

Microgeneration Certification Scheme

An example of good practice that could be applied in the Northern Periphery Programme region

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How can a homeowner or a community group have confidence that their plans for a renewable energy installation will be successfully implemented? What can they do to ensure that the equipment and installer are of a good standard? In the UK a scheme has been created to provide certification in the quality and reliability of micro-renewable energy technologies and the competence and business practices of those who install them. This is known as the Microgeneration Certification Scheme, or MCS for short.

In brief, the MCS is an industry-led scheme supported by the UK Government Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC). It aims to create and support a microgeneration industry based on quality and reliability and to provide consumer confidence that products and installers meet robust standards.

A number of organisations have been accredited as MCS certification bodies. These can certify products and installers for the MCS, based on the agreed standards defined for each different technology.

Installers are MCS certified based on an assessment of the supply, design, installation, and commissioning of renewable microgeneration technologies. This process considers the technical competence of the installer and their business practices and quality control procedures. More details of the requirements for installers can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/6autv3s>

Product certification involves examining the factory production controls and product testing procedures. More details are available from <http://tinyurl.com/6fgt3r9> and <http://tinyurl.com/5wto6y8>

The MCS provides a recognised measure of an installer's competence and a product's effectiveness and reliability. It has become the industry standard and is now a requirement for the eligibility of micro-renewable energy installations to receive funding support. This is a key element of ensuring that the industry maintains high standards and retains a good reputation for renewable energy.

On the downside, there is inevitably a cost involved for installers and product manufacturers with becoming MCS certified and remaining within the scheme. This cost and the process of certification can be off-putting, often to smaller firms where there is a perception that the certification criteria, costs and time involved are prohibitive. In some cases this can lead to less products or installers available and prevent or delay the development of a competitive market in certain regions or with some technologies.

There is further information on many aspects of MCS available from

<http://www.microgenerationcertification.org/>

<http://tinyurl.com/5vw7hmn>

<http://www.slideshare.net/seamcentre/bre-global-mcs-overview>

<http://tinyurl.com/65y937a>

<http://www.actionrenewables.org/services/mcs/certification-fees/>