

## **REPORT ON THE STUDY TOUR ON BIO-ENERGY**

*by Component C of the New ITS Project*

**16-18 October 2012, Slovakia**

**“INOGATE Technical Secretariat & Integrated Programme in  
support of the Baku Initiative and the Eastern Partnership energy  
objectives”**

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## Table of contents

Table of contents .....	2
1. Introduction .....	3
2. Preparation for the Event .....	4
3. Implementation of the Event .....	4
3.1 The event .....	4
3.2 The participants .....	5
4. Evaluation of the Event .....	6
5. Conclusions .....	8
6. Annexes .....	9
6.1 List of participants.....	9
6.2 Agenda .....	9
6.3 Evaluation questionnaires.....	9
6.4 Photos .....	9
6.5 Presentations.....	9
6.6 Acknowledgement emails from participants .....	9

## 1. Introduction

This report examines the bio-energy study tour of Component C, Sustainable Energy, implemented under the EU funded project “INOGATE Technical Secretariat & Integrated Programme in support of the Baku Initiative and the Eastern Partnership energy objectives”. The study tour took place in Banská Bystrica in central Slovakia from October 16 to 18. The study tour was linked with a conference on sustainable use of natural energy resources, covering a range of topics including biomass production and its efficient use, bio-energy sources and facilities from the viewpoint of environmental protection, biofuels as an alternative for the municipal energy sector and success stories of bio-energy projects. The INOGATE delegation focused on the bio-energy topics. The conference gathered energy producers, suppliers and consumers, energy managers and entrepreneurs, energy service companies, state regional and municipal authorities, owners and administrators of industry, NGOs and research institutes. INOGATE was the co-organiser of the conference. In addition, the INOGATE participants had guided plant tours of two operating bio-energy installations – a large biogas plant on a farm that cogenerates electricity and heat, and a biomass district combined heat & power (CHP) plant.

*ITS participants  
with conference  
co-organisers*



The main objectives of the bio-energy study tour were

- Decision making - to equip participants with improved knowledge and skills for making better investment decisions in the area of bio-energy;
- Best practice - to facilitate transfer of best practices on bio-energy, including biofuels, biomass production and its efficient use to the study tour participants;
- Operations - to improve capacity of the participants to develop and to carry out effective and profitable operations in the area of bio-energy;
- Actual demonstrations- to promote effective approaches and systems for bio-energy including demonstration of working examples.

## **2. Preparation for the Event**

During preparation of the study tour, Component C worked closely with the lead co-organiser of the conference in Slovakia to ensure effective participation of the INOGATE delegation and to address organisational issues.

For selection of participants from Partner Countries (PCs), Component C used assistance of the INOGATE Country Experts (CEs) to recruit candidates for the study tour. As the Country Experts are located in the PCs, they have direct access and communication with relevant stakeholders in the area of sustainable energy in their respective countries. Based on the applications provided by CEs as well as through direct liaison with potential candidates, Component C invited 21 participants from the 6 PCs. This also took into account readiness of the participants to co-fund their participation in the study tour. Component C liaised closely with the invited participants during the preparatory stage of the study tour, especially considered complex travel arrangements of the participants.

## **3. Implementation of the Event**

### ***3.1 The event***

The study tour took place on 16-18 October 2012 in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia. The event was effectively implemented. All but three invited participants came to Banská Bystrica. The participants were relevant specialists of the organisations and companies dealing with SE issues in PCs. The conference provided a good opportunity to learn more about the tendencies and some of the best practices in the area of bio-energy. The plant visits helped to familiarise the participants with concrete, implemented, bio-energy projects and to find out about challenges and successes of operating such bio-energy facilities. Participants receive answers to their specific questions. In addition, the INOGATE participants had several opportunities to network among themselves as well as other participants of the conference.

