



# Scheme Rules & Application Form

The Wood Fuel Quality Assurance (WFQA) Scheme is run by a voluntary committee of industry stakeholders and certified wood fuel suppliers and is administered by the Irish BioEnergy Association

## Scheme Rules

### 1.1 Introduction

The Wood Fuel Quality Assurance Scheme is a voluntary quality certification operating on the Island of Ireland and open to all wood fuel suppliers, suppliers wishing to be certified must meet required criteria laid out in the Scheme rules and the scheme Quality Manual.

This document describes the process from application to certification

### 1.2 Governance

The Wood Fuel Quality Assurance (WFQA) Scheme is overseen by an industry elected committee known as the Oversight Committee. Participants in the scheme can stand for election to the committee at the annual general meeting.

The scheme is administered by the Irish BioEnergy Association (IrBEA).

The WFQA certification process shall be independently audited on an annual basis by a recognised auditing organisation to be selected by the WFQA oversight committee.

### 1.3 Pre Application

Before making an application, suppliers should contact Noel Gavigan, the WFQA administrator:

Phone: 087 6845977

Email: [noelgavigan@irbea.org](mailto:noelgavigan@irbea.org)

### 1.4 Required attributes of wood fuel suppliers

Suppliers of wood fuel under the WFQA must commit to the following:

#### i. Raw material sourcing

- a. All raw material is fully traceable through chain of custody tracking and/or adequate felling licence identification.
- b. Non woody biomass fuels and certain types of recycled wood may be certified under the WFQA in line with conditions outlined in Section 2
- c. For information regarding phytosanitary (plant health) and EUTR\* import requirements, importers/agents are advised to contact the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine the following email addresses respectively: [forestprotection@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:forestprotection@agriculture.gov.ie) and [EUTR@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:EUTR@agriculture.gov.ie).

*\*Since March 2013, under the European Union Timber Regulation (EUTR), it is prohibited for an Operator to place illegal timber/timber products on the EU market in the course of a commercial activity. Operators are required to have and to apply a robust due diligence system (DDS) which confirms the legality of timber/timber products placed on the market based on the laws of the country of harvest. The EUTR is broad in scope as it applies to non-EU timber/timber products imported from outside of the European Union and placed on the EU market. The Regulation also applies to domestic and EU timber/timber products. Only EUTR compliant timber and timber products may be placed on the market by Operators following DDS which confirms the legality of the timber/timber product. Forest Sector Development Division of DAFM is Ireland's Competent Authority for implementation of the EUTR and can be contacted at [EUTR@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:EUTR@agriculture.gov.ie)*

## **II. Procedures for Certification of Non-Wood Biomass materials under the WFQA**

- a. The WFQA will consider certification of any biomass fuel that can be certified under ISO 17225.
- b. The proposed supplier must supply an initial sample of material, as well as a written description and any parameters that they currently have about the proposed fuel. For example, source, moisture content, size profile, packaging type (loose, bales, bags etc)
- c. The proposer must demonstrate that appliances exist that are CE certified to burn the proposed fuel.
- d. The WFQA committee will, in each case decide as to whether the fuel can be certified under the WFQA. Decisions will be by simple majority at a committee meeting or through email procedure.
- e. Following acceptance by the committee the fuel and supplier/proposer can be certified under the normal WFQA procedures.

## **III. Carbon Dioxide Emission Reduction**

All fuels certified under the WFQA must comply with the greenhouse gas savings as outlined in the Quality Manual and in accordance with the RED II Directive. This is understood to be a 70% reduction on the fossil fuel emissions of 80g CO<sub>2</sub>/Kwh.

## **IV. Quality Control**

- a. Suppliers must demonstrate knowledge of and an ability to control the normative requirements under ISO 17225
- b. Adequate sampling and testing programmes must be in place to ensure compliance.

