen Lin<sup>a,b,\*</sup>, Karthik Rajendran<sup>c,\*</sup>, Richard O'Shea<sup>a,b</sup>, Ao Xia<sup>d</sup>, Jerry D. Murphy<sup>a,b,\*</sup><sup>a</sup> Environmental Research Institute, MaREI Centre, University College Cork, Cork, T23 XE10, Ireland<sup>b</sup> School of Engineering, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland<sup>c</sup> Department of Environmental Science, SRM University-AP, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh 522 502, India<sup>d</sup> Key Laboratory of Low-grade Energy Utilization Technologies and Systems, Chongqing University, Chongqing 400044, China

Chemical Engineering Journal 437 (2022) 134988

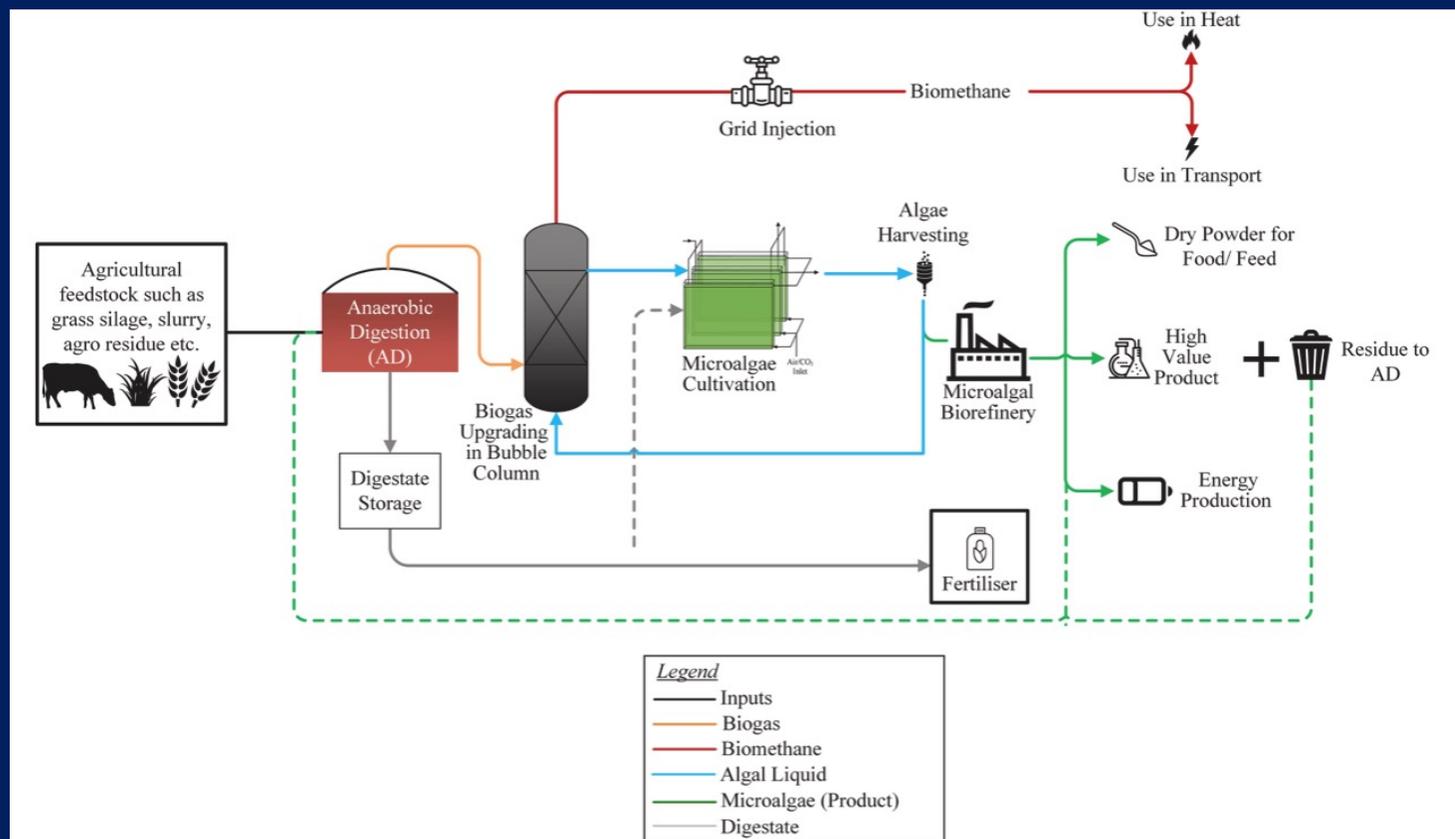
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Chemical Engineering Journal

