.

Forestry and Wood Update

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# COFORD Call for Research Proposals

COFORD invites proposals for funding from suitably qualified individuals and organisations to conduct research in the following areas:

**Strategic research**

* The role of forests in climate change mitigation and adaptation
* Biodiversity of plantation and native forests
* Forest management and planning, wood harvesting and transport
* Forest economics

**Applied research**

* Forest product and process development
* Communications and information technology applications in the forest sector
* Mechanisation of silviculture and harvesting.

Application documentation (including scoping documentation for the strategic research areas) can be downloaded from the Funding section of the [COFORD website](https://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/defaultarticle.php?cArticlePath=141) or on request from: Lilian Patterson; phone 01 2130725; email: info@coford.ie

The closing date for receipt of strategic research proposals is Friday 7 July 2006 at 5:00 pm. Applied research proposals may be submitted up to the end of 2006.

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# Small-scale forestry conference

GMIT is hosting a conference on ***Small-scale Forestry and Rural Development: The intersection of ecosystems, economics and society***, from 18 to 23 June 2006.

Small-scale forests by their nature, often represent considerable “viability” challenges to their owners and/or to the agencies responsible for developing policies and programmes to support and regulate them. Recently, the emphasis in management objectives appears to have shifted from intensive, exclusive and singular (timber productivity) to a broader, more inclusive multipurpose approach. Concurrent with changes in the motivations for small-scale forest ownership/management, are the challenges of: ensuring continuity of supply from a disparate source; creating new markets for new forest products; and devising methods for internalising the welfare benefits of healthy and diverse forests for the owners of these forests.

The evolving nature of small-scale forestry presents a multitude of questions and challenges for the owners themselves, the practitioners working in the forests, the extension and rural development services that deal with forest owners and the public bodies who represent and regulate them. It is these questions and challenges that this conference hopes to open for debate at an international level. Papers are presented from 23 countries worldwide including Australia, USA, several African states and many European countries.

The IUFRO (International Union of Forest Research Organisations) unit 3.08 specialises in research of small-scale forestry issues. The group was established in 1986 with the purpose: to exchange information on research problems, ongoing research efforts and research results related to the management of small-scale non-industrial private forest woodlots.

The objective for this conference is to stimulate discussion and debate through the exchange of ideas between small-scale forestry practitioners and researchers worldwide. Such debate can contribute to awareness and assist in disseminating new ideas and possible solutions, that may be applied in countries at different levels of development, within the “small-scale forestry” sectors.

Organised on behalf of the IUFRO 3.08 Small-scale Forestry Group, the Symposium is hosted by the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology in collaboration with COFORD (National Council for Forest Research and Development), Coillte (The Irish Forestry Company) and Teagasc (Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority). This event is supported by COFORD under its Networking and Knowledge Transfer Initiative.

The programme and registration form can be downloaded from the [COFORD website](https://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/Seminars/2006/SSF/GMIT-programme.pdf). For further information contact Sarah Wall, Forest Management Group, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, Dublin Road, Galway, Ireland; email: sarah.wall@gmit.ie or fax: 091 751107

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# Management of Soils and Nutrients in River Catchments

Two COFORD/ECI workshops on ***Management of Soils and Nutrients in River Catchments*** will be led by Professor Calvin Rose¸ Griffith University, Australia, who is a worldrenowned expert on soil erosion and conservation, land management, soil physics, chemical transport in soils and mathematical modelling of environmental systems. Professor Rose has authored five books and over 150 journal papers.

Other contributors will include Dr Eugene Hendrick - COFORD; and Dr Michael Rodgers, Markus Mueller, Liwen Xiao and Dr Mark Healy – Civil Engineering Department, NUI, Galway. The same material will be covered at both workshops. The venues and dates for the workshops are:

• 7 July 2006: National University of Ireland, Galway

• 14 July 2006: Marine Institute, Newport, Co Mayo

These workshops are of direct relevance to professionals working on projects related to the Water Framework Directive. Techniques for quantifying soil, nutrient and other losses from a number of forestry and agricultural activities, will be presented. These techniques will also be relevant to major infrastructural projects, e.g. motorway construction.