## **3. Labelling Requirements / Customer information**

- a. Final product must be accompanied by appropriate information for the customer, this information can be detailed either on product labelling or through information sheets attached to consignments.
- b. Consumers must be informed of: Supplier details, Country of Origin, statement that the product is derived from wood compliant with WFQA requirements , and all other normative information outlined under the relevant ISO 17225 classification.
- c. The consumer must be provided with WFQA an up-to-date certification information including the WFQA assigned Quality Stamp and the certification number. In practice this may be through information on labels, accompanying information sheets or on invoices.
- d. Consumers must be informed (via labelling, information sheet or invoice info) of the requirement to store wood fuel in dry conditions, and that their combustion appliance must be maintained to the manufacturer's specifications. Customers must also be advised to ensure their chimney/flue is properly cleaned and where appropriate (i.e. with firewood) that a spark guard is used.
- e. WFQA certification stamp printed on bags can take two forms either;

- i. the existing long form with supplier identified and with certification number or,
  - ii. with certification number only.
- In both cases the template must be provided by the WFQA. See appendix

#### V. Other requirements and management and record keeping

- a. Suppliers must demonstrate tax compliance, show evidence of a health and safety statement and public liability insurance.
- b. All records must be kept for a minimum 2 years and made available for WFQA audit.
- c. Customer complaints procedures must ensure that complaints are recorded and responded to within 14 days.

### 1.5 Application

Applications are welcome, at no cost, from woodfuel suppliers. The application form (2<sup>nd</sup> last page of this document) lists the documentation to be submitted.

- All applicants must have and maintain public liability insurance. The amount of cover shall be appropriate to the risks but shall not be less than €100,000 or equivalent. Current insurance certificates must be available during site visits.
- A tax clearance certificate is also required and must be valid on the date of site visit(s)
- Suppliers must maintain an up to date Health and Safety statement. It is important that each certified supplier complies with the law in this area.

### 1.6 Initial Review

The WFQA administrator will conduct an initial review of the documentation submitted and provide feedback on any issues arising. Some may have to be addressed before a site inspection takes place. When the initial review shows that all required areas are addressed in the management system, a site inspection will be arranged

Before an inspection takes place applicants must have paid the WFQA membership fee at the relevant rate (last page of this document).

All applicants will be subject to a full site inspection, to determine compliance with the Scheme Rules, the quality manual and the requirements of ISO 17225. During the visit a sample of the wood fuel will be taken by the inspector in the presence of the applicant. The fuel will be bagged, sealed and delivered to an approved laboratory for analysis.

At the end of the site visit, a note of any issues identified will be provided to the applicant. The issues will be categorised as follows:

- **Major:** a failure to fulfil one or more requirements of the WFQA Scheme that raises doubt about the system's capability to achieve the expected outcomes or to effectively control the process to provide, consistently, wood fuel of the intended quality.
- **Minor:** a failure which does not impact the capability to provide, consistently, wood fuel of the intended quality.
- **Opportunity for improvement:** A suggestion for improving the management system or practice (from the point of view of efficiency or effectiveness rather than compliance).

Major issues must to be addressed before certification can be granted. This may be possible through submission of documentation (including photos) but may require a further site visit. If an extra site visit does become necessary, this will incur additional fees and expenses which will be charged at cost.

Minor issues require an action plan; the WFQA administrator has the right to verify the effectiveness of closure of such non-conformances at any time but this will not halt the process of certification.

### **1.7 Sample Testing**

Sample testing to the relevant criteria in ISO 17225 is conducted in a laboratory. Results will be included in the inspection final report. Where the test results do not support the supplier's moisture content declaration or other ISO 17225 criteria, the supplier will be requested to take action to address the relevant issue(s). Action may require a further sample but might result in the supplier amending the classification of the wood fuel.

### **1.8 Final Report**

The final report will be issued when relevant actions have been agreed and, if appropriate, remedial action completed. This will include confirmation that all fees have been paid as invoiced.

### **1.9 Certification**

Upon a satisfactory review, a WFQA certificate will be issued and the supplier will be listed on the WFQA website.