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/cej](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/cej)

Optimisation and performance prediction of photosynthetic biogas upgrading using a bubble column

Archishman Bose<sup>a,b,c</sup>, Richard O'Shea<sup>a,b,d,\*</sup>, Richen Lin<sup>a,b,d</sup>, Jerry D. Murphy<sup>a,b,d</sup><sup>a</sup> Environmental Research Institute, MaREI Centre, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland<sup>b</sup> School of Engineering and Architecture, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland<sup>c</sup> Process and Chemical Engineering, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland<sup>d</sup> Civil, Structural, and Environmental Engineering, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland

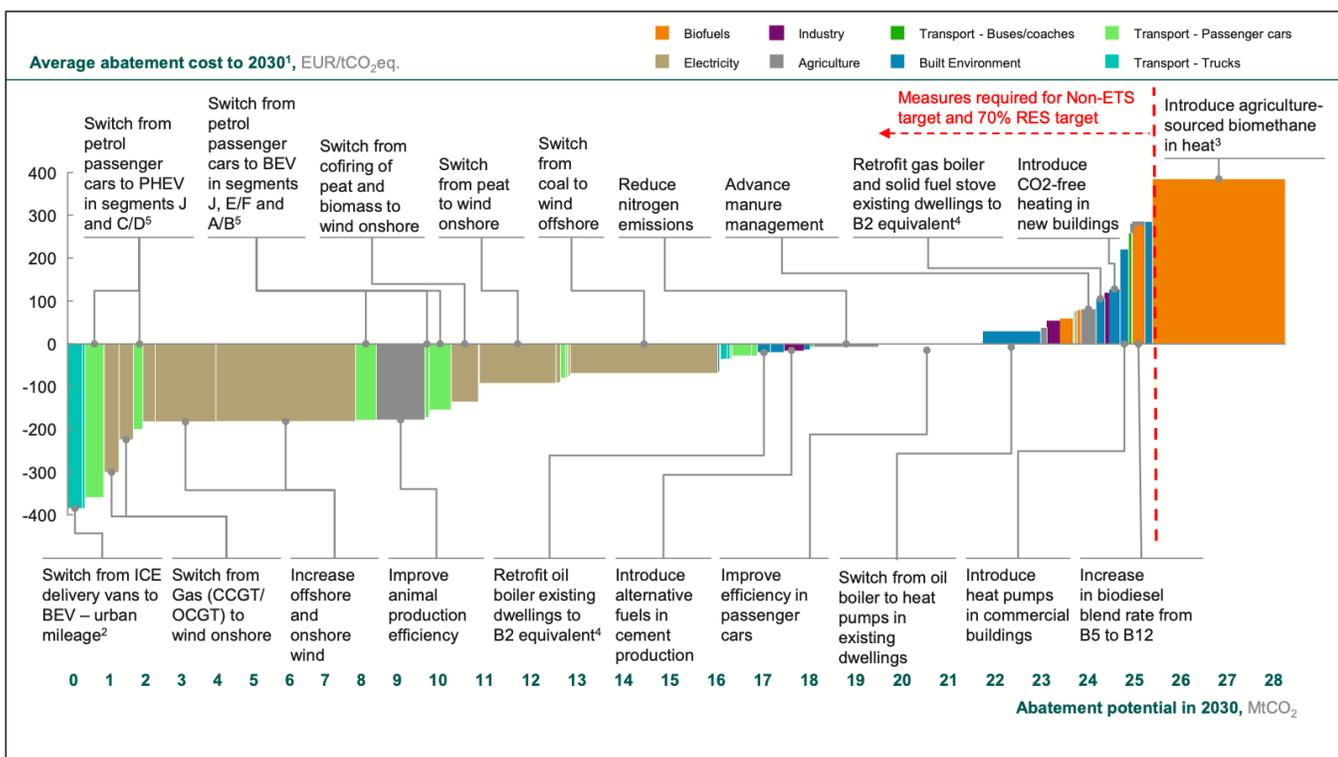
# CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2019

