

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR GENERATORS 50KW OR LESS



This question and answer guide is intended to assist small generators, i.e. those with a declared net capacity of 50kW or less, in their application for government support schemes for renewable technologies. It is intended to:

- explain the Renewables Obligation (RO) scheme;
- explain the Climate Change Levy (CCL) exemption for renewables scheme;
- explain the Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO) scheme;
- assist applicants in completing the accreditation form for these schemes; and
- explain how to claim the relevant certificates once accreditation is granted.

Please direct any further queries regarding small generators to Sarah Piggott, by email ([sarah.piggott@ofgem.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.piggott@ofgem.gov.uk)) or by telephone (020 7901 7353).

Please note that this guide may be updated from time to time.

For your ease of reference, all questions are hyperlinked and you can go straight to each question by holding down the CTRL button and clicking the left mouse button.

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## **Overview of the schemes**

### **1. What is the Renewables Obligation (RO)?**

The RO is the main support scheme for renewable electricity projects in the UK. It places an obligation on UK suppliers of electricity to source an increasing proportion of their electricity from renewable sources.

A Renewables Obligation Certificate (ROC) is a 'green certificate' issued for eligible renewable electricity generated within the United Kingdom and supplied to customers in the United Kingdom by a licensed electricity supplier. One ROC is issued for each megawatt hour (MWh) of eligible renewable output generated. Ofgem issues ROCs to accredited renewable generating stations. Operators of generating stations can sell ROCs to licensed electricity suppliers, or to other intermediaries. Licensed electricity suppliers use ROCs to demonstrate their compliance with their obligations under the scheme.

ROCs are issued monthly or annually, subject to submission of the required data, within the specified timeframes, and all other criteria for ROC issue being met.

The RO is underpinned by legislation.

### **2. What is the Climate Change Levy (CCL) exemption for renewables?**

The CCL scheme is designed to enable Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to verify the amount of renewable sourced electricity supplied to non-domestic customers in the United Kingdom. This is done using the allocation of Levy Exemption Certificates (LECs) against such supplies.

Provided that data is submitted within the specified timeframe, LECs are issued monthly. One LEC is issued for each megawatt hour (MWh) of renewable source electricity generated. They can only be allocated against supply to non-domestic customers in the United Kingdom.

The CCL is underpinned by legislation.

### **3. What are Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGOs)?**

REGOs are certificates attached to electricity produced from renewable energy sources. Their purpose is to provide evidence for the proportion of electricity generated from renewable energy sources. One REGO is issued for each kilowatt hour (kWh) of eligible renewable output generated. REGOs may be requested for electricity generated via the REGO Register at any time for a period greater than one month and up to one year (1 April to 31 March). REGOs are only issued to accredited renewable generating stations.

REGOs are transferred to the supplier along with the electricity. Suppliers use REGOs as evidence of the proportion of renewable source electricity supplied to customers annually.

## **Application for accreditation**

### **4. How do I apply for accreditation for these schemes?**

In order to be accredited under one or more of these schemes, applicants are required to complete an application form, and send it to us. Our address can be found on all the application forms.

Application forms for small generators are available, in a technology-specific format, for:

- biomass\*
- hydro-electric
- photovoltaic (PV)
- wind

\*To be considered as biomass, the fuel in question must have a minimum energy content that is derived directly or indirectly from plant or animal matter. The minimum percentage for the CCL is 98 per cent. For the RO, it is 90 per cent.

Biomass generating stations can use various technologies to generate renewable electricity, including anaerobic digestion, combustors or internal combustion engines.

Generating stations are accredited individually. We deal with applications case by case. Using an eligible renewable source alone will not guarantee accreditation. Before this can happen, other criteria, such as the installation of approved metering, must also be fulfilled.

Once your generating station has been accredited, we shall send you a letter, detailing the conditions of accreditation and specifying the scheme(s) for which your station has been accredited. Your generating station will be assigned a unique accreditation identification number for each scheme, which you must quote in all correspondence.

N.B. Accreditation alone does not guarantee the issue of ROCs, LECs or REGOs.

#### **5. The generating station is owned by a company and not an individual. What do we need to do?**

The process for accreditation remains the same. We require the name and contact details of the individual who will represent the company and who will complete the application process on the company's behalf.

We also require a covering letter, on company headed notepaper, to certify the individual's employment by that company.

#### **6. How long will the application take to process?**

We only accredit a generating station once we are satisfied that it is capable of generating electricity from a renewable source and that all relevant criteria have been met. Therefore, the length of time that it takes to process an application varies. However, we will acknowledge receipt of an application and raise any initial questions we have about it within ten working days of us receiving it.

