

ERGaR Certificate of Origin (CoO) Scheme

Scheme Rules V1.1

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1 Objective and scope

- 1.1 The ERGaR CoO Scheme (hereinafter referred to as the “Scheme”) is organised by the European Renewable Gas Registry (ERGaR) aisbl (hereinafter referred to as the “Operator”).
- 1.2 The Scheme facilitates the transfer of Certificates of Origin (CoOs) between participating National Biomethane Registries (hereinafter referred to as “System Participants”), who issue CoOs or equivalent documentation for biomethane injected into the Natural Gas Network in their country of operation.
- 1.3 CoOs are transferred via Data Packages (see 2.7), which are structured according to an agreed XML data format and uploaded and downloaded from the ExtraVert Platform by System Participants.
- 1.4 CoOs are fully defined in these Scheme Rules (hereinafter referred to as the “ERGaR Rules”) and are electronic documents that allow gas consumers to demonstrate their use of biomethane. Other types of documents transferred via the ExtraVert Platform are outside the scope of the Scheme.
- 1.5 The IT provider for the ExtraVert Platform, by appointment of the Operator, is Vertogas B.V. A Service Level Agreement between Vertogas and the Operator regulates all work carried out by Vertogas in connection with the ExtraVert Platform.
- 1.6 Only National Biomethane Registries that comply with the legal and technical requirements set out in the Rules may become System Participants and connect to the ExtraVert Platform.
- 1.7 The Scheme is designed to facilitate trade in CoOs for biomethane consignments injected into the natural gas network; however, the broadening of this scope to include biomethane consignments transported by road and waterway is not excluded.
- 1.8 The Rules and other Scheme documents will be in English and communication between the Operator and System Participants will be in English unless otherwise agreed.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 Biomass Coding List: a list maintained by the operator which shows the biomass information that is possible to incorporate into a Data Package in fields 32, 33 and 34. System Participants can request that Biomass Coding, specific to the biomethane sector in their country of operation e.g., national subsidy schemes or national legal frameworks, is added to and withdrawn from the list. The Operator may also add or withdraw Biomass Coding information from the list relevant to European wide standards such as CEN - EN 16325.

- 2.2 Certificate of Origin or CoO: an electronic document that records information about biomethane that has been injected into the Natural Gas Network. A CoO can be used by a gas consumer to demonstrate their use of a biomethane consignment, in that the biomethane consignment described in the CoO can be set against an energy amount of gas that the consumer has withdrawn from the Natural Gas Network. System Participants may apply different terminology to the documents they issue at national level: terms used include biomethane certificates, guarantees of origin and renewable gas guarantees of origin. Within the Scheme, all such documents will be considered CoOs. CoOs follow the approach detailed in Article 15 of Directive (EU) 2009/28 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources, including amendments as per Directive (EU) 2015/1513 (also referred to as “RED I”) and Article 19 of Directive (EU) 2018/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (recast) (also referred to as “RED II”).
- 2.3 CoO Creation: creating a CoO means creating an electronic data set containing information about biomethane that has been injected into the gas grid.
- 2.4 CoO Transfer: transferring a CoO means moving the electronic document either between two different accounts within a National Biomethane Registry, or, via the ExtraVert Platform, between an account held within a sending System Participant and an account held within a receiving System Participant.
- 2.5 CoO Withdrawal: withdrawing a CoO means a National Biomethane Registry removes a CoO from its registry without cancelling it. The registry may do this if it believes the information in the CoO is inaccurate or the biomethane injection has been double counted, or for other specific reasons.
- 2.6 CoO Cancelling: cancelling a CoO means recording its final purpose on a cancellation statement and ensuring that it cannot be used again for any other reason. The CoO is not deleted and is available to be audited. A CoO that is cancelled because it has been exported via the ExtraVert Platform will be marked as “cancelled because of transfer via ERGaR CoO Scheme”.
- 2.7 Data Package: a Data Package is defined as an XML file that contains information about one or more CoOs that a System Participant wishes to transfer to another System Participant. The Data Package must be uploaded to the ExtraVert account of the sending System Participant on the ExtraVert Platform. The XML format is provided by the Operator.
- 2.8 ERGaR aisbl (see also “Operator”): international, non-governmental, non-profit organisation established under Belgian law on 28/09/2016, with its registered seat at 1040 Brussels, Rue d’Arlon 63-65.
- 2.9 ERGaR Rules: the rules of the Scheme, as set out in this document.
- 2.10 ExtraVert account: an electronic account on the ExtraVert Platform, where System Participants upload and download the Data Packages, which allow them to transfer CoOs.
- 2.11 ExtraVert Platform: a stand-alone transfer platform developed by Vertogas B.V. under the Development Agreement concluded with the Operator. Subsequently maintained and administered by Vertogas B.V. under the Service Level Agreement concluded with the Operator.