To Tackle Climate Breakdown



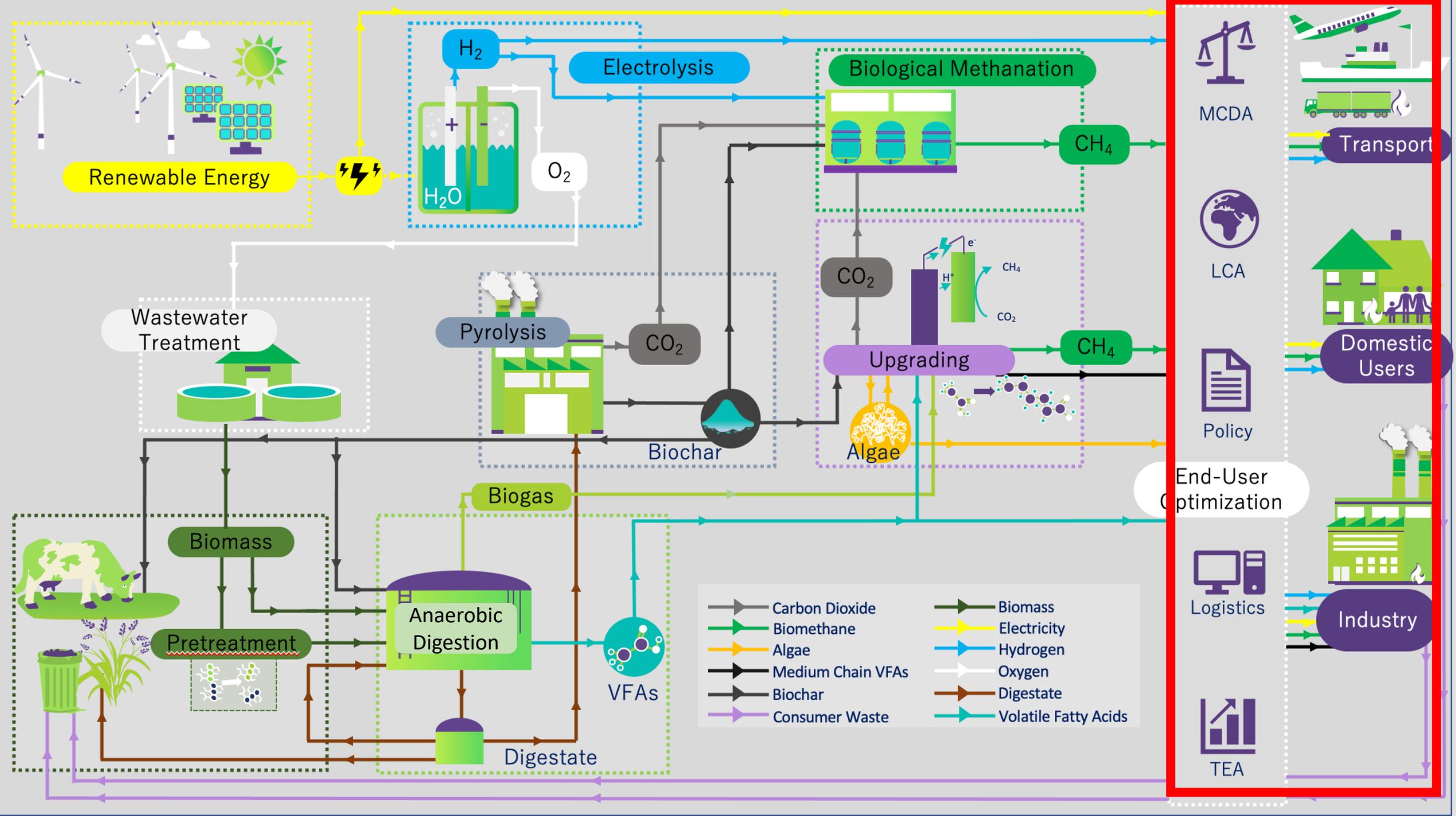
Riailtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

### Figure 4.2 Marginal Abatement Cost Curve for Ireland to 2030



Note: The horizontal axis shows the abatement potential of the technology switches. The vertical axis displays the average abatement cost as EUR/tCO<sub>2</sub> for each switch. The CO<sub>2</sub> price of the EU ETS is included in the cost of measures for industry and power and heat



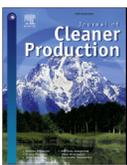


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## Assessing decarbonisation pathways in the food and beverage sector: A multi-criteria decision analysis approach

