RECC

RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSUMER CODE

Industry Standards Update
October 2023

Background

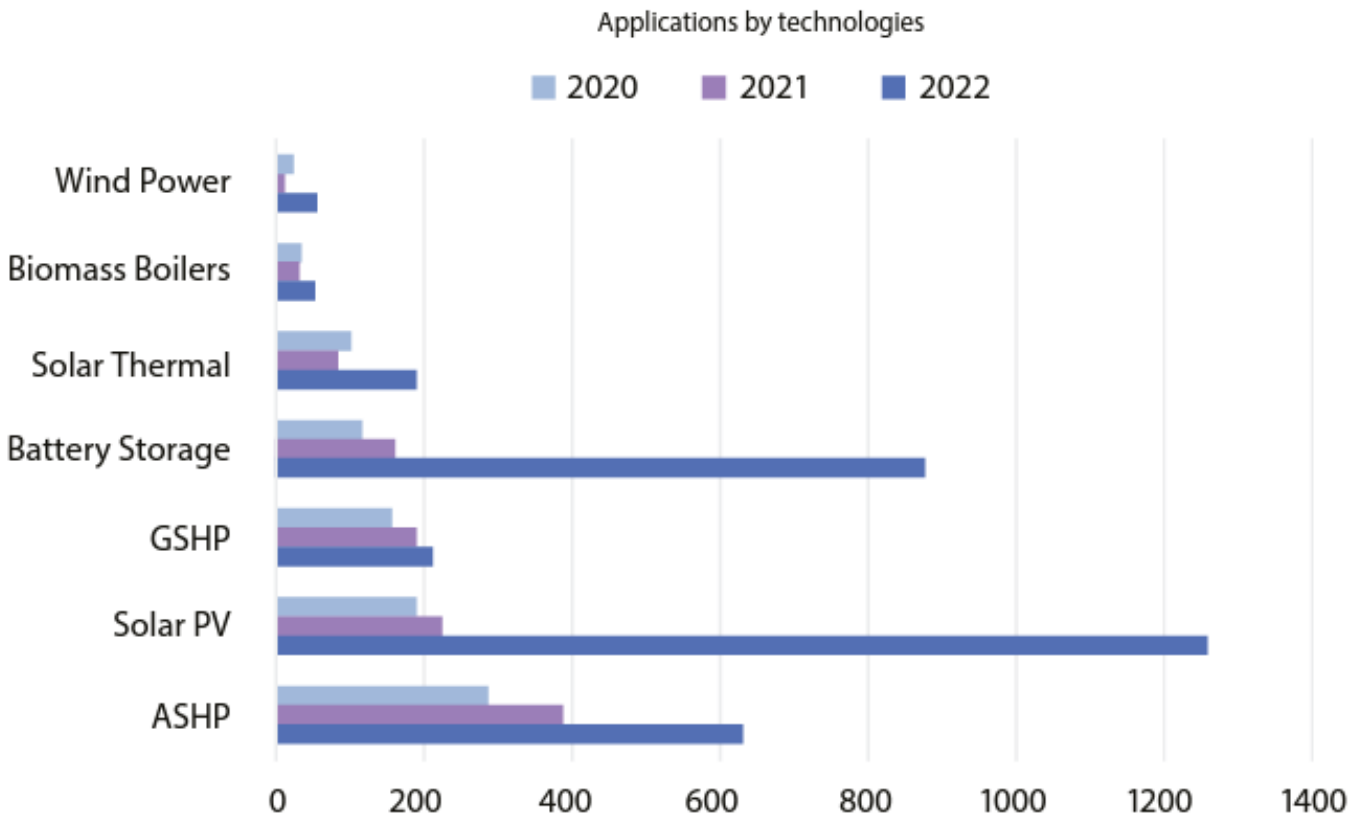
- REAL and RECC launched in 2006
- Administered by REAL, a wholly owned subsidiary of REA
- For installers of domestic renewable energy
- Approved by CTSI since 2013 when it assumed responsibility for CCAS
- Sets high consumer protection standards which members agree to comply with - based on consumer law
- If signed up to a Code of Practice like RECC, considered a criminal offence to breach that CoP
- RECC is an ISO 9001 certified TrustMark scheme operator and ADR Provider
- Currently 4,427 members, 309 members install biomass – Oct 2023

What does it cover?

