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Future energy trends are influenced by numerous factors including the relative cost of alternative energy supplies, new source discoveries, and the cost to extract and produce energy sources. If renewable energy becomes reliable and affordable, energy use may turn away from fossil fuels and towards greener fuel sources. As the renewable energy sources and related technologies are evaluated, wastewater, biosolids, and biogas show promise as future energy sources that could reshape energy trends in the U.S. and beyond. To fully realize the benefits of these programs and of renewable energy on the whole, renewable energy technologies must be further developed and applied widely to provide clean, reliable, affordable energy on a much larger scale.

To that end, the wastewater profession has been striving to promote greater use of biogas produced at municipal WRRFs as a renewable and sustainable energy source. Biogas project developers, engineering consultants, and others require accurate data on biogas production to conceptualize, design, and develop renewable energy and resource recovery projects. In June 2011, WEF identified an information gap and sought to fill that gap by assessing the current and potential utilization of biogas from WRRFs for energy production, by identifying opportunities to support expanded biogas utilization through WEF's core capabilities in areas such as technology evaluation/transfer and education and training. A diverse project team, comprised of nonprofit organizations, communications outlets, consulting engineers, and vendors was established to assist with this project.

With the help of the Project Steering Committee and Advisory Team convened by WEF, the team defined what data would be collected in the initial data collection effort that culminated in the release of the 2013 report, entitled [Biogas Production and Use at Water Resource Recovery Facilities in the United States](#). The report highlights existing anaerobic digestion systems at U.S. Water Resource Recovery Facilities, as well as current uses of, and potential future opportunities for, using biogas produced by these facilities. The Phase 1 report was considered a beginning to a longer ongoing data compilation process that would involve the collection of additional, more detailed data.

The portfolio of data is continuously being augmented. The data from Phase 1 and Phase 2 activities is currently available at [biogasdata.org](#). In an effort to focus on gaps identified in the dataset after the completion of Phase 1, a focus on innovative approaches to the data collection was employed to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in moving forward. Robust processes and requirements management were applied to enable the continuation of the collaborative commitment to advancing knowledge regarding biogas from biosolids. Phase 2 data collection efforts concentrated on gathering data in "regional sprints" aimed at focusing on populating data gaps identified during the Phase 1 data analysis, review, and reflections. The sprint teams were assigned states in specific regions of the country (based on U.S. EPA regional designations). The regions 4 and 6 data have provided a fascinating snapshot of emerging trends that can be obtained from current and developing data collection efforts, and are highlighted in the 2014 Phase 2 report, entitled [Biogas Utilization: A Regional Snapshot in Understanding Factors that Affect Water Resource Recovery Facilities](#).

WEF Volunteers from a broad range of perspectives and areas of expertise assisted in the collection of this data. The Phase 1 and Phase 2 efforts to collect and compile data on biogas production and use at water resource recovery facilities in the United States relied on the efforts of many people and organizations, many of whom made significant voluntary in-kind contributions of their time. The time and commitment volunteered by these dedicated water resource recovery professionals is greatly appreciated. The Phase 3 efforts are underway for continued collection efforts. Interested parties should direct any inquiries regarding participation to biosolids@wef.org.