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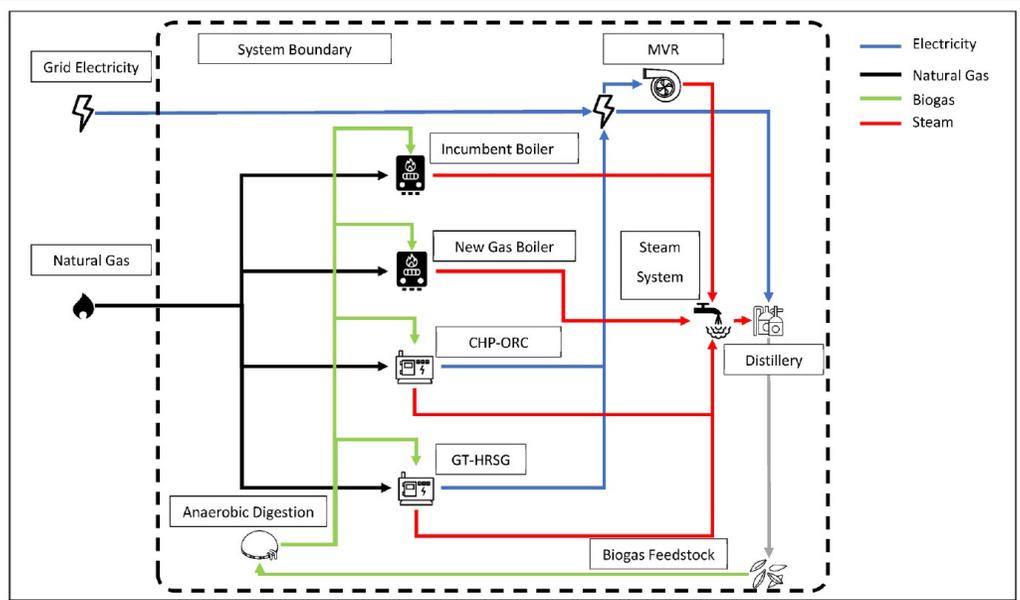


Fig. 2. Energy system schematic. CHP: Combined heat and power. ORC: Organic rankine Cycle. GT: Gas turbine. Hrsg: Heat recovery steam generator. MVR: Mechanical vapour recompression.

Table 2  
Decarbonisation pathways.

Pathway	Rationale	Component Technologies						Pathway abbreviation
		New Boilers	CHP ORC <sup>a</sup>	GT HRSG <sup>b</sup>	Anaerobic Digestion	Heat Recovery	38 kV	
1	Efficient steam	X						Boiler
2	Power generation		X					CHP ORC
3	Power generation			X				CHP GT
4	Heat recovery					X	X	38 kV – MVR
5	Biogas				X			Biogas only
6	Efficient steam	X	X					Boiler – CHP ORC
7	Power generation							
8	Efficient steam	X		X				Boiler – CHP GT
9	Power generation				X			Boiler – Biogas
10	Efficient steam	X						
11	Biogas					X	X	Boiler – 38 kV- MVR
12	Power generation		X					CHP ORC – Biogas
13	Heat recovery				X			CHP ORC – MVR
14	Power generation			X				CHP GT – MVR
15	Heat recovery					X	X	38 kV MVR – Biogas
16	Biogas				X			
17	Efficient steam	X	X			X		Boiler – CHP ORC – MVR
18	Power generation	X		X		X		Boiler – CHP GT– MVR
19	Heat recovery							
20	Efficient steam	X			X			Boiler – 38 kV – MVR – Biogas
21	Power import							
22	Heat recovery					X	X	Boiler – CHP ORC – Biogas
23	Biogas							Boiler – CHP GT – Biogas
24	Efficient Steam	X	X		X			Boiler – CHP ORC – Biogas
25	Power generation	X	X	X	X	X		Boiler – CHP ORC – MVR – Biogas
26	Heat recovery					X		Boiler – CHP GT - MVR – Biogas
27	Biogas							

<sup>a</sup> CHP ORC: Combined heat and power organic Rankine cycle.  
<sup>b</sup> GT HRSG: Gas turbine with a heat recovery steam generator.