- 2.12 **National Biomethane Registry:** an organisation that operates an account-based administration system documenting the chain of custody of biomethane from the moment of injection into the domestic natural gas network up to the moment of withdrawal. For the purpose of the Scheme, the documents they issue will be considered CoOs. A National Biomethane Registry is established either by government mandate or by the voluntary cooperation of market participants and operates within a domestic market.
- 2.13 **Operator:** The Operator of the Scheme is ERGaR aisbl, an international non-profit organisation established under Belgian law with its registered seat at 1040 Brussels, Rue d’Arlon 63-65.
- 2.14 **Proof of Sustainability (PoS):** a document detailing the verification of sustainability claims relating to biomethane consignments in accordance with the relevant EU requirements and recommendations (RED, FQD and Communication 2010/C 160/01). PoS documents are issued by conformity assessment bodies (certification bodies) associated with a voluntary scheme recognised by the European Commission under the RED. If requested by an economic operator (the owner of a biomethane consignment), the sustainability characteristics of the biomethane detailed in a PoS may also be forwarded through the ExtraVert Platform, alongside the information contained in a CoO.
- 2.15 **System Participant:** a National Biomethane Registry admitted to the Scheme by decision of the Operator’s Executive Board, in accordance with the ERGaR Rules.

3 Data Packages

- 3.1 The electronic document used for the transfer of CoOs between System Participants on the ExtraVert Platform is referred to as the ExtraVert Data Package (or “Data Package”).
- 3.2 A Data Package is an electronic dataset in an XML format, uploaded by a System Participant to their ExtraVert account. It includes information and attributes relating to a specific biomethane consignment injected into the European natural gas network, as represented by one or more CoOs.
- 3.3 A Data Package serves the purpose of transferring cross-border the information contained in one or more CoOs. It provides the receiving System Participant with the information necessary to issue a corresponding CoO or CoOs in their registry and thus complete the CoO transfer.
- 3.4 The format of the Data Package provides the option to include sustainability claims on a voluntary basis. These may be based on documents other than CoOs, such as Proof of Sustainability (PoS) documents. These add to the primary information contained in the CoOs.
- 3.5 CoOs follow the approach set out in Article 15 of Directive (EU) 2009/28 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources, including amendments as per Directive (EU) 2015/1513 (also referred to as “RED I”) and Article 19 of Directive (EU) 2018/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (recast) (also referred to as “RED II”). They therefore contain as much of the following information as is available:
- 3.5.1 Medium of energy, e.g., gas;
 - 3.5.2 Unique CoO number assigned by the System Participant;
 - 3.5.3 Production capacity of producer;
 - 3.5.4 Date when producer became operational;

