

**COILLTE ESTABLISH NORTH WEST  
BIOMASS SUPPLY HUB**

Coillte are underpinning the future sustainable energy supply of a range of customers in the North West. These contracts displace several thousand litres of oil per week by providing more competitive energy costs for the businesses concerned thereby helping to maintain competitiveness and secure local jobs into the future. Having secured a number of biomass fuel supply agreement's it was necessary to establish a suitable local supply hub infrastructure to fulfil our operation and logistics requirements.



Coillte now operates its biomass fuel supply hub from Drumkeen, located between Letterkenny and Ballybofey. The depot comprises of a large 10 acre secure log storage yard and 2500 m<sup>3</sup> of covered fuel storage sheds. In addition there is a weighbridge and a quality testing laboratory. The depot has a modern Starchl Drummond chipper capable of processing 20T/hr. It is operated under contract by Ecowood Energy Systems who are responsible for the day to day running of the depot. This hub serves clients as far West as Kilcar and East into Belfast, Northern

Ireland. Typically this fuel hub stores in excess of 20,000m<sup>3</sup> of logs on a daily basis.



Coillte is committed to a strategy that matches renewable energy requirements with local biomass supply and pulp feed stock is sourced by our local Coillte Forestry team from the North West region. These logs are sourced and delivered on a pre-planned basis several months in advance.



The logs are systematically stacked for open air drying down to the required moisture contents specific to each customers boiler requirements. The key to ensuring quality wood chip at the correct moisture content is to manage stock rotation and replenishment and to ensure suitable air flow through the stacks.



Stacks are also covered during the winter months. Each depot will have its own specific characteristics and seasonal variations in moisture need to be planned and controlled with great care. This can only be gained through experience and by having a strong partnership with your contractor.



All wood chip is produced strictly in accordance with quality specifications set out in I.S. CEN/TS 14961 : 2005. Moisture content samples are taken in aluminium sampling trays for testing by the oven dry method and/or using calibrated moisture testing devices. Particle size is controlled during the chipping process by the provision of the correct size screens on the chipper feed. Regular testing is undertaken to assess the percentage of fines.



Wood chip delivery vehicles comprise of larger moving floor trailers (20 to 24T loads) to smaller tipping vehicles with side blowers (8 to 16T loads) depending on the specific clients fuel handling and on-site storage infrastructure. Biomass is delivered and checked for compliance of moisture content, particle size and percentage fines. Each client is then invoiced per Giga Joule of energy delivered.

Des O'Toole, Commercial Business Development Manager for Coillte explains " In today's economic climate, Irish businesses cannot afford to ignore the high cost of energy. Natural gas is not available in the North West and many businesses are exposed to the volatile nature of traditional oil based fossil fuel prices. Unlike oil or gas; biomass is carbon neutral and Coillte offers long term supply contracts at competitive energy rates lower than current oil prices. For many businesses, this offers substantial annual energy savings, improves competitiveness and also provides a local economic stimulus through employment and the ancillary logistics services required".

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