



ALFA
UNLOCKING THE BIOGAS POTENTIAL
OF LIVESTOCK FARMING

Terms of Reference

Open Call for Business and Technical Support



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1. Introduction

The purpose of this open call is to facilitate the provision of free, customised business, and technical assistance to biogas projects in the livestock sector. The current document outlines the **Terms of Reference** (ToR) that aim at providing you with **information** on your involvement in the project activities as a **supported project** before you decide to participate. Please take time to carefully read this document and ask for any clarifications you may have, by sending your question to the respective Hub Manager (under Chapter 14 – Contact Point). The ToR are effective from December 15th, 2023, and continue until the completion of the support services or latest, until the end of the project 31.10.2025.

2. ALFA at a glance

ALFA is a cross - national three yearlong coordination and support action running from 01.11.2022 to 31.10.2025, supported by the European Union within the framework of Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Action programme, with the aim of tapping into the potential of **biogas production** from **livestock farming** in order to enhance the **wider uptake of RES** and increase the share of bioenergy as a baseload energy source.

Aspiring to act as a **catalyst** in six EU countries (BE, DK, GR, IT, SK, ES), ALFA will provide demand-driven **business and technical support** to over 50 livestock farmers and/or other biogas projects in the livestock farming sector, unravelling biogas market dynamics, implementing capacity-building activities, and promoting awareness about the benefits of **biogas solutions**. All the activities will be deployed by local networks named **ALFA Hubs**, which were established by local project partners with the support of two European networks among ALFA partners (European Dairy Farmers - EDF and European Biogas Association - EBA).

The main **goals** of the project are to:

1. Assess the **regional specificities** and analyse the **framework conditions** to identify drivers and barriers for the uptake of biogas in EU livestock farming industry, in multi-layered ways including country framework analysis, interviews, surveys and successful practices analysis.
2. **Co – create** the **ALFA support measures** as solutions for igniting the uptake of biogas within the livestock farming sector, considering the needs and the challenges, towards the local created network (ALFA Hubs)
3. **Deploy the biogas uptake support measures** of ALFA in real market conditions to facilitate the integration of renewable energy in final energy mix.
4. **Communicate** the results and **inform policy**, promoting mutual learning and exploitation of demand driven results, with the goal to empower livestock biogas uptake across Europe.

The main **outcomes** of the project will be:

1. The **ALFA Hubs**: local networks, set – up by ALFA project, but being operational also after the course of the project to support the market uptake biogas in the targeted countries.
2. The **analysis** of regional specificities in three-fold ways, including desk research, surveys, and interviews with successful cases.

3. The demand driven **business and technical service portfolio**, co-created with stakeholders to be tailored to the needs of interested projects, and twice improved throughout the course of the project.
4. The training materials in the form of **seminars and webinars** for capacity building of stakeholders throughout the biogas value chain, along with awareness campaigns to be further utilised.
5. A **suite of ALFA tools** including a **Decision Support Tool** (for assessing biogas projects in terms of profitability and environmental and social benefits), an interactive map with active **Biogas Cases**, an online repository named **Knowledge Center** with useful informative materials, and a **Biogas Forum** serving as an open environment for nurturing novel ideas, exchanging good practices etc., all available through the **ALFA Engagement platform** (alfaep.eu)

3. Business and technical service provision

ALFA brings together a consortium of ten partners across seven different countries, in order to **support livestock biogas market uptake** in diverse regional contexts, framework conditions and local livestock markets to expedite the adoption of biogas solutions within the livestock sector. Towards this goal, ALFA offers hands-on **business and technical support services** to **50 promising farming projects, free of charge**. The ALFA project will execute its support services in **two rounds**. This ensures an ongoing and adaptive approach to the changing needs of the biogas projects, tailoring, improving, and **fine-tuning the services portfolio** of ALFA. The support services will be demand-driven, focusing on the unique requirements of each participating project. The call for the first round runs from **December 15th, 2023, and will be open until February 29th, 2024**, looking for potential or ongoing biogas projects in the livestock sector.

4. Benefits

Participants selected through this open call will benefit from cost-free, individualized business and technical support services. These services are specifically tailored to enhance the biogas solution ideation of projects in the livestock sector. Nevertheless, ALFA provides several benefits to participants including know-how and expertise for market uptake activities, while offering a tailored Service Action Plan (including KPIs and a time plan) co-defined with the project representative.