- 3.5.5 First day of production of the output to which the CoO relates;
 - 3.5.6 Last day of production of the output to which the CoO relates;
 - 3.5.7 Type of installation, e.g., biomethane from anaerobic digestion;
 - 3.5.8 Identity of the originating producer, including the unique number assigned to that producer by the National Biomethane Registry, as well as the name of the producer;
 - 3.5.9 Identity (country and region) of the National Biomethane Registry who issued the CoO in the country of production;
 - 3.5.10 Date when the electronic issuance of the CoO in the country of production took place;
 - 3.5.11 An indication whether and to what extent the producer received investment or production support;
 - 3.5.12 The energy source (biomass processed);
 - 3.5.13 The validity period of the CoO.
- 3.6 Certain fields within the Data Package are mandatory and must be completed in order for the transfer to be valid while others are optional. This is set out in Appendix B – Information Fields in a Data Package.
- 3.7 When a Data Package is uploaded by a sending System Participant, the CoO or CoOs detailed in the Data Package must be made unavailable for further use until confirmation of the transfer is received, at which point the original CoOs must be cancelled.
- 3.8 On receipt of a Data Package, a receiving System Participant should prepare to create a CoO or CoOs matching the characteristics and amount described in the Data Package. No information may be changed but attributes may be excluded if the receiving System Participant's systems and processes do not allow for them to be included.
- 3.9 When the receiving System Participant confirms that they are able to create a CoO or CoOs according to the details included in the Data Package, the sending System Participant must provide the receiving System Participant with proof of the cancellation of the original CoO or CoOs. On receipt of this proof, the receiving System Participant creates their new CoO or CoOs, which are then available to be used.
- 3.10 A Data Package may represent any energy amount of biomethane from 1 MWh upwards. Upon receipt of a Data Package, a System Participant may create either one CoO, representing all the MWh recorded in the Data Package, or multiple CoOs that together make up the total MWh recorded in the Data Package. The new CoO or CoOs issued by the receiving System Participant must always make up the total MWh described in the respective Data Package and cancelled by the sending System Participant and must record without any alteration the attributes of the biomethane reflected in the original CoO or CoOs.
- 3.11 A receiving System Participant is entitled to refuse to create a CoO or CoOs based on a Data Package from a sending System Participant if
- 3.11.1 the resulting CoO or CoOs would infringe government rules or regulations prevailing in their country; or
 - 3.11.2 the Data Package is incomplete, incorrect, or invalid; or
 - 3.11.3 the receiving System Participant has any credible information about relevant fraudulent activity; or

- 3.11.4 the receiving System Participant is not provided with proof that the relevant CoO or CoOs have been cancelled in the registry of the sending System Participant.
- 3.12 All transfers of Data Packages take place using the ExtraVert Platform, which also allows System Participants to make explanatory notes regarding individual Data Packages. Any email communication between System Participants relating to the upload, download, withdrawal, rejection, or acceptance of Data Packages must be systematically labelled using the Data Package's Exchange ID, in such a way as to be auditable at a later date.
- 3.13 The Data Package will state all information in English with the expectations of;
 - 3.13.1 Names and address of traders and production devices (fields 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41)
 - 3.13.2 Biomass information (fields 31, 32, 33, 35) where that information is stated in a language other than English on the Biomass Coding List published by the operator.

4 Requirements of and process for National Biomethane Registries to become System Participants

- 4.1 There is no precondition that the National Biomethane Registry must be a member of the Operator.
- 4.2 The National Biomethane Registry must maintain an electronic, account-based documentation system for the registration of energy quantities of biomethane injected into the domestic gas network, allowing the issuing of corresponding biomethane CoOs as well as the transfer of CoOs between registered account holders.
- 4.3 In order to be admitted to the Scheme, each National Biomethane Registry must, as a minimum
 - 4.3.1 maintain independence from economic operators;
 - 4.3.2 not own biomethane CoOs (or other similar products) or participate in markets associated with biomethane CoOs (other than the functions defined in their foundation documents);
 - 4.3.3 carry out operations in a professional and transparent manner, adhering to the relevant laws and regulations;
 - 4.3.4 have an auditable system documenting the issue, handling and cancellation of CoOs;
 - 4.3.5 follow appropriate auditing procedures, including conducting external audits that confirm the accuracy of their processes for issuing CoOs;
 - 4.3.6 keep any documentation (digital or otherwise) for a minimum of five years;
 - 4.3.7 accept responsibility for the preparation of all relevant information for the auditing of activities relating to their participation in the Scheme.
- 4.4 The National Biomethane Registry may issue CoOs for biomethane installations in other European countries that do not yet have a National Biomethane Registry of their own, provided that any National Biomethane Registry offering such a service has implemented appropriate measures to ensure that there is no double registration of those installations' production in other National Biomethane Registries.
- 4.5 When applying to become a System Participant, a National Biomethane Registry will provide the following documentation to the Secretary General of the Operator:
 - 4.5.1 a completed application form;