Sets out the strict requirements its members must meet. Scope includes:

- General business standards
- Advertising and marketing
- Selling techniques
- Dealing with vulnerable consumers
- Pre-payment protection (deposits and advance payments)
- Performance estimates and quotations
- Contracts and cancellation rights
- After-sales activities, guarantees and warranties
- Dispute resolution
- Protection if installer ceases to trade

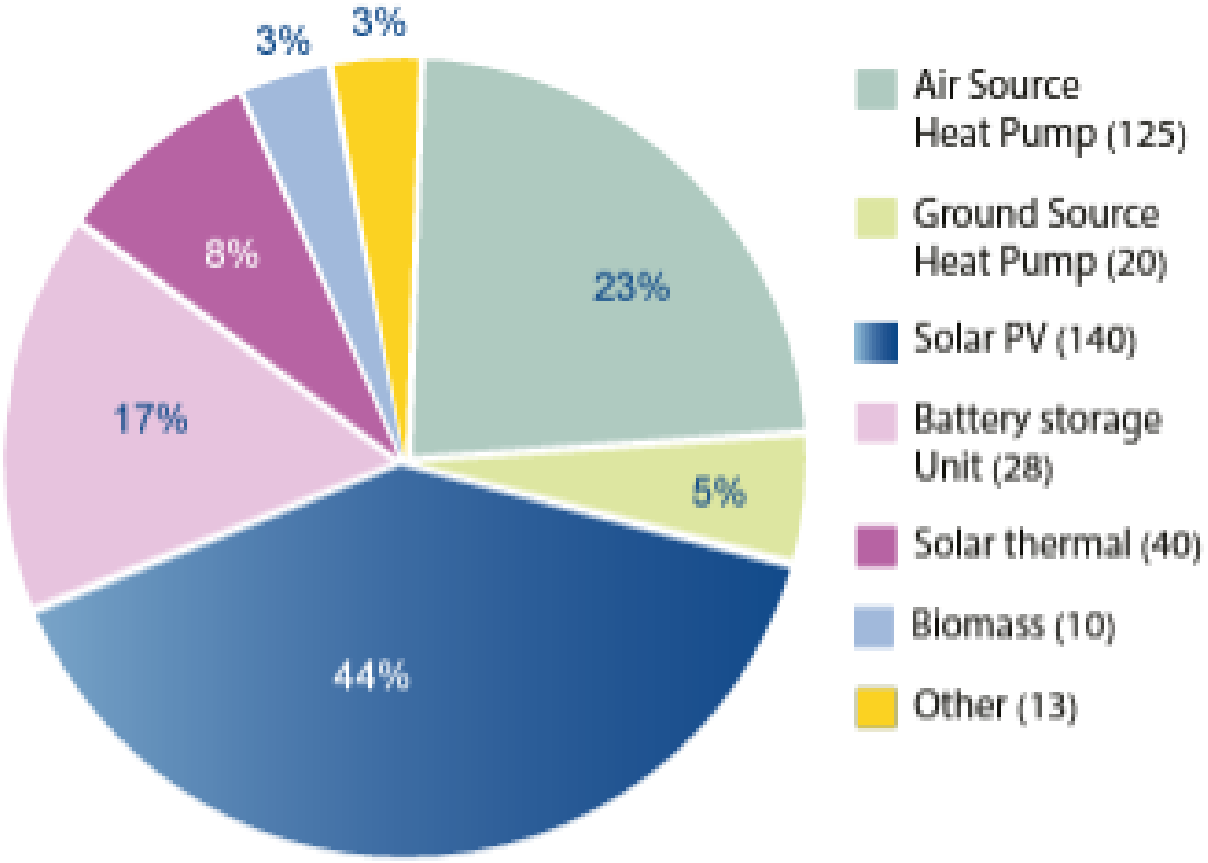
Applications by technologies



- According to RECC's Annual Report 2022

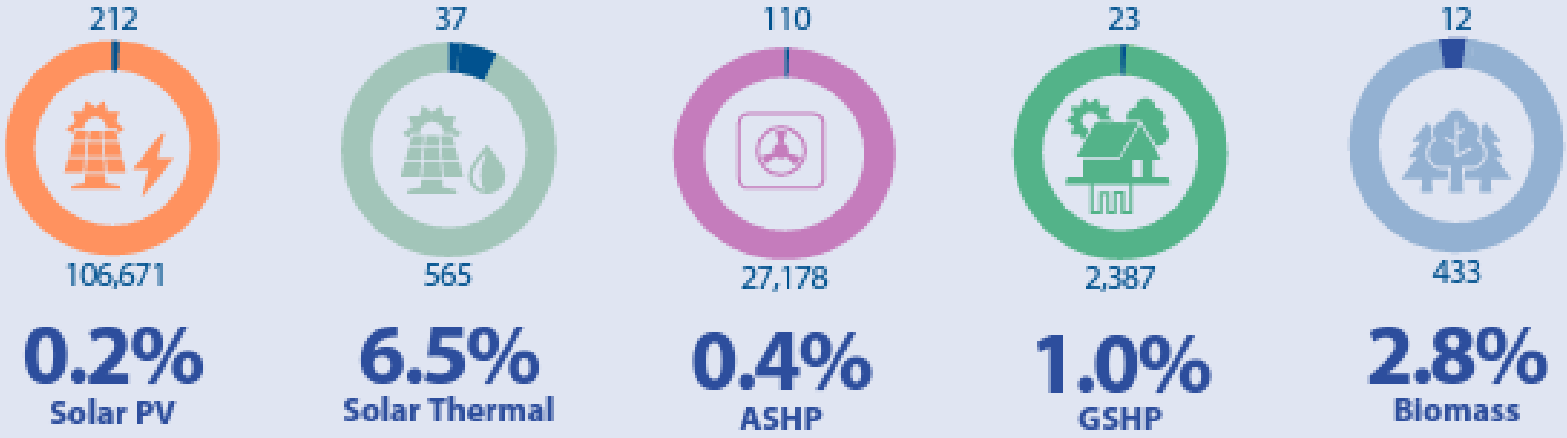
Complaints by technology

Fig 4.3 - Complaints registered with RECC in 2022 by technology



Complaints compared to installs

Figure 4.4 - Complaints registered by technology as a percentage of all domestic installations in 2022[1]



1 Installation numbers are taken from the MCS Data Dashboard **https://datadashboard.mcscertified.com/installationInsights.** Please note that complaints may relate to installations carried out before 2022. This means that conclusions cannot be drawn between the numbers of complaints registered in 2022 as a proportion of the total domestic installations carried out in 2022 for any technology.

Utilisation

- CIBSE guidance - Biomass Heating, AM15: 2014 – very clear

6.4.3 Utilisation factor

The Tier 1 boundary in the Renewable Heat Incentive for boilers of less than 1 MW is based on a utilisation factor of 15%, the principle being that every biomass system should be able to achieve a utilisation of at least 15%. A utilisation factor of less than 15% is an indication that an application may not be suitable for biomass, so the utilisation factor should be calculated in every case. The utilisation factor can usually be improved significantly by decreasing the size of the boiler, while the effect on utilisation factor of increasing the size of the associated thermal storage is an order of magnitude lower. The calculated biomass boiler utilisation factors for the examples in Figures 6.8 to 6.10 are 21%, 30% and 57% respectively.

Utilisation

- ‘Review of Biomass Performance Standards’ written for DECC in 2014 backs this up. Kiwa’s ‘Methodology for Evaluating the In-Situ Performance of Solid Fuel Biomass Boilers’ establishes how critical utilisation is and why it should be kept high.
- Many installs where the issue seems to be oversizing, in these cases the biomass boiler will just keeps cycling.
- Can use a buffer tank where utilisation factor is low however, biomass boiler should be sized correctly and accordingly.
