

Microgeneration for the next generation



The original independent service for land owners, land managers, developers, architects and local authority managers:

- Technical and feasibility advice on all small-scale renewable energy projects including micro hydro, wood and other biomass heating, wind, heat pumps, solar thermal and photovoltaic's, biogas, biodiesel, community heating and combined heat & power (CHP) ensuring optimum payback
- Specialist advice on all aspects of building scale sustainable energy systems including heating, lighting, ventilation, insulation, heat recovery, rainwater collection, passive solar, glazing and sustainable materials
- Advice and support regarding incentives and applications to grant schemes and project management of building-scale renewable energy systems



Rising energy costs, increasing awareness of climate change and the availability of grants are leading to growing interest in building-scale renewable energy systems.

It is predicted that within the coming few years, steeply rising world oil demand will exceed supply resulting in a sharp increase in inflation and particularly energy costs. At the same time climate change is driving governments to encourage the saving of fossil energy and to penalise its overuse by fiscal and other means. The introduction of Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's) for buildings has affected property values, with energy efficiency related variations growing over time and buyers and tenants attracted to homes with low running costs.

As a direct result of all of the above, pay-back times on energy efficiency measures and renewable energy systems, such as automated wood systems, heat pumps and solar collectors, will shrink. Demand is keeping costs fairly high but government incentives are available which make some schemes attractive in the right circumstances, even at today's energy prices.

Particularly with the introduction of generous feed-in tariffs (FIT's) for microgeneration and the imminent arrival of a Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) for biomass, heat pump and solar heating, the market for renewable energy systems is fast-growing but is fairly impenetrable by non-specialists. Quality of advice is very variable as new entrants pour into the micro-renewable energy sector and the customer is in a very vulnerable position.

Some government-funded bodies such as the Carbon Trust, the Energy Saving Trust and the Energy Saving Scotland Advice Centre network can provide basic advice on the use of renewable energy. However, except for larger businesses, detailed and genuinely independent, site-specific and objective advice is hard to find but very important and valuable.

In the past, the choice of methods for heating and powering a building was limited and basic. However with the arrival of a great variety of renewable energy options and incentives it is now broad and complicated and the assistance of an independent specialist such as Bell Ingram is essential to ensure the best possible outcome.

The most cost-effective arrangement for any building, new or old, domestic or commercial will involve a combination of insulation and other energy efficiency measures, heat recovery, gas, oil, biomass (logs, chips, pellets, grain, straw), heat pump (ground, air or water-source), solar (thermal or photovoltaic), micro-hydro or small-scale wind.

The suitability of the myriad combinations of these systems is very site sensitive. Ultimately, the difference in the capital cost and the payback between the right and the wrong choice can be huge – a fast payback or no payback.

Images L-R: Mann Power Consulting Archimedean Screw, REFO Woodchip Boiler, Renewables Devices Wind Turbine.

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