### **1.10 Mark (Label)**

After successful certification, the supplier will be issued with a unique WFQA mark (label) that includes their name, certification number, period of certification and products certified. The mark may be used on any advertising (including website), literature, stationery, signage, packaging, branding and vehicles. The mark may not be used without the certificate number. Where retail customers request that packed goods are not branded with the supplier contact information the WFQA certified supplier may label packaging with the WFQA mark and the certificate number only.

### **1.11 Re-Inspections**

Certificates are valid for 1 year and a re-inspection will be required for a supplier to renew their certificate.

### **1.12 Withdrawal of Certification**

Certification can be withdrawn if the quality system or the delivered fuel ceases to be complying. Voluntary withdrawal is also possible if circumstances change and the scheme is no longer appropriate. A maximum of 90 days' notice will be given to the supplier to address any issues and to confirm their effective resolution. Depending on the nature of the non-compliance the supplier may be given a lesser time period to comply.

Issues which might impact on continued certification may originate from :

- Customer complaint(s)
- Failure to meet specified fuel criteria
- Major issues found during an on-site audit



- Non-payment of membership fees.

An applicant may appeal any decision to the WFQA Oversight Committee. If certification is withdrawn or comes to a natural end, the following actions will be required:

- Return of any WFQA certificates
- Removal of WFQA certification marks from product, packaging, website and advertising
- Removal from all packaging, websites and other printed material, any reference to WFQA certification either current or historic

### 1.13 Complaints

In the first instance, when a complaint is received the supplier is expected to record the issues and any correspondence and to resolve the concern as quickly as possible. Complaint records will be viewed during the on-site audit.

In the event of a complaint being made to the WFQA Oversight Committee concerning a certified supplier, the matter will initially be discussed with the supplier. In cases where the issue cannot be resolved through the complaints process, the matter may be elevated to a dispute; in such cases an additional inspection or test may be required.

If the complaint is unfounded, the individual who complains will be liable for the cost of the test, however if the complaint is upheld the supplier will be liable. Where serious complaints are upheld it may result in the withdrawal of certification.

## WFQA Application Form

Name of Supplier			
Address			
Contact Name		Function	
Telephone		Website	
Mobile		Email	
<b>Documents to be submitted with the application (Yes/No)</b>			
Tax Clearance Cert		Copy of Insurance Policy	
Quality Manual		Health and Safety Statement	
<b>Approx Tonnage of each Woodfuel Supplied in previous 12 months</b>			
Firewood		Woodchip	
Woodpellets		Briquettes	
<b>Confirm that the following information is made available to customers (Yes/No)</b>			
Moisture Content of woodfuel		Particle Size of Woodchip/pellet; or size of firewood/briquettes	
Weight or Volume of each delivery, or bag			

We hereby apply to join the Wood Fuel Quality Assurance Scheme as laid out in the WFQA Scheme Rules, and subject to the fees as laid out by the WFQA Steering Committee

Name	
Signature	
Date	

Completed forms may be scanned and emailed to [noelgavigan@irbea.org](mailto:noelgavigan@irbea.org) or posted to

WFQA Administration, IrBEA, DCU Alpha, Old Finglas Road, Glasnevin, Dublin 11

## Fee Structure as of May 2019

Type of Woodfuel	Individual	Small to Medium Company (<50 employees)	Large Company (>50 employees)
Firewood or Woodchip	€670	€1090	Price on Request
Woodpellets or Briquettes	Price on Request	€1090	€2,500

Notes:

1. Individuals are defined as those trading under their personal name (ie: not a company) and companies supplying less than 1,000 tonnes of woodfuel per year
2. If a supplier produces and sells woodfuel from more than one location, or depot, an additional charge may apply
3. If a supplier produces more than one woodfuel (eg: firewood and woodchip) an additional charge may apply
4. Fees include full membership of the Irish BioEnergy Association [www.irbea.org](http://www.irbea.org)