It is advisable to obtain proof of posting when you send in the application, should the form go astray in the postal system. It is also important for you to keep the receipt of application that we send.

Generating stations are normally accredited from the date on which we receive the application. However, if the generating station is yet to commission i.e. start generating renewable electricity, and it is eligible for ROC and/or LEC support, it will be accredited from the commissioning date. Please note that you can only submit an application for full accreditation within two months of the generating

station's commissioning date. For generating stations that are due to commission outside that timeframe, a preliminary accreditation application form is available on our website (preliminary accreditation is for the RO only).

ROCs and, or LECs will only be issued from the date of accreditation. Once accredited the operator of a generating station can request the issue of REGOs, via the REGO Register. The operator of the generating station may request the issue of REGOs prior to the accreditation date only if the operator would be able to prove, on demand, that the electricity on which the REGOs are requested was generated from eligible renewable sources.

## **7. How do I choose a name for my generating station?**

It is for the applicant to choose the name of the generating station. However, please ensure that the name does not contain numbers, initials or symbols. The name of the generating station could simply be the name of a house, the owner of the generating station or something connected with the technology used at the generating station.

We publish names of accredited generating stations on our website. We do not publish addresses.

## **8. What is a schematic diagram?**

You **must** provide a diagram of the layout of your generating station. It should be an electrical schematic or a simple, but comprehensive, single line drawing that illustrates the layout of your generating station. As a minimum, this diagram must show the location of:

- the renewable generator;
- any auxiliary equipment associated with the operation of your generating station, for example pumps, fans or control systems (together with a note of their electrical rating);
- any inverters or switches; and
- the metering e.g. total generation, import and export metering.

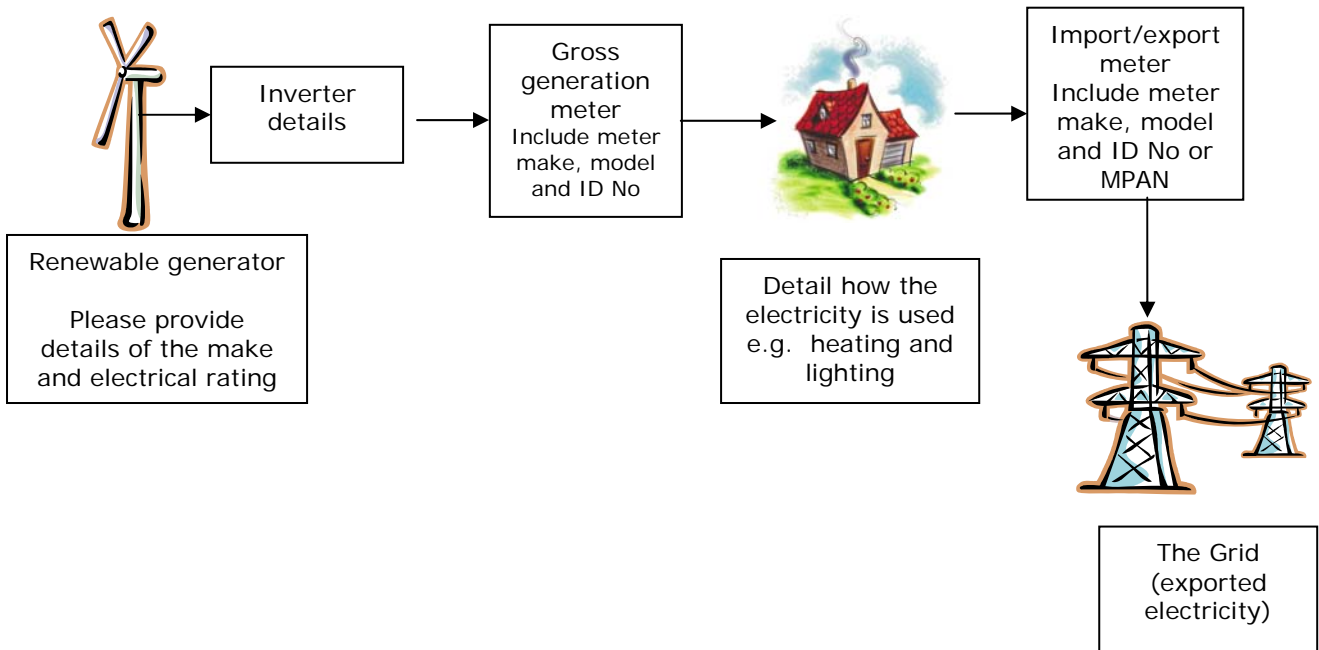
Metering details are especially important. You should give the details of all the meters that you have at your generating station - in the format: **make, model** and **serial number** (or MPAN (MPRN in Northern Ireland) for import and export meters – see question 11).