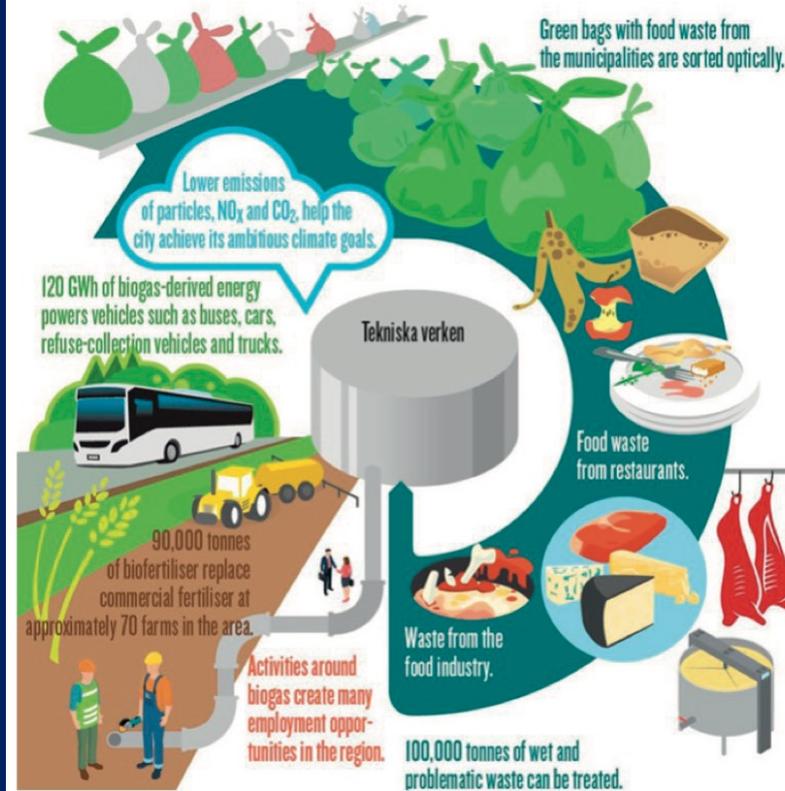
To achieve GHG emissions savings greater than 67%, biogas from the anaerobic digestion of distillery feed products is required.



**IEA Bioenergy**  
Technology Collaboration Programme

## Perspectives on biomethane as a transport fuel within a circular economy, energy, and environmental system

IEA Bioenergy: Task 37  
December 2021



**Figure 27.** Illustration of biogas solutions in and around Linköping, where the municipally owned utility Tekniska Verken has a central position.

*Illustration: Mattias Schläger.*



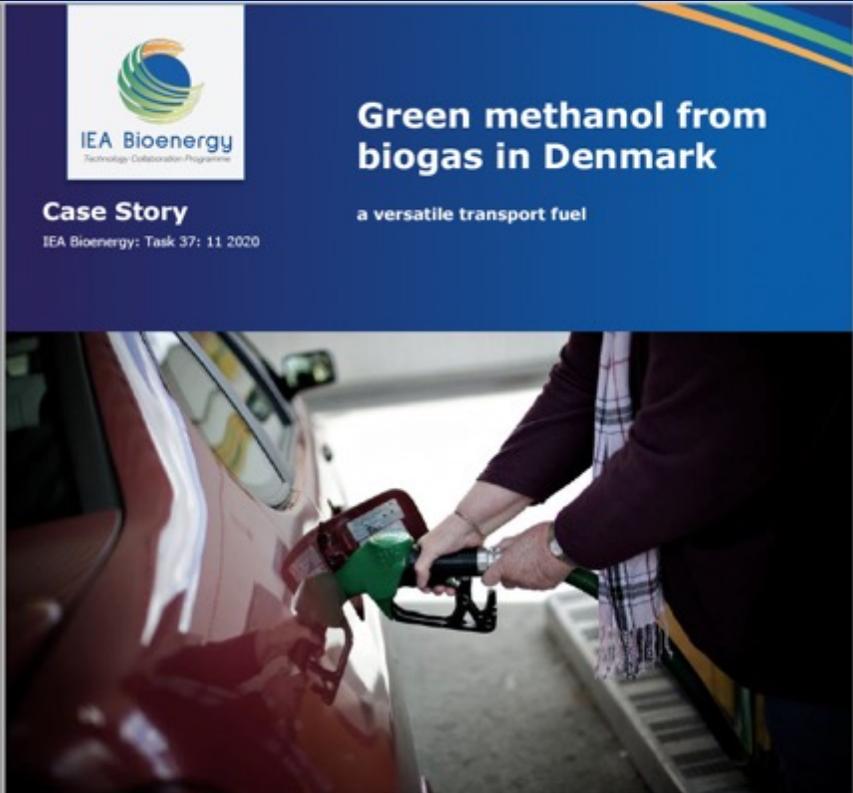
**Figure 28.** A truck filling liquid biomethane, at a filling station that has been established as part of the cooperation between Tekniska Verken and Toyota Material Handling Manufacturing Sweden. *Source: Svensk Biogas*



**Figure 31.** Double decker buses fueled by biomethane in Bristol; photo from Jon Craig, Jon Craig Photography, courtesy of JBP Bristol.