The morning session will include a number of presentations on work carried out by Professor Rose and at NUI, Galway. The afternoon session will include a short workshop where participants will be encouraged to explore methods of identifying and quantifying contaminant release from various land activities of interest to them. After the workshop session, there will be a demonstration of equipment used in quantifying releases from soils.

Persons interested in attending these workshops should register with COFORD before 29 June 2006 indicating their particular interest in the workshop topics and preferred choice of venue (registration form can be downloaded from the [COFORD website](https://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/defaultarticle.php?cArticlePath=129_205_330)).

The number of participants at each workshop will be limited to 30 and there will be a charge of €50 per participant. Early application is advised, and participant places will be allocated in the order of receipt of completed application forms. Timetable and workshop details will be communicated to participants by 3 July 2006.

Attendance at the workshop (including refreshments and lunches) is subject to a registration fee of €50.00 per person. Further information can be found at www.coford.ie.

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# Carbon corner

## Think long term sink

Balancing long-term perspectives and short-term expedients is a perennial challenge facing foresters. Climate change is a good example: during the climate change negotiations forests were at the front-line, providing negotiators with wriggle-room in setting levels of greenhouse gas emissions for the period 2008-2012. All well and good, and Ireland is a significant beneficiary on foot of the afforestation programme since 1990. But forests will be harvested and reforested in the future, and this year’s carbon sink can become next year’s source of greenhouse gases.

Over the long-term afforested areas will remove more carbon than they release, and will contribute to reducing levels of greenhouse gases. However, the accounting frameworks in the international processes are based on annual net changes in carbon stocks.

An important proposition arising from these considerations is that if afforestation rates tail off, then in the not too distant future carbon stock changes in the Kyoto-eligible forest could go below the line, as crops are harvested, and today’s carbon asset will become a liability, until reforestation begins to replace the carbon harvested. So what needs to be done by the responsible agencies and government to address this contingency?

One of the fundamental principles underpinning forest management is sustained yield. It is variously defined – in this context a useful one comes from the University of California’s cooperative forestry extension service: Management of forest land to produce a relatively constant amount of wood products, revenue, or wildlife (<http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/departments/espm/extension/GLOSS.HTM>). A simple example is a programme that plants a constant area of land each year for the length of a rotation. At the end of the programme there will be a sustained level of production of goods and services.

Applying this principle can help to answer the question of how to avoid a future sink liability. In the Irish context, the ‘since 1990’ afforestation programme contribution to Kyoto compliance is based on a 16,000 ha per year planting rate. Taking an average rotation length of 45 years, with some crops being felled at 30-years-of-age, then around the year 2020 emissions from harvested areas will become significant, which should be balanced by sequestration in younger crops. Balancing will happen as long as there is a sufficient area of younger forests to compensate for harvest – the sustained yield principle – but if afforestation tails off between now and 2020, then emissions could begin to exceed sequestration. To address this liability a prudent and sensible policy would be to maintain afforestation at the 16,000 ha per year rate - out to 2035 - a full rotation. Such a level of planting would increase the forest area by another 450,000 ha or thereabouts, to a level not far off the 17% forest cover envisaged in the 1996 *Growing for the Future*, the current forest policy document.

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# Forest Energy 2006

The second phase of the Forest Energy 2006 programme is due to take place in the weeks from 23 August to 1 September. The programme is an initiative of COFORD, Teagasc and Waterford Institute of Technology, aimed at demonstrating cost effective production of quality wood chip fuel. During the spring of this year energy assortment harvesting systems were demonstrated in a range of conifer and broadleaf stands and in crops on Bord na Móna cutaway. The performance, productivity and cost of each system was documented. Moisture content, the critical factor in wood chip quality, has been determined at felling: the efficacy of summer drying will be assessed when chipping takes place at the end of August. The demonstration sites will be the same as the ones used for the harvesting demonstrations. Three chippers will be demonstrated: a tractor-mounted chipper with self-loading grapple and towing a chip trailer; a self-propelled terrain chipper with a chip forwarder; and a truck-mounted chipper. The tractor-mounted chipper and terrain chipper are capable of driving along the extraction racks, grabbing the felled trees and chipping into a trailer. The truck-mounted chipper will be used to chip energy wood stacks at the roadside.