- 4.5.2 a copy of their terms and conditions (with English translation);
 - 4.5.3 a copy of an audit report showing their compliance with industry good practice (with English Translation);
 - 4.5.4 a description of their functions, procedures and organisational structure (with English translation);
 - 4.5.5 a declaration of their acceptance of the prevailing ERGaR Rules.
- 4.6 The Operator's Secretary General reviews the application form and associated documents. If there is any cause for doubt or concern, the Secretary General either requires further evidence from the applicant or requests that the Operator's Executive Board decides how to proceed.
- 4.7 The Secretary General submits a proposal to the Executive Board that a new System Participant shall be admitted to the Scheme.
- 4.8 The Participation Agreement between the applicant and the Operator is signed following a positive decision by the Operator's Executive Board.
- 4.9 If information provided by the System Participant as part of the joining process, or during any later involvement in the Scheme, is found to be misleading, wrong, or fraudulent, or if the Operator discovers unusual or extraordinary activity by the System Participant, the Operator may suspend the System Participant's ExtraVert account and/or terminate the Participation Agreement immediately.

5 Activities carried out by the System Participant

- 5.1 Activities carried out by the System Participant include all tasks and processes necessary for the robust maintenance and administration of their biomethane registry and its IT system. Depending on the registry, these tasks and processes include, but are not limited to:
- 5.1.1 the creation, transfer and cancellation of CoOs;
 - 5.1.2 the registration of account holders;
 - 5.1.3 the processing of customer service and market participant enquiries;
 - 5.1.4 supervision of the IT system;
 - 5.1.5 the generation of statistics;
 - 5.1.6 ongoing maintenance of the website; and
 - 5.1.7 the provision of training for staff and account holders.
- 5.2 System Participants must create biomethane CoOs based on reliable and accurate metering data provided by distribution and/or transmission network operators.
- 5.3 System Participants must document the creation, transfer, withdrawal and/or cancellation of every biomethane CoO, to maintain a clear record of each transaction.
- 5.4 System Participants must never issue CoOs for any fossil gas that may be blended with biomethane and enters the gas network via the same injection point.
- 5.5 System Participants may use the net or gross method for issuing CoOs and must keep the Operator informed of their current practice (see Appendix A – Net and Gross measurement of gas production).
- 5.6 Data held by System Participants must be stored for at least five (5) years.
- 5.7 System Participants must only upload Data Packages to the ExtraVert Platform at the request of their account holders.

6 Information system of the System Participant

- 6.1 System Participants must ensure that their manual and automated information systems for sending or receiving Data Packages are able to support the auditing of all transactions.
- 6.2 System Participants must successfully complete a technical interface test with the ExtaVert Platform prior to sending or receiving their first Data Package. This test ensures that all technical requirements for receiving or sending a Data Package are met. The test is carried out by the Operator or a third party contracted by the Operator. Only registries that have successfully completed the interface test are allowed to send or receive Data Packages.

7 Data protection

- 7.1 Due care must be taken to protect data provided by economic operators, the Operator, and other System Participants.
- 7.2 Participation in the Scheme is conditional on compliance with national data protection laws and the EU General Data Protection Regulation.
- 7.3 The Operator will maintain a Privacy Policy which will be publicly available on the Operator's website.
- 7.4 System Participants must preserve the confidentiality of information provided to them in connection with their activities unless
 - 7.4.1 they are implicitly or explicitly required to disclose such information under their own rules;
 - 7.4.2 they are otherwise authorised to disclose such information by the person to whom a duty of confidentiality is owed; or
 - 7.4.3 they are required to disclose such information by law, including by request of a competent authority having the force of law.

8 Sanction system

- 8.1 The Scheme has pre-defined measures to be taken if a System Participant fails or ceases to satisfy the requirements and commitments set out either in the ERGaR Rules or in the Participation Agreement.
- 8.2 These are internal Scheme sanctions, independent from the regulatory function of any competent authority.
- 8.3 The System Participants are legally answerable to the Operator: their commitments are laid down in the Participation Agreement concluded between the System Participants and the Operator.
- 8.4 Violations of commitments and requirements may be identified through audits and inspections by impartial auditors or inspectors contracted by the Operator, or by any other means.
- 8.5 In the event of violations of the ERGaR Rules, and/or non-compliance with the stipulations of the Participation Agreement signed between the Operator and the System Participant, the party responsible for the violation must take immediate measures to rectify the situation.
- 8.6 In the absence of successful corrective measures, a meeting of the Control and Sanction Committee will be called.
- 8.7 The Control and Sanction Committee will be composed of at least three members, including