- Utilisation must be incorporated into these MCS biomass standards MIS3004 more
- Currently does not function in consumer’s interest

Efficiency

- ‘Measurement of the in-situ performance of solid biomass boilers’ report by Kiwa, 2018

‘3.1 Efficiency

The average (median) efficiency of the all boilers in the field trial was **77% net** and **70% gross,** see Figure 2. The best performing boiler had an efficiency of 84% gross. This was within the range of values expected in standard laboratory tests at steady state, which are 77–86% gross. However, over three quarters of boilers fell below the bottom of this range. **The efficiency distribution indicates that there is a performance gap of on average 15 percentage points between standard laboratory efficiency and real-world efficiency.’**

Efficiency

- Efficiency normally given by manufacturers as 80% or above

- Are we telling consumers the wrong information about efficiency? Should we not represent the efficiency of the user's actual experience

Rapid cycling

- Same Kiwa study, 2018, states the predominant factors causing poor performance in biomass boilers were found to be:
  - Poor fuel
  - Lack of operator knowledge
  - Rapid cycling – classed most important – stop, start, found to be bad for efficiency and pollution – least done
- Of all technologies consumers with biomass are in the weakest position, boilers are often oversized, however installers can often blame consumers on fuel, maintenance and operation and get away with it.

MCS + RECC since 2010

- MCS certified installer's must currently be members of a CTSI approved Code of Practice, like RECC, effectively making CTSI code membership mandatory – recently announced to be removed
- To be eligible for a BUS grant, Consumers must use an MCS certified installer
- CMA's findings on consumer protection in the green heating and insulation sector, May 2023 states 'It is therefore critical that people can trust businesses to treat them fairly and are protected from harmful practices. Businesses also need to comply with their legal obligations, which will help drive consumer trust and confidence.'
- Removal of Consumer Codes: • lead to a loss of consumer confidence in the sector leading to a fall in demand and the consequential negative impact on businesses; • substantially weaken consumer protection; and • undermine the green heating and insulation sector

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Thank you

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