In addition to support services, the ALFA project will provide participants with invaluable mentoring and networking opportunities, by inviting the selected participants in corresponding activities, increasing collaboration opportunities and visibility in the biogas community across Europe. This facet of the initiative aims to foster connections, knowledge exchange, and collaboration within the biogas community. The open call encompasses a series of capacity-building activities aimed at equipping participants with the requisite skills and knowledge. These activities are strategically designed to empower individuals and organizations engaged in biogas projects within the livestock sector.

5. Resources and Finance

Supported projects should understand that by receiving the rendered services free of charge they have to invest the time for collaboration and joint activities in order for delivering parties to perform the services. The time spend on the performed activities will not be charged to the project.

6. Applicant Project Profile

The open call welcomes applications from a diverse range of projects within the livestock sector that align with the goals of the ALFA project. Potential profiles of projects that can be supported include:

- **Livestock Farmers with Existing Biogas Plants:** Livestock farmers who currently operate biogas plants and seek support to enhance the efficiency and functionality of their existing systems.
- **Livestock Farmers without Biogas Plants:** Livestock farmers without current biogas installations but are interested in installing a biogas system.
- **Biogas Plants Utilizing Manure:** Biogas plants that utilize manure among other feedstock sources, with a focus on improving sustainability and maximizing energy output.
- **Farmers Associations or Cooperatives:** Farmers associations aiming to install or improve biogas systems within their communities, fostering sustainable and collective approaches to energy solutions.
- **Energy Communities:** Energy communities looking to install or enhance biogas systems, particularly those utilizing manure among other feedstock sources, to promote community-based renewable energy initiatives.
- **Other Stakeholders interested in Livestock Farming with Biogas Solutions:** Stakeholders, including potential investors, who express interest in supporting and investing in livestock farming with a specific focus on biogas solutions.

The open call encourages a wide spectrum of projects, and applicants are invited to provide information and necessary details about their initiatives through the application form.

7. Development phase

ALFA's market uptake support services are designed to cater to projects at diverse stages of development. This includes supporting initiatives in the early phases, such as ideation and early project design, as well as providing assistance during the initial project analysis and planning stages. The spectrum of support extends to assessments of funding options, aiding in the formulation of detailed concepts, and the development and implementation planning phase. ALFA is committed to facilitating projects through their implementation and deployment phases, ensuring a comprehensive approach that extends to ongoing operations and monitoring. This inclusive support framework underscores ALFA's dedication to fostering the growth and success of projects across the entire developmental spectrum within the biogas sector in the livestock industry.

8. Service Portfolio

ALFA services cover the entire spectrum of biogas project development in the livestock sector. From market research, business modelling, and financial guidance to farmer-to-farmer advice, concept design, and technical support, ALFA offers a comprehensive suite of solutions. Whether the project is in the early ideation phase or looking to optimize an existing system, ALFA’s service portfolio is designed to meet its specific needs and accelerate the adoption of biogas solutions in livestock farming. The figure below presents the available services portfolio.

BUSINESS SUPPORT		TECHNICAL SUPPORT	
Market Research	Business Modelling and Planning	Concept design and development of biogas systems	Evaluation of biogas potential based on preliminary calculations
	Corporate and Sustainable Finance		Energy and environmental analyses assessing the energy and carbon footprint across the life cycle
Access to finance support	Farmer to Farmer advice	Consultancy on the implementation and monitoring of biogas solutions	Technical support for farmers in the evaluation and comparison of plant suppliers’ quotes

Figure 1. ALFA Services Portfolio

Business Services

The ALFA business support services focus on nurturing the economic, financial, and administrative potential and capabilities of the project and its leadership team. These services aim to bolster expansion and elevate the innovation level of the supported initiatives.

Market Research: Conducting comprehensive market research, including the identification of target markets, analysis of the external environment using the PESTLE framework, providing a market overview (quantification, trends, competitive analysis), and evaluating market attractiveness using Porter’s 5 forces.

Business Modelling and Planning: Developing innovative business models tailored to participants’ needs and specificities, focusing on energy and digestate, utilizing the Business Model Canvas methodology.