Chipping demonstrations:

* 23 August in Frenchpark, Co Roscommon
* 25 August in Swan, Co Laois
* 28 August in Portlaw, Co Kilkenny
* 30 August in Kilbrin, Co Cork
* 1 September at Bord na Mona Boora, Co Offaly

No booking is required to attend the events. Assembly times and locations times will be announced in the national and local media, closer to the date of the event (please check [www.woodenergy.ie](http://www.woodenergy.ie) in the days coming up to events for any updates).

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# European Pellets Conference 2007

This conference will be held on 28 February 2007 in Wels, Austria in the frame of the next World Sustainable Energy Days.

Pellet markets in many European countries have seen a remarkable development over the last few years. Encouraging increases in demand lead to new challenges in supply when moving from market niches to mass markets.

The conference will provide information on pellet technologies, innovation and market trends as well as an opportunity to meet a majority of the European players in the pellets sector to discuss new co-operation projects. Conference topics will include: technology trends and innovation; markets in Europe and around the globe; raw materials and potentials; products and services; strategies, programmes and financing; promotion and successful market establishment

The World Sustainable Energy Days are held in parallel to the Energiesparmesse, an exhibition and trade show dedicated to renewable energy sources and energy efficiency. The annual [World Sustainable Energy Days](http://www.esv.or.at/esv/index.php?id=228&L=1) offer a number of other high-profile events, including the conferences [European Energy Efficiency Conference](http://www.wsed.at/wsed/index.php?id=1659&L=1), Energy Future 2030, Rural development & sustainable energy, and a day of site-visits.

For further information about all these events go to [www.wsed.at](http://www.wsed.at) or email office@esv.or.at.

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# Ash species in Europe – Biological characteristics and practical guidelines for sustainable use

A useful and informative book on ash in Europe was produced recently by FRAXIGEN – a research project funded under the Fifth EC Framework Programme (Biodiversity and Ecosystems), co-ordinated by Dr David Boshier, Dr Peter Savill and Dr Janet Stewart of the Oxford Forestry Institute. The project had the following objectives:

* To study patterns of gene flow and genetic diversity in the three European ash species and observe how these are influenced by variation in reproductive biology.
* Study how natural ash populations have adapted to their environment, and how selection by humans for productive characters has affected adaptive variation
* To provide guidance for governmental, private and public interest groups on the collection, exploitation and conservation of ash genetic resources

The book provides information on the three ash species native to Europe: *Fraxinus excelsior* L. (common ash), *Fraxinus angustifolia* Vahl (narrow-leaved ash) and *Fraxinus ornus* L. (manna ash) and a useful practical guide for the differentiation of *F. excelsior* and *F. angustifolia* using buds; shoots/stems; leaflets; gender; inflorescences/fructifications and fruit as criteria. The key is particularly useful from an Irish perspective, considering the difficulties experienced over the past decade following the inadvertent use of ‘brown bud’ ash(*Fraxinus angustifolia* Vahl (narrow-leaved ash)), sourced from European nurseries. Also included are key conclusions for policy makers and field practitioners, nursery operators and seed collectors.

Contact COFORD for further information on FRAXIGEN. Copies of the report are available (free of charge) from Dr David Boshier at the Department of Plant Science, University of Oxford, South Parks Road, Oxford OXI 3RB, Great Britain; email david.boshier@plants.ox.ac.uk

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# Hardwood Matters – Final call for contributions

The deadline for receiving contributions to our next issue of Hardwood Matters has been extended to Friday 9 June. If you have hardwoods for sale or wish to purchase some hardwood timber then Hardwood Matters is the ideal medium for such transactions and is entirely free-of-charge. Transactions arising from Hardwood Matters are confidential to the buyer and seller and are not monitored by COFORD. [Complete the form online](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/questions_create.php?questions_areas_id=64)  or [download the form](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/HardwoodMatters/cataloguelisting.doc), complete and return it to COFORD, Arena House, Arena Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18.

