

ADBA Northern Ireland Conference 2026

Anaerobic Digestion, Biomethane and Northern Ireland's Economic Future

09:00–10:00 Registration & coffee

10:00–10:15 Opening Remarks: Resetting the Conversation

Chair: Chris Huhne, Chairman, ADBA

10:15 – 11:10 Session 1: Anaerobic Digestion as Strategic Infrastructure for Northern Ireland

Key Themes:

- Whole-of-economy value of AD: up to **£5bn GVA** and **3,000 high-quality jobs**, paying circa 30% above the NI average
- Supporting agriculture as a core NI sector, not undermining it
- Energy security and indigenous supply in a volatile global context
- Contribution to net zero and environmental protection, including nutrient management and water quality pressures (e.g Lough Neagh)

Indicative Contributors:

- Dr. Gareth Mottram, Policy Lead, ADBA (economic and policy framing)
- Consultant
- Senior representative, farming

11:10 – 11:30 Opening Keynote Address: Why Northern Ireland Needs AD

- Senior politician

11:30–12:15 Networking Break (45 mins)

12:15–13:30 Session 2: What Northern Ireland Could Gain: Growth, Resilience and System Optionality

Key Themes:

- Whole-of-economy benefits of biogas: rural jobs, farming incomes, industrial competitiveness and tax base growth
- Retaining agricultural output while meeting environmental limits
- Gas system opportunity: meeting NI demand by 2040, with potential export surplus
- Role of existing AD plants as future system assets
- Reducing reliance on oil-fired heating to strengthen energy security
- All-island opportunities where pragmatic and beneficial

Indicative Contributors:

- Professor David Rooney, Academic Director, CASE
- Pdraig Fleming, Biomethane Programme Manager, Gas Networks Ireland
- Senior representative, Gas Distribution
- Senior representative, Environmental Protection

13:30–14:30 Lunch

14:30–15:45 Session 3: Understanding the Current impasse: How Policy, Institutions and Incentives Interact

Key Themes:

- Interaction between agriculture, environmental regulation and energy policy
- Institutional remits and the challenge of system coordination
- Legacy schemes shaping present-day decision-making
- The difficulty of capturing the **holistic economic benefits** of AD within siloed frameworks
- Why good intent has not yet translated into delivery

Outcome: A shared diagnosis of where Northern Ireland is today - a necessary foundation for moving forward.

Indicative Contributors:

- Moderated discussion to encourage open engagement

15:45–16:30 Networking Break (45 mins)

16:30–16:55 Session 4: From intent to Action: Securing a Viable Future for AD in Northern Ireland

Session Focus:

A forward-looking discussion on what must change to move from analysis to action - with particular focus on **existing AD capacity**.

Key Themes:

- The existential challenge facing ROC-supported plants as support expires
- Transition pathways for existing assets: heat utilisation, hybrid models, network integration
- The case for alignment with the **UK-wide Future Framework** for AD and biomethane
- What credible progress looks like in the next 12–24 months
- How industry and government can work together constructively

Indicative Contributors:

- Dr Gareth Mottram, Policy Lead, ADBA
- Senior representative, AD operator / investor
- Network or regulatory context speaker (listening role)

16:55–17:00 Closing Remarks

Chair: Chris Huhne, Chairman, ADBA

- Summary of key messages for policymakers
- What success looks like after the conference
- Next steps for ADBA engagement in Northern Ireland

17:00–18:00 Drinks Reception