- 8.7.1 The Chairperson of the Control and Sanction Committee (being a person independent of the Operator and the System Participants, who has been nominated to the Control and Sanction Committee by the Operator’s President following a decision by those of the Operator’s Board Members who are not employed by any of the System Participants);
 - 8.7.2 The Operator’s Secretary General or Assistant/Deputy Secretary General;
 - 8.7.3 One of the Operator’s Board Members (nominated to the Control and Sanction Committee by the Operator’s President following a decision by those of the Operator’s Board Members who are not employed by any of the System Participants).
- 8.8 Decisions concerning appointments to the Control and Sanction Committee under 8.7.1 and 8.7.3 will be taken by a minimum of three (3) people. If there are fewer than three (3) Board Members who are not employed by any of the System Participants, the Operator’s Secretary General will make up the shortfall by inviting representatives of the Operator’s Full Members to make the decision. If the Operator has no Board Members who are not representatives of System Participants then a representative of one of the Operator’s Full Members may be appointed to the Committee.
- 8.9 The Committee as formed above may choose to invite independent legal, sustainability or auditing experts to form part of the committee on a permanent basis or to consider particular instances of non-compliance.
- 8.10 The Committee’s first step is to conduct a thorough investigation of the case, based on which it will decide on sanctions against the violating party. As part of this process, the Committee may consider a written submission from the System Participant(s) in question, should they wish to provide one.
- 8.11 During the time that the Operator is calling a meeting of the Committee and the Committee is conducting its investigation, the Operator may suspend the ExtraVert account of the System Participant in question.
- 8.12 The Operator imposes sanctions only on System Participants and only in accordance with the Participation Agreement signed between the Operator and the System Participant, which includes a commitment to adhere to the ERGaR Rules. Any party other than the Operator who has been affected by the violation of either the ERGaR Rules or a Participation Agreement must pursue recourse by their own means.
- 8.13 Sanction levels that can be applied are:
- 8.13.1 Sanction level 0: The Control and Sanction Committee determines that no other measures against the System Participant are necessary.
 - 8.13.2 Sanction level 1: The Control and Sanction Committee determines that a reprimand must be issued to the System Participant along with an instruction to implement the requirements of the Scheme more carefully.
 - 8.13.3 Sanction level 2: The Control and Sanction Committee determines that a warning must be issued to the System Participant. If the problem continues to exist, the result is generally Sanction level 3.
 - 8.13.4 Sanction level 3: The Control and Sanction Committee determines that a warning with contractual penalty must be issued to the System Participant. At Sanction level 3, a contractual fine of up to 25,000 € [twenty-five thousand euros] may be imposed, depending on the severity of the violations and/or the level of damage caused by the violations and/or taking into consideration any advantages achieved through illegal activities, as well as the overall scale of the System Participant’s activities. The fine is set individually in each case, at the discretion of the Control and Sanction Committee, and is legally enforceable as set out in the liability clause of the Participation Agreement.