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# BIHIP Sweet Chestnut Group

The meeting of the British and Irish Hardwood Improvement (BIHIP) Sweet Chestnut Group was held in East Sussex on 10 May 2006. Ted Horgan is the Irish representative on the group. He reports as follows:

The main theme of the meeting was timber technology. The group was met at The Woodland Centre, Whitesmith, East Sussex, by Edward Stenhouse, a member of the Chestnut Group, and his business partner Nigel Braden.

Prior to a guided tour of the factory where the various processes were demonstrated, the woners gave a detailed account of how their small company was leading the way in supplying sweet chestnut building components from local renewable sources. The innovative feature of their product is the use of small dimension chestnut timber, which is naturally durable, and very strong, especially when grown quickly from coppice woodlands. They further explained, and later demonstrated, that by selecting short lengths of defect-free timber, finger-jointing and laminating using modern glues, large sections can be built up which have a wide range of applications both for interior and exterior use.

The group then moved to Chiddingly for a meeting to discuss a range of BIHIP related subjects, including funding, status of plus the tree selection programme, possibility of Irish chestnut plus tree selection, promotional campaign and the securing of clonal seed orchard sites.

The final stop of the day was at the Woodland Enterprise Centre, where the main focus was the first building at the centre, known as “The Sweet-Chestnut Gridshell”. Built from both softwood and hardwood timber, including a structural gridshell from locally grown chestnut coppice, this building demonstrates the use of small section timbers, rather than heavy beams, to support the structure. The building is located in a woodland setting, and comprises 550 m2 of office space, an exhibition hall and meeting rooms for timber and woodland events.

For more details about BIHIP please contact John Fennessy (email: john.fennessy@coford.ie) or click on to [www.bihip.com](http://www.bihip.com)

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# COFORD Seminar: Managing our broadleaf resource to produce quality broadleaf timber

This COFORD event, which was scheduled for 30 June 2006, has been deferred to the autumn. It will now take place on Friday 13 October and the theme will be the early management, with particular emphasis on thinning, of fast growing ash plantations. The programme will cover ash stands both pure and in mixtures. For more information contact John Fennessy (email john.fennessy@coford.ie).

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# COFORD establishes Working Group on Edible Forest Fungi

Recently, the first meeting of the Working Group on Edible Forest Fungi was held in Portlaoise. This meeting was exploratory in nature with the group examining issues such as:

* Extent of knowledge on forest fungi in Ireland
* Level of information on distribution of species
* Woodland types where different species of fungi can be found
* The need for a comprehensive national survey of forest fungi
* Markets for edible forest fungi

The next meeting of this group is scheduled to take place in mid June. Those interested in edible forest fungi can contact John Fennessy (email john.fennessy@coford.ie)

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# Sustainable Energy Ireland's Energy Agreements Programme

On 30 May 2006 Minister Noel Dempsey TD officially launched Sustainable Energy Ireland's Energy Agreements Programme. In his speech he said: “Sustainable energy increasingly takes centre stage in the development of economic, environmental and energy policies. We are all aware of the critical issues which are driving us towards a more sustainable economy. The forthcoming Energy Policy Green paper will set an ambitious agenda for energy over the medium to longer term - with Sustainable Energy as the key over-riding theme. Energy efficiency plays no small part in this.

At the basic level, energy efficiency is common sense and prudent housekeeping but improved energy efficiency means ever better exploitation of available energy. Reducing the high percentage of wasted energy is a crucial part of the global, EU and Irish energy challenge. As part of the recently published Directive on energy end-use efficiency and energy services, Ireland has committed to making every effort to improve energy efficiency by 1% each year over 9 years, (from 2008).

From my time as Minister for the Environment, I am aware that environmentally friendly initiatives where companies can regulate their own behaviour, work extremely well. The continued success of the Repak initiative is just one example of this and if industry embraces the concept of energy efficiency with the same vigour, then much progress can be made.

