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Northern Ireland RHI Audit summary.docx

Hi Cat, Amy,

Please find attached a brief summary of the Northern Ireland audits. Please let me know if there are any additional points you require on this.

Regards,

Oliver

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Northern Ireland RHI Audit Programme

Introduction

Ricardo-AEA was commissioned to undertake five non-domestic RHI audits in Northern Ireland during March 2014. All the audits related to solid biomass installations. The audits followed the same steps as those undertaken by Ricardo-AEA across Great Britain for Ofgem. The five sites selected for audit were of comparable size but varying complexity and geographical location, see table 1 below.

Table 1: NIRHI installations audited

NIRHI no.	Installation name	Technology	Size (kW _{th})	Complexity
Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry	Charles Hurst Ferrari show room	Solid biomass boiler	97	complex
	Enniskillen Hotel Biomass Energy Cabin	Solid biomass boiler	99	complex
	McKee Mushrooms Plant 2	Solid biomass boiler	99	complex
	ROL Testing Ltd	Solid biomass boiler	40	simple
	Pierce Communications	Solid biomass boiler	99	complex

Audit findings

Across the five audits no non-compliances were identified. Indeed three had no observations identified either. The two observations identified were minor points:

- **Commercially sensitive information redacted by the RHI Inquiry** was identified as not having boiler nameplates fitted
- **Commercially sensitive information redacted by the RHI Inquiry** was identified as not complying with a non-standard condition relating to the biomass boiler and oil boiler operation. However, the auditor identified that given the metering configuration this would have no impact upon meter readings and so this was raised for Ofgem information only.

It is very positive that the audits identified just a couple of minor observations, which is much lower than identified during audits in GB. When comparing the findings to GB, the following factors may help explain the results of the Northern Ireland pilot.

One area that has seen a high level of non-compliances in GB is associated with maintaining biomass fuel records. Another issue associated with biomass is the use of waste wood which has fossil fuel contamination in the form of resins for which the participant is unaware of. Of the five Northern Ireland audits all were utilising biomass wood pellets supplied by Balcas Brites. This meant that all sites were using a uniform biomass product and had purchase invoices to hand. The greater problem in GB has been with sites using other forms of biomass to wood pellets, particularly self-supply and in the wood working sector.

A second feature of the Northern Ireland audits is that they were generally small and had one or two heat meters, thereby less complicated compared to some of the audits in GB.

Finally it should be caveated that a sample selection of 5 sites is very small and so it is difficult to comment on whether these findings are representative of the installations installed under the Northern Ireland RHI programme. In GB there have been many sites with limited or no issues as well so a wider sample size could lead to different conclusions.

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Recommendations for future NI audits

Should further RHI audits be undertaken in Northern Ireland it will obviously be important to select some that match the typical installations installed as per above. In addition it is recommended that consideration is given to the following parameters:

- Selection of installations that are utilising other forms of biomass than wood pellets, for example wood chips and self-supply biomass.
- Selection of sites above 100kW_{th}.
- Installations that have more than 2 heat meters.