**Figure 34.** A long distance coach powered by liquid biomethane operating the Stockholm-Oslo route. This is based on collaboration between Scania, mobility provider Flixbus and gas supplier Gasum. *Scania CV AB.*



**IEA Bioenergy**  
Technology Collaboration Programme

## Green methanol from biogas in Denmark

a versatile transport fuel

**Case Story**  
IEA Bioenergy: Task 37: 11 2020

Figure 1: 100 Danish petrol cars will from September 2020 to September 2022 run on CO<sub>2</sub>-friendly bio-methanol from biogas, as part of the project "Biomethanol M85 at Danish fuel stations," supported by the Danish Energy Agency's development program EUDP.

### Green methanol and grey methanol

Methanol is the simplest alcohol with a chemical formula CH<sub>3</sub>OH. It is a light, volatile, colourless, flammable liquid with a specific alcohol odor; it is highly toxic and unfit for consumption. Methanol has many uses (Figure 2) and is versatile as a fuel source with an energy value of 16MJ/l or 20GJ/t. "Grey" methanol, produced using natural gas as a feedstock, has emissions similar to other fossil fuels such as liquefied natural gas (LNG) and marine diesel oil (MDO). Global methanol production currently amounts to about 80 million metric tonnes per year. "Green" methanol (or bio-methanol) may be produced via biological pathways (anaerobic digestion), thermo-chemical pathways (gasification) or electrofuel pathways (power to gas) as indicated in Figure 3. As a renewable fuel bio-methanol has a much lower global warming potential than fossil fuels and considerably lower greenhouse gas emissions when compared to methanol from fossil fuels (grey methanol) on a whole life cycle basis.

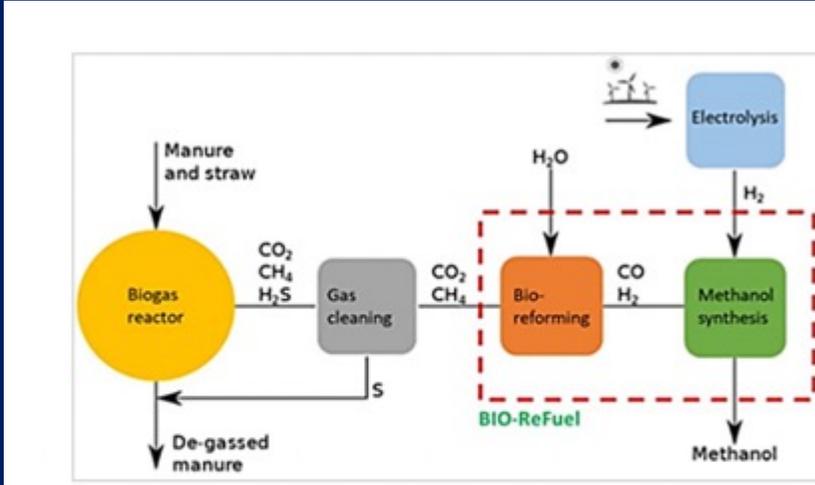


Figure 4: The process flow of bio-methanol production  
Source: Lemvig Biogas

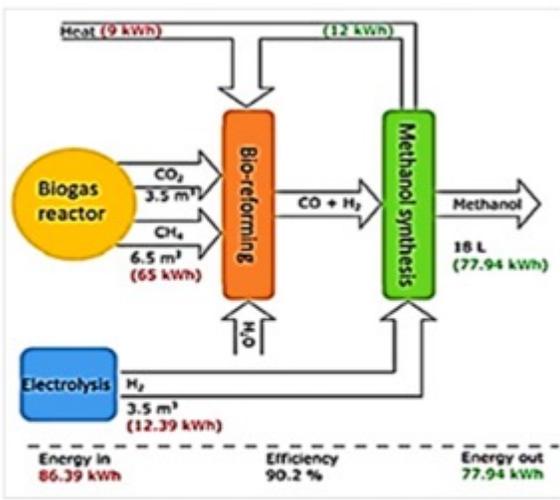
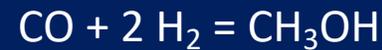


Figure 5: Energy balance  
Source: Lemvig Biogas



*Thank you*

