

- Press Release -

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Berlinwasser International and GTZ begin energy efficiency project for wastewater treatment plants in Minas Gerais.

Berlin, Germany – Energy efficiency in sewage plants is an environmental topic with acute relevance for development policies, explains Dieter Ernst, CEO of Berlinwasser International. This is why the Berlin company has joined a PPP (public private partnership) project developed together with GTZ [Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, Corporation for Technical Cooperation] for the energy efficiency of sewage plants in the Brazilian federal state of Minas Gerais.

Over the next 1.5 years, the partners – together with COPASA, Minas Gerais' state-owned water utility – will mine and analyse data to reach a conclusion as to whether biogas can be integrated into an overall energy concept, and if so, to what extent. The treatment methods for biogas utilization and energy efficiency at sewage plants to be developed in tandem with local Minas Gerais experts should help to modify existing wastewater treatment plants and to optimize the energy efficiency of plants already in the planning stage.

“We will enable COPASA, the water utility, to utilize biogas in existing and future sewage disposal facilities for energy production,” outlines Dieter Ernst the project's goal. “Here, our expertise in energy efficiency for the operation of wastewater treatment plants comes into play, which we acquired over many years in our domestic market as well as in the international marketplace.”

So far, Brazil has little experience in operating with biogas, and no practical experience in utilizing biogas in significant ways for energy production at local municipal/district wastewater treatment plants. Methane, which is produced in fouling or in anaerobic digestion processes, is emitted directly into the atmosphere or, at the most, burnt off. Both options lead to preventable burdens on the environment. Therefore, COPASA at the beginning of 2008 established a new department for energy efficiency and generation.

“We believe German environmental technology can be used for biogas utilization in Brazilian sewage plants once COPASA implements the project’s results,” says Dieter Ernst in his evaluation of the project’s impact, which will span a range of different segments. Since 2006 Berlinwasser International AG has been cooperating with COPASA in the areas of water loss reduction and water treatment plant optimizations as well as in international projects and tenders.

The PPP project was started on 1 May 2009. Berlinwasser International and COPASA experts are now commencing with analysing the sewage plants’ operational processes and technical equipment to assess their energy saving potential. Biogas as a source for renewable energy also reduces CO2 emissions when utilized in energy production. This helps the environment and reduces operational expenses, improving the economic situation of public water utilities.

Berlinwasser International AG

Berlinwasser International AG, as Germany’s leading service provider concentrating on the management and operation of drinking water supply and wastewater disposal systems, is active in water markets throughout the world. Within the framework of public private partnership (PPP) schemes, Berlinwasser International AG offers a broad range of infrastructure and consulting competencies for investment and development projects abroad. BWI’s range of services includes the design and implementation of operations management and management contracts, consulting and collaboration with financial investors. The BWI portfolio also includes concession agreements and BOT and TOT projects, which are managed from the company’s head office in Berlin.

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