



GIZ Project: Supporting sustainable biomass production and use in Ukraine and Russia

Press-release

Ukrainian rape seed producers at risk to lose access to EU biofuels market

First Greenhouse Gas calculations show that Ukrainian farmers will not reach the emission reduction target set by the EU

The first pilot calculations show that Ukrainian rape seed producers have to improve their greenhouse gas performance in order to maintain access to the EU biofuels market. The performance levels do not reach the current EU emission reduction targets. The research commissioned by the German Development Cooperation GIZ marks the beginning of a series of workshops in Ukraine to train stakeholders in the EU's sustainability requirements and greenhouse gas calculations. The project is jointly implemented with the Kiev Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting (IER).

The EU has set targets for the share of renewable energies in its energy mix: 20 per cent of the overall energy consumption and 10 per cent of fuel in the transport sector by 2020 (EU Directive 2009/28/EC). Currently, only about 50 per cent of the vegetable oil used in the EU is grown on EU fields. This offers net exporters of agricultural commodities, like Ukraine an attractive market. The demand will be of particular relevance for rapeseed from Ukraine.

Producers must, however, prove compliance with the Directive's sustainability criteria. Otherwise they cannot enter the EU biofuels market regulated by the Directive. Alongside compliance with other environmental criteria, biofuels must emit at least 35 per cent less greenhouse gases than the fossil fuels they replace. This target will rise to 50 per cent in 2017 and to 60 per cent in 2018 (the latter for biofuels installations that started production on or after Jan 2017).

Until 2017, farmers do not have to perform calculations using actual farm data as they can use standardised emission values (so called default values) for rape seed provided in the Directive. After 2017, when the emissions reduction target rises to 50 per cent, the default value can no longer be used because it does not reach 50 per cent emission savings. Farmers should therefore operate a management system that allows the collection and control of the actual data needed for the calculation.

In the pilots test, farmers with high productivity reached 37 per cent emissions reduction, little above the 35 per cent target. Farmers with low productivity only achieved 19 per cent. If the actual emissions from Ukrainian rape seed are too high to reach the 50 per cent reduction target in 2017, farmers must act and reduce their carbon footprint. The test results call for strategies to improve management of emission hot spots like diesel consumption, fertilizer and pesticide use. Improved input management will also help producers curb production costs through efficiency gains.

Calculations were also performed on Ukrainian corn. The results are more promising: In all cases producers reached the 35 per cent target and only few missed the 50 per cent target. This means that farmers with similar performance levels are safe at least until 2017.

The actual farm data was provided through farmers (IER) and through a representative sample of the Ukrainian Agribusiness Club (UCAB)/Agribenchmark data base. The Heidelberg Institute for Energy and Environmental Research (IFEU) performed the calculations using methodology compliant with the Directive (BioGrace). Potential emissions from land use change were assumed to be zero. The emissions savings were calculated using the Directive's respective default values for emissions from transport and processing.

Further Information and Contact

GIZ funds the greenhouse gas work under its project “Supporting sustainable biomass production and use in Ukraine and Russia”. The project partners GIZ and IER work with Ukrainian stakeholders and international experts to introduce the concept of sustainability certification for biomass in Ukraine. Trainings will show how to perform greenhouse gas calculations, including practical calculation sessions using a greenhouse gas calculation tool. The project partners are also producing a handbook for farmers on the Directive’s sustainability requirements. For further information please contact

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