I am confident that the energy efficiency target can be met, if not exceeded, particularly in the context of our achievements in recent years - sustained economic growth coupled with a reduced level of energy intensity. Over the past thirteen years, GDP has steadily increased and the gap between economic growth and our total primary energy requirement has widened. For example, in 2004 the economy grew by 4.4% while energy use increased by only 1.4%.

The energy agreements programme will no doubt contribute to the achievement of the energy efficiency target.

The need for companies such as those represented here today to remain competitive in the global market needs no emphasis from me. Effective management of energy can contribute both to reducing costs and maintaining competitiveness.The considerable savings made by members of the Large Industry Energy Network (LIEN) over the past decade demonstrates evidence of the benefits of adopting a strategic approach to energy management. In 2004 alone €20 million in energy costs were avoided.

The Energy Agreements programme is aimed at our largest energy using companies, several of which are already involved with LIEN, now in its eleventh year. This new programme will build on the achievements to date, by requiring firms to work towards certification to the new Irish Standard on energy management, IS 393. In return, SEI will offer participating companies tailor-made support in reaching the standard and in benefiting fully from the process.

The programme will help every player on the team to be a winner and will help meet our Kyoto targets and maintain competitiveness, thus helping to sustain our economy. I would urge all present to fully engage with the process and to take advantage of the specialised support on offer, remembering all the while that we are working towards a common goal.

In the Autumn I intend to launch a major national energy efficiency campaign to persuade all consumers of the benefits of prudent, efficient use of energy. This multi-annual campaign will aim to change behaviour to reduce waste, use more energy-efficient equipment and processes and use energy more wisely.

The ten companies signing up to the programme today are industry leaders in this area and set an excellent example to all sectors. Society as a whole will reap the benefits, which accrue from your combined activities.

As Minister, with responsibility for this area, I will publish the first comprehensive Green Paper on Energy Policy in nearly three decades, next month. The Green Paper will set the framework for energy investment and provide an economic environment where your companies can continue to thrive. I am hugely supportive of the effort of these companies and encourage all major industrial energy users to come on board.

Source: DCMNR Press Release 30 May 2006

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# Renewable Energy Grants Extremely Popular With Consumers

Irish consumers have shown an extremely positive level of interest in the new renewable energy 'Greener Homes' Scheme announced earlier this year.

"The scheme, which supports investment in renewable energy heat technologies (such as wood chip and wood pellet boilers and stoves, solar panels and heat pumps), has proven to be popular with the public from day one and is really raising peoples awareness of cleaner, more efficient options for heating their homes," said the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Noel Dempsey T.D.

The interest in the Greener Homes Scheme has been very encouraging so far. In the eight-week period since the scheme was launched Sustainab! le Energy Ireland (SEI) has received 2,500 applications for grant aid, with 1,275 applications for heat pumps, 725 applications for wood chip and wood pellet boilers and stoves and 500 applications for solar panels.

"The key objectives behind the Greener Homes Scheme includes raising consumers awareness of renewable energy choices for their homes, stimulating the market for domestic renewable technologies by encouraging more people to purchase and install renewable technologies, and achieving a positive fuel switch from fossil fuels to more environmentally friendly renewable alternatives," added the Minister.

The scheme also complements the development of our renewable electricity programme which now has 850MW of renewable electricity capacity connected to the grid. Meanwhile, the new electricity support scheme called REFIT opens for applications on Thursday 1 June 2006. This scheme will provide support for a further 400MW of renewable capacity and will ensure that Ireland fully meets its European Union 2010 target of 13.2% of electricity consumption generated from renewable energy sources.

"The REFIT scheme will see the electricity needs of 260,000 homes provided for by renewable energy sources. It will reduce our dependency on imported fossil fuels by 37 and a half million barrels of oil over 15 years. Crucially it will prevent the emission of over 1 million tonnes of polluting greenhouse gases annually. I look forward to seeing continued support for all kinds of renewable energy when the REFIT programme opens for business," said the Minister.

