

Energy Research, Development and Demonstration

Response to Consultation paper

May 2005

Donegal County Council

Introduction

Donegal County Council in common with other local authorities through out Ireland was given responsibility for co-ordinating and facilitating the establishment and operation of the County Development Boards. For this purpose, the Council set up a new Community, Enterprise and Cultural Services Unit, which has been directly responsible for providing this support.

The partnership model of the County Development board allows for a co-ordinated approach to issues, which may not be practical through other models.

The Donegal Energy Action Team, under the direction of the Community and Enterprise section, has been addressing energy management issues since 2000 and it is envisaged that this work would be continued in the future

Donegal County Council have been involved in a number of diverse projects which impact on energy and the environment and would like to take the lead with its partners in the County Development Board in initiating a field scale Research, Development and Demonstration study.

We outline below a proposal for the development of a research project within the region.

Section 4.

All Island Perspective.

Donegal County Council is currently co-operating with adjacent councils in the North in the areas of water, and waste management. It would be well positioned to engage in work with a cross border dimension. The system boundaries for a field scale study could extend across the political boundaries.

Section 6

Links with the Environment.

Introduction.

Donegal County Council with its partners in the County Development Board are supporting a number of projects, which impact on the area of energy use within the county. These would include

- Forestry
- Production of Bio Diesel
- Anaerobic Digestion and energy recovery
- Social Housing with communal renewable heating.
- Development of a Technology park based on sustainable energy technology.

Forestry

Donegal County Council is actively promoting the use of Renewable energy through the work of the Forestry Forum and the Forest Link project. www.forest-link.com/. This Intereg funded project is exploring amongst other things the development of a market for forest waste and the role it would have as source of renewable energy both locally and nationally.

Agriculture.

Donegal County Council along with our partner Derry City Council are engaged in a Non Food Use of Land project. This Intereg funded project is looking at land use other than for conventional crops. Energy crops in the form of Oil Seed rape and willow are currently being grown in the county. Energy recovery from agricultural wastes and other food wastes is also under active consideration.

Social Housing

Donegal County Council have received a proposal from a local housing association to develop a cluster of social houses, which incorporate a high level of renewable energy technology. The developers have included communal heating as part of the design brief. This model could serve as a demonstration for other local authorities with a social housing remit.

Economic Development.

The Economic Forum of the County Development board recognises the role renewable energy offers in terms of displacement of imports into the county and the economic benefits which would accrue from this. There is also a market opportunity to be exploited in the area of renewables.

Environment

Our partners, on the CDB, the Letterkenny Institute of Technology have adopted a renewable energy remit from the Environmental Forum. They will act lead partners in the area of Research in the area of renewable energy within the county. They have considerable in house capability in the energy field.

Donegal County Councils Core Service Provision.

Donegal County Council is keenly aware of the environmental aspects of the provision of its core services. There is a national awareness of role energy recovery would play in waste management. There is an internal willingness to address these environmental aspects through the modification of its activities and this transition would be an integral part of the study.

Potential for Energy Research, Development and Demonstration.

Donegal County Council envisages a role for itself and its partners in the County Development Board to engage in a field scale energy study with links to the environment and economic activity.

We would propose that the specific projects noted above and others, which will materialise in time, along with elements of the Councils core service provision will form the basis of a field scale study of energy usage within the region and how it would impact on the environment and economic development.

With our partners in the Letterkenny Institute of Technology we will seek to capture and analyse the costs and benefits of the various projects. Complete lifecycle analysis would be carried out on all relevant parts of the projects to ensure the development of robust models. The development of Carbon Balances would be a feature of this study. This empirical evidence would be made available to relevant bodies and would allow for evidence-based decision-making and inform policy formulation.

The development of the Technology Park would allow for field scale study and demonstration of energy recovery technology. This would be done both on a commercial and academic basis.

Conclusion.

This proposal from the County Council with its partners in the County Development board offers a unique opportunity to engage in this multi faceted joined up study.

We are seeking a forum to develop this proposal and feel that such a concept would merit consideration in the development of your Research, Development and Demonstration brief.

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