Background and Project Objectives

In 2017 the Department of Communications Climate Action and Environment announced its intention to support the use of commercial scale Renewable Heating through a Renewable Heat Incentive (later branded the Support Scheme for Renewable Heat (SSRH). The SSRH is seen as a key measure to meet Irelands 2020 RES targets and future targets. Through the SSRH commercial heat users will be supported to utilise renewable heating from sources such as biomass boilers.

One factor critical to the success of the SSRH is the quality of biomass installations, i.e. are they built/installed correctly to ensure they work efficiently and do not emit excess air pollutants. This proposal aims to ensure that all installations are done correctly and that the SSRH scheme as a whole result in successful use of biomass fuel.

This proposal is to implement a professional accreditation body for biomass designers and installers, similar to where gas appliances may only be installed and serviced by Registered Gas Installers, we propose to set up similar requirements for those engaged in biomass boiler design, installation and maintenance. We proposed bringing together key experts and stakeholders to draw up guidelines for installations and requirements for professionals who wish to be accredited. Once this is agreed we then propose to implement the programme and begin registering practitioners.

At this point it is important to point out the distinction between a biomass appliance and a biomass appliance installation. The biomass installation (typically a boiler) may be manufactured in the manufacturers factory and will be manufactured to meet the required EU regulations in terms of efficiency and air emissions once the appliance is properly installed. A Biomass appliance installation includes all the peripheral factors such as fuel supply infrastructure, buffer storage (capacity of heating fluid system to absorb and store heat), flue, ease of access for maintenance. It is critical that the installation is fit for purpose and allows the biomass appliance operate to its full design potential.

The requirement for proper controls around installations is nothing new, most EU countries have adopted some measures require designers and or installers have some form of training or in some measure can show their competence to install biomass combustion systems correctly. Bioenergy Europe have completed a two year project looking at this exact matter, the results of this project can be found at [QUALICERT](https://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/projects/en/projects/qualicert). The EU have come some way to address the requirements for standards of appliances through Commission Regulations 2015/1185 (Eco Design requirements for Space Heaters), 2015/1189 (Eco Design requirements for Solid Fuel Boilers) and through the development of EN 303-5:2012 (Solid Fuel Heating Boilers < 500kw), in order for these standards to be correctly adhered to there is further need for installers and designers to have a capability to design/install correctly.

**Project Objectives**

Objective 1 – Form a Steering Group of Stakeholders

1. An open invite meeting will be held where all stakeholders will be entitled to attend
2. A steering group will be formed at this initial meeting, the task of the steering group will be to oversee all following works as detailed below.

Objective 2 - Agree Requirements for accreditation of designers and installers

1. Determine the key generic criteria for quality installations.
2. Determine key requirements for designer and installer competencies.
3. Determine any additional professions that should be accredited.
4. Affiliation (if any) with other professional bodies and/or EU jurisdictions.
5. Any other tasks as agreed by the stakeholder group and fitting with the project objectives.
6. Publication of report from the steering group detailing its findings and recommendations

Objective 3 – Design framework for the accreditation programme

The accreditation programme will need design in terms of the following

1. Accreditation types – e.g. designer, installer, annual service provider
2. Specific parameters to be met by each type, e.g. qualifications, experience, demonstrated ability, insurance, ISO-9001 (or other) accreditation, etc…
3. Terms for entry (and ejection) for accredited persons
4. Accreditation procedures
5. Writing of terms and conditions
6. Accreditation costs

Objective 4 – Start of accreditation of service providers

Following design of the scheme the project then proposes to begin accreditation of professional service providers, this will be carried out in the following manner

1. Publication of the opening of the scheme, its terms and conditions, application requirements and fees.
2. Acceptance of applicants to the scheme, suggested minimum 3 designers and 3 installers.
3. Auditing of applicants
4. Accreditation of applicants (where successful)

Objective 5. Signoff on first round of accredited designers and installers

1. Reconvening of stakeholder group
2. Presentation of accredited installers/designers
3. Acceptance of first round accreditations.
4. Close of project.
5. There are many professional companies engaged in designing, installing, commissioning and operating commercial scale biomass boilers. These companies have developed their skills through training and practice and are at this stage highly proficient. The design and installation of biomass boilers are key to their success, properly designed and installed systems operate efficiently, reliably and are compliant with air emission regulations.
6. A risk factor for Ireland in the new SSRH is that once up and running the scheme will have the potential to attract system designers and installers who do not have the correct training and/or skill sets – thus running the risk of having problematic installations.