Source: DCMNR Press Release 29 May 2006

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# Vacancies at EFI

Two posts are available at EFI, namely posts of Leader of EURO\_FOREST PORTAL and Assistant in the same project. For further information, go to <http://www.efi.fi/organisation/open-posts/>

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# Call for proposals for new COST Actions

COST brings together research teams in different countries working on specific topics. It finances networking of nationally funded activities in supporting meetings, conferences, short term scientific exchanges and outreach activities. COST therefore does not fund research itself. Currently more than 200 scientific networks (Actions) are supported. Every year approximately 45 new Actions are approved and started.

Developing stronger links amongst European scientists is crucial to building the European Research Area (ERA). COST’s main objective is to stimulate new, innovative, interdisciplinary and broad scientific networks in Europe. COST activities are carried out by research teams to strengthen the foundations for building scientific excellence in Europe.

COST invites proposals for Actions contributing to the scientific, economic, cultural or societal development of Europe. Proposals playing a precursor role for other European programmes and/or involving young groups’ ideas are especially welcome.

COST is organised in nine scientific and technical Domains (Biomedicine and Molecular Biosciences; Chemistry and Molecular Sciences and Technologies; Earth System Science and Environmental Management; Food and Agriculture, Forests, their Products and Services; Individuals, Society, Culture and Health; Information and Communication Technologies; Materials, Physical and Nanosciences; Transport and Urban Development).

Proponents are invited to indicate their preference for one Domain. Proposals not fitting this broad disciplinary structure are also welcome and will be assessed separately.

Proposals should include researchers from a minimum of five COST member states and should network nationally funded research activities. Their work plan should include no more than four targeted Working Groups and include activities such as meetings, short term scientific missions, work shops, conferences and outreach activities. On average financial support of some € 90.000 p.a. as grant for up to 4 years can be expected.

A two stage process will be followed to assess proposals. Preliminary Proposals, submitted using the on-line template at www.cost.esf.org/opencall should provide a brief overview of the proposal and its impact. Proposals will be screened for eligibility. Proposals not conforming to the eligibility criteria of COST (e.g. requesting research funding) will be excluded. A pre-selection will rank the remaining Preliminary Proposals of which some 75 per collection date will be invited to submit a Full Proposal. These will be peer reviewed according to the assessment criteria which can be found at www.cost.esf.org/opencall. The decision will normally be taken within six months of the collection date below and the Actions should expect to start about six weeks thereafter.

The first collection date for Preliminary Proposals is 31 May 2006. Full Proposals will be invited by 30 June 2006 for submission by 15 September 2006. The next collection date is expected to be 30 March 2007

Proponents may wish to contact their national COST Coordinator (CNC) for information and guidance. Proposals must be submitted on-line to the COST Office web site. For details including the criteria, a list of COST Member States and contact details for the COST National Coordinators see www.cost.esf.org/cnc.

COST receives financial support for its coordinating activities from the EU RTD Framework Programme. The COST Office, established by the European Science Foundation (ESF), acting as the implementing agent for COST during the 6th FP on RTD, provides the scientific secretariat for COST activities. All grants to be offered in response to this call are subject to COST being awarded funds from the seventh RTD Framework Programme.

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# Wood Energy Advisory Service

The free advisory service on [www.woodenergy.ie](http://www.woodenergy.ie) is available and queries are being attended to by Pieter D. Kofman via email. Queries about the harvesting and supply chain sector of the wood energy industry, can be submitted online. Pieter can also be contacted between 9 and 12 am via Skype – the free software can be downloaded from [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com) and allows telephone calls to be conducted via your computer, free of charge. He can also be contacted by phone during the designated hours on +45 75 88 1519 or mobile +45 28 55 77 58.

Please note that queries about boilers, stoves or approved installers should be directed to Sustainable Energy Ireland, Renewable Energy Information Office, Shinagh House, Bandon, Co Cork. Tel: 023-42193, Fax: 023-29154, Email: renewables@reio.ie.

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