

Press Release
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MISSING FiT DATA MAKES VALUE CHECKING IMPOSSIBLE

As a result of a Freedom of Information (FOI) request from the Renewable Energy Foundation (REF), Ofgem yesterday, 5th January 2011, began to publish large quantities of information relating to the installation of Feed-In Tariff (FiT) generators.(1)

REF applauds Ofgem's prompt response to their FOI request (full details Appendix 1) and their plan to update this invaluable database on a quarterly basis.

Yesterday's data publication allows the general public for the first time to see data on every single FiT registered generator, including general location (postcode area, region, country), technology type, capacity, and many other technical points of importance to analysts.

However, it has transpired that due to government's design of the FiT legislation **Ofgem is unable to determine how much electrical energy is actually being produced by any of these generators.**

REF asked "We also seek confirmation or otherwise that Ofgem does not hold the kWh generated by each individual FIT-registered installation." Ofgem replied: "Ofgem does not hold this data."

FiT generators are very heavily subsidised, and Government's own Regulatory Impact Assessments show that the FiT scheme will have a total lifetime cost to the general electricity consumer of over £8bn pounds, with very small compensating benefits (technically the Net Present Value is negative £8.2bn, i.e. is a cost to the public as distinct from a benefit (2).

REF believes it is extraordinary, that Ofgem has not been empowered to collect actual generation data to ensure that this very large transfer of wealth encourages optimal development of microgeneration rather than going to waste. Lack of this data also makes fraud monitoring difficult or impossible.

In fact, government, the regulator and the general public have no means of assessing the effectiveness of the FiT expenditure. In an age of inexpensive telemetric monitoring this is inexcusable.

Dr Lee Moroney, REF's principal data analyst, said: "Good data is essential for public accountability. Ofgem are clearly doing what they can, and we applaud their efforts in releasing this new FiTs information , but the key data related to the actual performance of the individual renewable technologies is missing. In order to protect the consumer interest, this has got to change."

END

For more information please email Margareta Stanley on press@ref.org.uk or telephone 020 79303636

Notes to Editors

About REF

The Renewable Energy Foundation is a registered charity promoting sustainable development for the benefit of the public by means of energy conservation and the use of renewable energy. See www.ref.org.uk

REF is supported by private donation and has no political affiliation or corporate membership. In pursuit of its principal goals REF highlights the need for an overall energy policy that is balanced, ecologically sensitive, and effective.

REF makes freely available the most comprehensive database of renewable energy generator performance in the United Kingdom: <http://www.ref.org.uk/roc-generators/>

Notes

(1) See

<http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Pages/MoreInformation.aspx?docid=13&refer=Sustainability/Environment/fits>

(2) http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/elec_financial/elec_financial.aspx

Appendix : The text of the letter from OFGEM is pasted below.

If you would like a copy of the original document please contact press@ref.org.uk for an emailed pdf.

Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) request for data on Feed-in Tariff (FiT) installations in the UK.

In your request of 2nd December, you asked Ofgem to release information on installations registered to date under the FIT scheme and licensees' periodic levelisation data. You also indicated that this would be a regular request. Ofgem has reviewed your request and decided to publish the requested information not subject to an exception under EIR on a quarterly basis (see Annex 2). In Annex 1 to this letter I have reproduced your questions in bold and our position on each piece of data in italics immediately underneath each question.

The information will be published on our website at www.ofgem.gov.uk/fits and it will be available in three separate zipped excel spreadsheets. One spreadsheet will contain information on installations registered under the FIT scheme and two remaining spreadsheets will include data relating to a specific levelisation period. All spreadsheets will be available from 5th January.

We will then update this information quarterly. The information on FIT installations will be updated at the end of each quarter, levelisation data will be published about three months after each levelisation period ends. (The January levelisation data covering the period between 1 October 2010 and 31 December 2010 will therefore be available at the end of March).

More frequent updates would take up disproportionate amounts of staff time to extract and would come into the general classification of `manifestly unreasonable' under EIR.

If you are unhappy with the decisions made in relation to your request, you may ask for an internal review. You should contact me via the FOI inbox, if you wish to complain.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours Sincerely

Paul Kitcher
Head of Information Management
OFGEM