Access to Finance: Identifying European, regional, and national financing opportunities for implementing biogas technologies in livestock farming. Offering step-by-step guidance on securing the identified financing options.

Corporate and Sustainable Finance: Assessing the profitability of potential investments in biogas systems, including metrics such as IRR, ROI, NPV, CapEx, and OpEx.

Farmer to Farmer Advice: Facilitating mentorship and knowledge exchange among livestock farmers, connecting those who have successfully incorporated biogas solutions with those interested in similar activities (supported projects).

Technical Services

ALFA's technical services cater to the tailored technical development and optimization of your project, emphasising effective implementation and providing tools for continuous improvement.

Concept Design and Development of Biogas Systems: Providing conceptual design services that address critical aspects of biogas production, including determining plant size, design, and selecting appropriate technological solutions.

Evaluation of Biogas Potential: Conducting preliminary calculations to assess biogas potential, considering substrate mixtures to achieve high biogas yield and productivity.

Energy and Environmental Analyses: Assessing the energy and carbon footprint across the life cycle of biogas production through Life Cycle Analysis (LCA). Identifying environmentally impactful stages and exploring scenarios related to critical parameters like feedstock types.

Consultancy on Implementation and Monitoring: Offering consultancy services for the implementation and monitoring of biogas solutions. Collaborating with farmers to address concerns and obstacles.

Technical Support to farmers in the evaluation and comparison of plant supplier quote: Assisting farmers in the evaluation and comparison of quotes from plant suppliers, supporting the selection of optimal technical solutions for biogas and biomethane production on their farms.

9. Application

Applicants have the flexibility to choose between two options when submitting their applications to the ALFA project. The first option involves an online application process, while the second option allows applicants to upload the filled in application form. The steps are the following:

Option 1: Online Application Form

Step 1: Register on the ALFA Engagement Platform.

Step 2: Validate your registration via email.

Step 3: Complete online the concise online application form and the Informed Consent Form.

Step 4: Verify all submitted information in the confirmation email.

Option 2: File Uploading

Step 1: Download the Application Form, including the Informed Consent Form.

Step 2: Register on the ALFA Engagement Platform.

Step 3: Confirm your registration through email.

Step 4: Upload the completed file with all necessary information.

Step 5: Confirm accuracy by reviewing the information sent to your email.

Applicants are encouraged to choose the application method that best suits their preferences. In both cases, applicants are prompted to review and confirm the accuracy of the provided information, ensuring a smooth application experience. The ALFA Engagement Platform offers a user-friendly experience to facilitate a seamless application process.

10. Selection Process – Transparency

In delineating the criteria for project assessment, the selection factors include several considerations described right below. It is crucial to underscore that these criteria, **distinct from eligibility requirements**, establish the foundation for a transparent and equitable selection process. So, the projects will be evaluated based on the following objective criteria:

- Profitability: Assessment of the potential for financial viability and profitability.
- Replication Potential: Evaluation of the project's scalability and potential for successful replication.
- Level of Innovation Potential: Analysis of the degree of innovation inherent in the project.
- Environmental Benefits: Examination of the positive environmental impacts and sustainability considerations.
- Women Engagement: Consideration of the level of engagement and empowerment of women in the project.
- Geographical Spread: Assessment of the project's reach and coverage across different geographical areas.
- Clear Need for Support: Identification of a demonstrable and clear need for the support offered.

The selection process is designed to be transparent, ensuring fairness and equal opportunities for all candidates. The commitment to transparency extends to conducting evaluations without biases related to race, colour, age, or religion, or any other characteristic ensuring equal opportunities for all candidates.

The ALFA selection committee will assess each project along the weighted dimension of these selection criteria. In this round of calls the 25 projects with the highest scoring are selected to engage further with the ALFA experts and receive ALFA market uptake support services.

The ALFA selection committee is made of the ten consortium partners who all have relevant expertise in one of the listed criteria areas. Every partner has one vote and cannot participate in the evaluation of applications from their regions.

Applications are accepted from Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Slovakia and Spain. Applicants from other EU countries are also eligible to apply, but they will be given lower priority. To participate in the selection process, you will have to follow the application procedures, (details in Chapter 9) if needed with the help of your respective Regional Hub Manager (can be found under Chapter 14 – Contact Point). This form will provide the basis for the selection process of promising projects.

