

GB vs Northern Ireland RHI Changes

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18 November 2015 changes

The NIRHI had regulatory amendments go live on 18 November 2015 which brings changes to the scheme. This document has been updated to reflect these changes.

In summary these are:

- Biomass changes for those with a date of accreditation on or after 18 November 2015:
 - introduction of a tiered tariff for small (0-19kW) and medium (20kW-199kW) biomass
 - banding changes to medium and large biomass tariff bands. Medium is now 20kW - 199kW, and large is 200kW - 999kW.
 - there is an annual cap of 400,000kWh for eligible heat payments for small and medium biomass
- Two specific tariffs for biomass CHP have been introduced – one for new CHP installations, and one for CHP installations which have been converted from fossil fuel.
- No limit on capacity for solid biomass and municipal waste CHP installations.
- ‘Eligible heat use’ definition extended to include heat used for cleaning or drying carried out on a commercial basis otherwise than in a building. This is applicable to all heat uses from 18 November 2015, (not just those with a date of accreditation from 18 Nov). This means that existing participants could make an amendment to add a heat use of this type.
- CHP installations can now be classed as ‘simple’ for metering purposes, whereas before they were automatically classed as complex.
- Biomass CHP systems accredited on the NIRO on or after 1st October 2015 could be eligible for the RHI on their heat output (but will not be able to also receive the uplift on this under the RO)
- Relocation of accredited installations allowed, where the relocation occurs on or after 18 November 2015

Summary

This document summarises the main differences between the Great Britain (GB) and Northern Ireland (NI) RHI Schemes based on the original Regulations as well as changes on both schemes since then.

The Major Differences

DETI Branded Guidance

- The Guidance volumes for the NI RHI are DETI branded and published on the DETI website (with a link from the Ofgem NI homepage).
- Ofgem is administering the scheme on behalf of DETI as made possible under section 114 of the Energy Act 2011. Any mention of 'The Energy Act' relates to the 2011 version and not the 2008 as in the GB guidance.

Technology Eligibility

Biomass

Applicants must demonstrate that their biomass boiler has been designed and installed to use solid biomass as its only primary fuel source on NI RHI scheme, but not on GB.

On NI, municipal waste is an eligible technology but on GB it is all categories of 'waste.'

Solid biomass including solid biomass contained in municipal solid waste is only eligible for NIRHI up to but not including 1000kWth. The Regulations only provide for 1MW and above for large heat pumps (Ground Source heat pumps, water source heat pumps and deep geothermal only). There is no capacity limit on GB for biomass and waste.

Heat pumps

Air source heat pumps are not eligible on the NI RHI scheme, but they are on GB RHI scheme.

Eligible sources of heat for heat pumps on both schemes are different.

There is no requirement to measure SPF of heat pumps on the NI RHI scheme.

Biogas

On NI, biogas is only eligible up to 199kW.

CHP

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Combined heat and power (CHP) requirements are considerably different, please see the relevant technology chapters of the Volume 1 Guidance documents for a comprehensive overview.

Biomass/Solar/Heat pumps

Installations used to gain installer Microgeneration Certification Scheme accreditation are not eligible on the NI scheme.

Metering

Metering requirements are different for NI installations, please see chapter 7 of the Guidance for a comprehensive overview. The GB ND RHI requires the minimum number of meters necessary to calculate scheme payments; this is not the case for Northern Ireland. Heat loss from external pipework cannot be 'disregarded' even if it has been properly insulated. However, a heat loss calculation can be submitted instead of installing additional meters.

Air Quality Requirements

Applicants with biomass boilers will not need to submit an RHI emission certificate or valid environmental permit with their application on the NI RHI scheme.

Sustainability Requirements

NIRHI participants will not be required to meet the sustainability requirements on land use and greenhouse gas emissions.

Date of Commissioning eligibility

For Northern Ireland this is 1st September 2010 (GB is 15th July 2009).

Eligible Heat uses

NIRHI is now in line with GBRHI in terms of eligible heat uses. From 18 November 2015, NIRHI also supports specific heat uses used otherwise than in a building for drying or cleaning carried out on a commercial basis.

Council Tax / Business Rates

In the GB Scheme, Council Tax bandings are used to decipher between domestic and non-domestic properties. In Northern Ireland it is Domestic and Business Rates. Further guides to help potential applicants understand their domestic rate banding or business rating can be found on the Land and Property Services (LPS) website. Enquiries can also be directed to the local Domestic Rates Officer who may be able to provide evidence of status if required (multiple domestic rates bills or business rates bills etc).

The Northern Ireland RHI introduced support for single domestic premises from 9th December 2014.

Source of funding

Since 9 December 2014, NIRHI applicants in receipt of a grant from public funds and other public support can repay the part of their grant relating to the eligible installation in order to have their installation accredited to the RHI, in line with the GB scheme.

For NI, grant repayments *can't* be repaid through reductions to periodic support payments as they can with GB.

Reporting

- **Reporting Requirements;** what DETI will publish on their website. The following changes have been made:
 - a. Taken out Biomass Sustainability reporting and replaced with Biomethane Sustainability reporting. (In the NI version – there is no requirement for Biomass installations to provide sustainability reporting, however there is for Biomethane producers. NI Regs. 32, Schedule 2.)
 - b. Kept in the reporting of 'total amount of heat generated for which payments have been made under the RHI' taken out 'as well as details of what this heat has been used for' as it is not supported by Regulation 51.
 - c. Taken out 'we will aim to update this information daily' for the same reason as above.