### 3.2 The participants

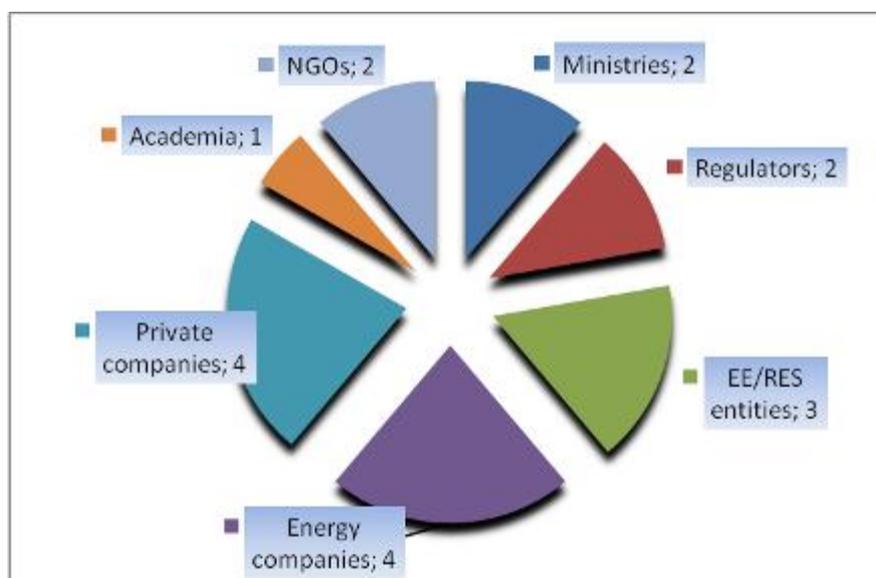
Component C received a total of 40 applications or expression of interest from the 6 PCs to participate in the study tour. The questionnaire used for recruitment of candidates is provided in Appendix 1. Based on the information received and the scoring system, ITS experts invited 21 participants from PCs. In the end, 18 actually attended

PCs	Participants planned	Participants actually invited	Participants actually attending
Armenia	1	2	1
Azerbaijan	2	3	3
Belarus	3	3	2
Georgia	1	1	1
Moldova	2	6	6
Ukraine	4	6	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>

ITS was surprised to learn that a majority of participants were ready to co-fund their expenses. This allowed for a 50% increase in participation as well as savings in the planned budget. The co-funding factor was taken into account during selection of participants. Component C will aim to pursue this strategy of cost sharing for its future capacity building events, also. The table below shows cost contribution of participants in this Slovakian bio-energy study tour. In some cases, choice of travel arrangements allowed further reduction to the budget, e.g., travel from Belarus by car instead of by air.

PC	Type of cost self-financed	Number of participants with cost sharing
AZ	Travel, accommodation, per diem	1
MD	Travel, accommodation, per diem	2
MD	Travel	4
UA	Travel	4

In total, 18 persons from the 6 PCs participated in the study tour. The list of participants is presented in Appendix 2, composition of the group is shown in the below Fig. 3.1.



#### 4. Evaluation of the Event

The ITS experts developed a set of questionnaires to evaluate the study tour (please, see Appendix 3). All 18 participants were asked to fill in the questionnaires before and after the event, only one participant did not submit the completed post-evaluation questionnaire. However, the level of detail in the answers received varies with some very short responses.

According to the pre- and post-event questionnaires completed by the participants, over 75% of the participants reported improvement in their knowledge and skills (from good to medium and from low to medium). All participants found the study tour helpful for raising their awareness on bio-energy and the information acquired useful for their work. Three participants described the study tour as particularly “very useful.” The majority of participants said that the achievement of objectives of the study tour were “full” and “good” with a few cases of partial achievement of objectives. Some of the participants would like to see more in the area of effective operations in bio-energy. Some participants wished to improve the quality of translation into the Russian language.

As regards organisation of the event, 6 participants expressed high satisfaction with the organisational side of the event. The rest of the ratings were divided between “high” and “medium” satisfaction. Most participants saw the event as a good networking opportunity and found the on-site visits useful and interesting.



*Conference and plant tours during the study visit in  
Banska Bystrica, Slovakia*

## **5. Conclusions**

Overall, the study tour contributed to enhancing the knowledge of participants on bio-energy issues. The participants learned more about the best practices in the area of bio-energy, how to implement bio-energy projects, what to take into account when making investment decisions. The event also offered opportunities to visit two bio-energy installations and see their operation in practice.

Furthermore, the study tour was an excellent networking opportunity for peers from the PCs to meet and establish contact. Most participants highlighted this in their evaluations.

Participants said they would use the knowledge acquired during the study tour in their daily work, taking into account the specific focus of their work. The knowledge is particularly useful for assessment and implementation of bio-energy projects, developing recommendations for legislation, sharing knowledge with colleagues at work, dealing with investors, successful implementation of existing bio-energy projects or ideas (e.g., the national bio-mass project in Ukraine) and organising similar bio-energy seminars. Some participants gave recommendations for further activities in the area of bio-energy such as organising more roundtables, involving more EU countries for best practices, providing more specific examples.

In the follow up to the bio-energy study tour, the ITS experts will maintain contact with the participants of the study tour to enhance peer-to-peer networking and to provide them with additional support, to the extent possible. The ITS team will approach the participants with the specific questionnaire within 6 months of the study tour to find out how the participants have utilised or plan to use the acquired knowledge in the area of bio-energy.

## **6. Annexes**

*6.1 List of participants*

*6.2 Agenda*

*6.3 Evaluation questionnaires*

*6.4 Photos*

*6.5 Presentations*

*6.6 Acknowledgement emails from participants*