11. Timeline

The call for the projects is open officially on December 15th, 2023. From this day, applications are accepted. The evaluation and the selection processes for the ALFA Open Call for project starts on February 29th, 2024, and will be completed by March 8th, 2024. The delivery of the services for the supported projects is expected to start on March 11th, 2024, and will be completed at the latest by June 14th, 2024.

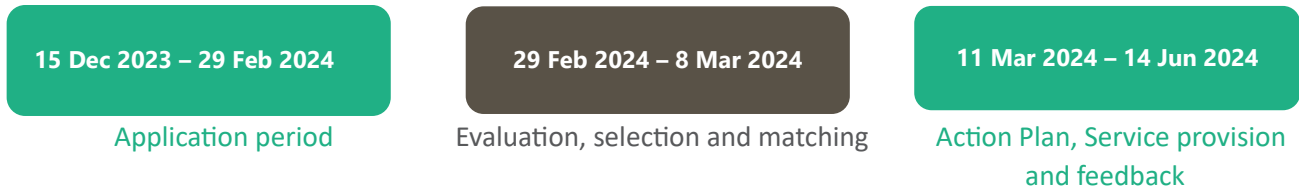


Figure 2. Timeline of Open Call & Service Provision

12. Roles and responsibilities

Applying to the ALFA call for projects or receiving a nomination from an ALFA consortium partner demands your commitment to actively engage in the subsequent process as shown by completing and signing the application and consent forms. If your project is selected, you will benefit from complimentary business and innovation support services or technical assistance and consultancy.

As a beneficiary of market uptake support services, representatives of selected projects are expected to:

- Receive business or technical market uptake support services.
- Agree to participate in a post-service delivery survey to evaluate the services and activities implemented during the collaboration.
- Consent to having the project listed on the ALFA website as a recipient of the open call for projects.

The relationship between the ALFA Hub, the project representative and potential other participants involved in the project activities is built on trust and mutual respect. Therefore, the following rules should apply to establish a code of conduct between the involved parties:

- Each party agrees to truthfully communicate information, potential risks and issues that could impact the project in an accurate and timely manner.
- The collaboration and services delivered are based on the Service Action Plan, which will be developed based on the assessment of the needs of the projects.
- All parties involved in the delivery of support services are expected to attend scheduled meetings and fulfil the jointly defined activities and steps in the process of delivery of the support services.

The Regional Hub Manager in your area will communicate the results of the selection process.

13. Confidentiality and Data Protection

If a project is selected to receive support, either business or technical, will be asked to share fundamental details, outlining its current state and specific goals. Additionally, it is requested to provide any relevant details related to the service. For further guidance, please consult ALFA [Privacy and Cookies Policy](#) to ensure adherence to our data protection standards. Your collaborative effort in providing thorough project details will aid in customizing the services to effectively meet project's specific requirements.

14. Contact Point

Any enquiry, complaint or concern about any aspect of your experience as a supported project can be addressed to the ALFA Hub Manager and Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL that oversees the operation of the hubs and will conduct the evaluation of the service provision. The contact details of the responsible persons are provided [here](#).

15. Amendment, Modification or Variation

These Terms of Reference may be amended, varied, or modified in writing after consultation and agreement by the selected projects.

The project

ALFA has the objective to help unlock the EU's biogas production potential by fostering the adoption of technologies using manure to produce biogas, thus helping increase the adoption of renewable energy sources in the EU and helping reduce emissions from untreated animal waste. The project will identify drivers and barriers for the uptake of biogas in the EU livestock farming industry and will support farmers from 6 EU countries (Italy, Denmark, Belgium, Slovakia, Greece and Spain) through its own co-created solutions, including financial, business, and technical support services as well as capacity-building seminars. In parallel, the project will develop an Engagement Platform to host tools that facilitate collaboration and knowledge exchange among industry actors and provide credible estimations of each farm's biogas potential, prospect profits, and environmental and social impacts. Moreover, ALFA will inform all relevant stakeholders via awareness-raising campaigns and policy recommendations and will provide guidelines for replication of its results in other regions.

Coordinator: **Q-PLAN**

PARTNER	SHORT NAME
	Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL ADVISORS PC
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	FBCD AS
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