

# POSITION PAPER

## UCO to biodiesel - 2030. Turn waste to resource

### 0. Executive summary

The collection of Used Cooking Oil (UCO) and its transformation into Biodiesel represents an opportunity for the EU to decarbonize its transport system and to address the environmental problems that the wrong disposal of UCO may produce. UCO based Biodiesel produces the biggest greenhouse gas savings among biofuels, as a waste, it does not compete with other edible feedstocks and produces no Land Use Change effects. Still, various barriers at the EU and national level are hindering a greater use of UCO as a feedstock. To exploit the benefits of this source and develop a European well-functioning market for this waste the following specific measures are required:

- Clear and stable Biofuels legislation with specific promotion for advanced biofuels
- Specific national measures to support small producers
- Higher blends of biodiesel in transport
- Increase of public resources for advanced biofuels production and research
- Clear legislation on waste and development of certification schemes
- Raising awareness among policy makers and the general public

RecOil, an EU initiative supported by the European Commission through the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme, aims to increase sustainable biodiesel production and its local market intake by enhancing household used cooking oil (UCO) collection and transformation. Assessing the “UCO to biodiesel” chain best practices through the industry expertise, reviews of the legal and market barriers and opportunities in EU and national level, the local authorities’ cooperation, household surveys and demonstration of pilot projects in 5 countries, RecOil has identified the main barriers hindering the development of a full chain from UCO collection-to-biodiesel and proposes actions to promote the production of this clean alternative fuel.

### Main barriers – Recommendations

#### 1. UCO collection and processing are affected by uncertainties in the EU and National Energy and Environment policy, which hinder investments in advanced biofuels based on non-edible feedstocks like UCO

The *Indirect Land Use Change (ILUC) Directive* has been discussed during the last 2 years and yet the final approbation seems not close. EU institutions need to make an effort to reach a consensus on this dossier. The Directive should establish a clear and stable framework for the post 2020 period, with clear definitions and a concrete list of feedstocks, coherent implementing measures and strong incentives and goals in order to boost a transition towards advanced biofuels.

#### 2. National Framework, supporting measures to facilitate small producers / currently not available in some countries (making this not legal), not efficient in others

There is a delay and inertia in several EU Member States to regulate the full chain, especially when beneficiaries are a public utility, a local/regional government, as well as very small

producers and economic entities. The further definition of the rules will improve dramatically the environmental and economic performance of the UCO-to-biodiesel chain.

### **3. The limited use and production of advanced biofuels should also be addressed by developing higher blending targets for biodiesel**

Higher blending levels are technically viable and can be easily implemented specially in specific sectors. This measure should be carried out taking into consideration the whole EU market in order not to create unnecessary distortions. Equally, it is essential to take into account the transport sector readiness to adapt its automobiles to higher blends and maintain a close dialogue with the standardization bodies. In addition, EU policy should encourage co-refining of UCO with conventional oil, considering its very low refining cost. This measure would minimize the energy cost of refineries, greatly reducing potential emissions.

### **4. The lack of public and private financial resources to implement support measures hinders the expansion of advanced biofuels**

The financial crisis, the lack of clear policies and legal framework and the competition with other more investment-friendly regions have slowed down the development of advanced biofuels projects in the Europe. The EU has the resources to boost these type of ventures. For example, the Horizon 2020, NER 300, Public Private Partnerships such as BBI Joint Undertaking, the new Investment Package, BEI funding, etc. could act as a catalyst to leverage more investments in advanced biofuels.

### **5. The lack of clarity regarding the waste classification (by-product or waste) and the certification process limits the creation of value chains and a higher degree of UCO collection may lead to fraud risk and market distortions**

The EU should keep in its agenda the revision of its legislation on waste and recycling policy. A future Circular Economy Directive should take these issues into consideration and establish a coherent normative framework. In addition, it should include measures which foster the cooperation between the different governmental levels and the exchange of good practice among local authorities, which are in fact, the usual responsible for the collection of UCO. The Covenant of Mayors could act as a very useful tool.

### **6. Policy makers and the general public are not aware of the problems that no collection and disposal of UCO may produce**

The EC could put this issue in public debate or lead raise awareness campaigns at the EU level, in collaboration with national governments, local authorities or the civil society, as it has already done in the past within the field of environmental policy.

## RECOIL consortium members



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