9 Appendix A – Net and Gross measurement of gas production

- 9.1 In order to reach the minimum requirements for the calorific value of the gas they inject, biomethane producers may be required to blend fossil gas into the biomethane, usually in the form of propane but potentially using other gaseous fossil fuels.
- 9.2 System Participants must have appropriate processes in place to identify whether fossil gas has been blended with biomethane and establish the energy content of that fossil gas, ensuring that CoOs are only issued for the biomethane portion of the total gas injected.
- 9.3 Therefore, CoOs only ever record information about MWh of biomethane injected and contain no information regarding any fossil gas blending. The issue of fossil gas blending is completely distinct from, and has no bearing on, the adoption of Net or Gross measurement methodologies.
- 9.4 Net and Gross measurement refers exclusively to the measurement of fossil gas combusted on site by a biomethane installation during the production of biomethane.
 - 9.4.1 It does not refer to the combustion of any biogas produced by the biomethane installation.
 - 9.4.2 It does not refer to the combustion of any biomethane produced by the biomethane installation.
 - 9.4.3 It does not refer to the use of electricity, neither generated on site from the combustion of biogas or biomethane nor withdrawn from the grid.
- 9.5 When measuring MWh of biomethane according to the Net method, the following calculation is used:
 - 9.5.1 Measure the total MWh of biomethane produced;
 - 9.5.2 Subtract MWh of fossil gas combusted on site, which may include:
 - 9.5.2.1 fossil gas used to heat the anaerobic digestion process;
 - 9.5.2.2 fossil gas used in the gas upgrading process;
 - 9.5.2.3 fossil gas used to power compressors;
 - 9.5.2.4 any other use of fossil gas in the process.
- 9.6 When measuring MWh of biomethane according to the Gross method, the MWh of biomethane produced is measured without any reference to the use of fossil gas combusted on site.
- 9.7 Under both, the Net and Gross methods, the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of the fossil gas combusted are included in any GHG emission factor allocated to the biomethane and recorded within a CoO or PoS.
- 9.8 System Participants must update the Scheme as to any change in their methodology regarding the use of Net or Gross method.
- 9.9 The Operator will maintain a factsheet stating whether System Participants issue CoOs in accordance with the Net or Gross method.
- 9.10 System Participants must host this Annex to the ERGaR Rules on their websites and circulate it to their account holders.
- 9.11 System Participants must ensure that cancellation statements generated by their registration databases identify whether cancelled CoOs adopted the Net or Gross method, where relevant taking into account the methodology employed by the System Participant that created the original CoOs.

10 Appendix B – Information Fields in a Data Package

# Field	Field name	Format of field	Mandatory field (Yes/No)
Data Package Information			
1	Exchange ID	generic string type	Yes
2	Creation date time	date	Yes
3	Source Registry	enumeration	Yes
Source Trader			
4	Trader ID	generic string type	Yes
5	Trader Name	generic string type	Yes
Trader Address			
6	Street and Number	generic string type	No
7	Postal Code	generic string type	No
8	City	generic string type	No
9	Country	generic string type	No
10	Target Registry	enumeration	Yes
Target Trader			
11	Trader ID	generic string type	Yes
12	Trader Name	generic string type	Yes
Trader Address			
13	Street and Number	generic string type	No
14	Postal Code	generic string type	No
15	City	generic string type	No
16	Country	generic string type	No
17	Tracking Claim	enumeration	Yes

# Field	Field name	Format of field	Mandatory field (Yes/No)
Certificate of Origin Details			
18	Certificate Batch ID	generic string type	Yes
19	Original Cert Number From	generic string type	Yes
20	Original Cert Number To	generic string type	Yes
21	Created by	enumeration	No
22	Creation date	date	Yes
23	Valid to	date	No
24	Energy MWh	integer	Yes
25	Energy Medium	enumeration	No
26	Gross or Net Energy	enumeration	Yes
27	Production date from	date	Yes
28	Production date to	date	Yes
29	Delivery Type	enumeration	Yes
30	Metering Point	generic string type	Yes
31	Biomass Coding Scheme	generic string type	No
32	Biomass Code	generic string type	No
33	Biomass Description	generic string type	No
34	Biomass Classification Description	generic string type	No
35	Original Biomass Description	generic string type	No
36	Proof Of Biomass Origin	PDF upload	No
Production Device			
37	Device ID	generic string type	Yes
38	Name	generic string type	Yes

# Field	Field name	Format of field	Mandatory field (Yes/No)
Address			
39	Street and Number	generic string type	No
40	Postal Code	generic string type	No
41	City	generic string type	No
42	Country	generic string type	Yes
43	Production Capacity	integer	No
44	Date of Commission	date	Yes
45	Production Support	yes/no	Yes
46	Investment Support	yes/no	Yes
47	Technology	enumeration	No
Biomass Sustainability Details			
48	Sustainability Scheme ID	generic string type	No
49	Sustainability Scheme Name	enumeration	No
50	Issuing Date VS Certificate	date	No
51	Expiration Date VS Certificate	date	No
52	Country of Origin	generic string type	No
53	Greenhouse Gas Emission Chain	generic string type	No
54	Additional Information	generic string type	No
55	Proof of Sustainability	PDF upload	No
56	Biomass Scheme Description	generic string type	No



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