We will not process applications that do not have a schematic diagram and/or metering information.

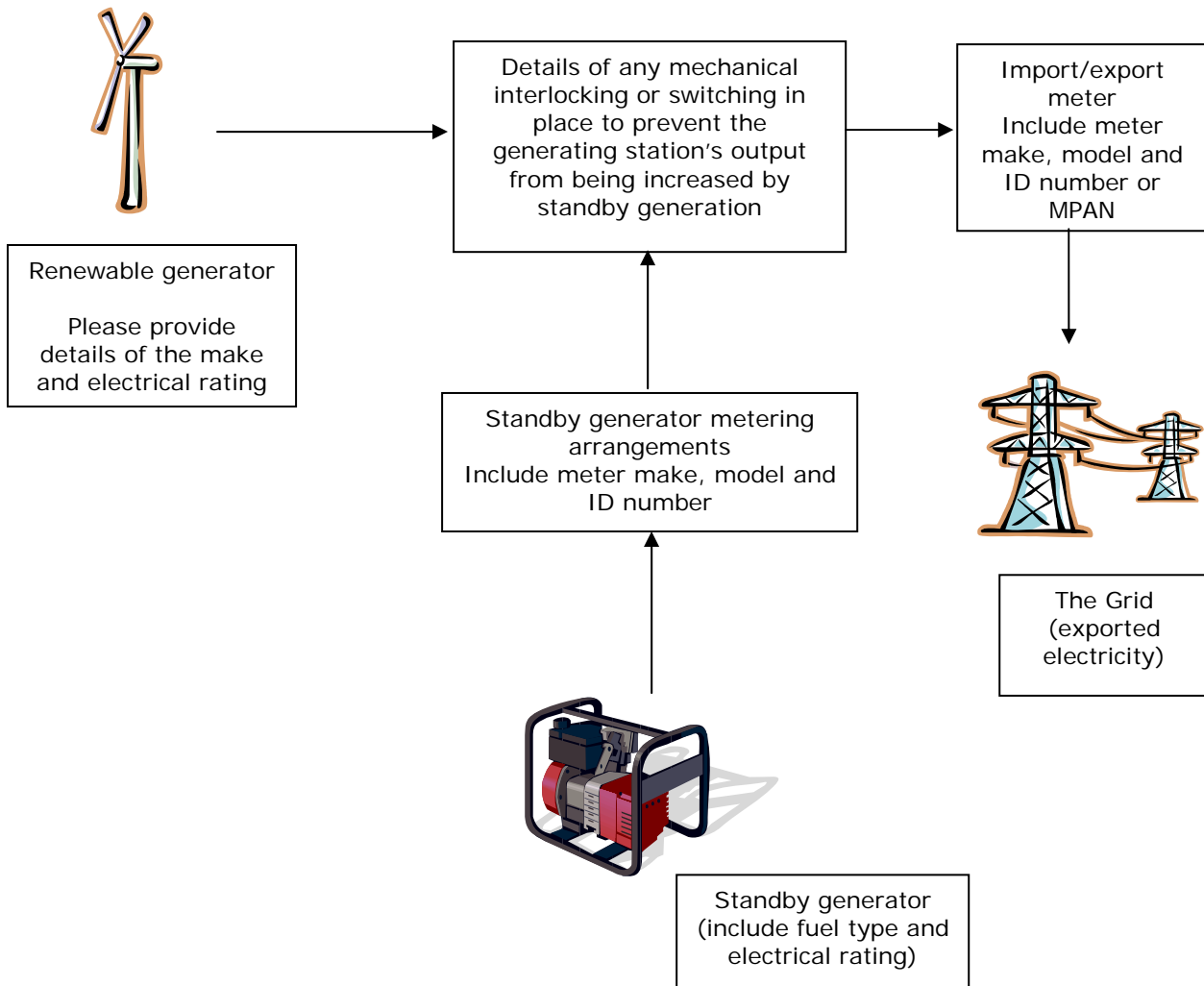
Three examples of schematic diagrams are shown below. They are not prescriptive. In some cases, there will be a "gross output" meter, or "ROC meter", immediately after the generator, in others this may be positioned after an inverter. The schematic or single line drawing you submit must reflect the true layout of your generating station.

You may be able to obtain a schematic diagram from the installer of your generating station.

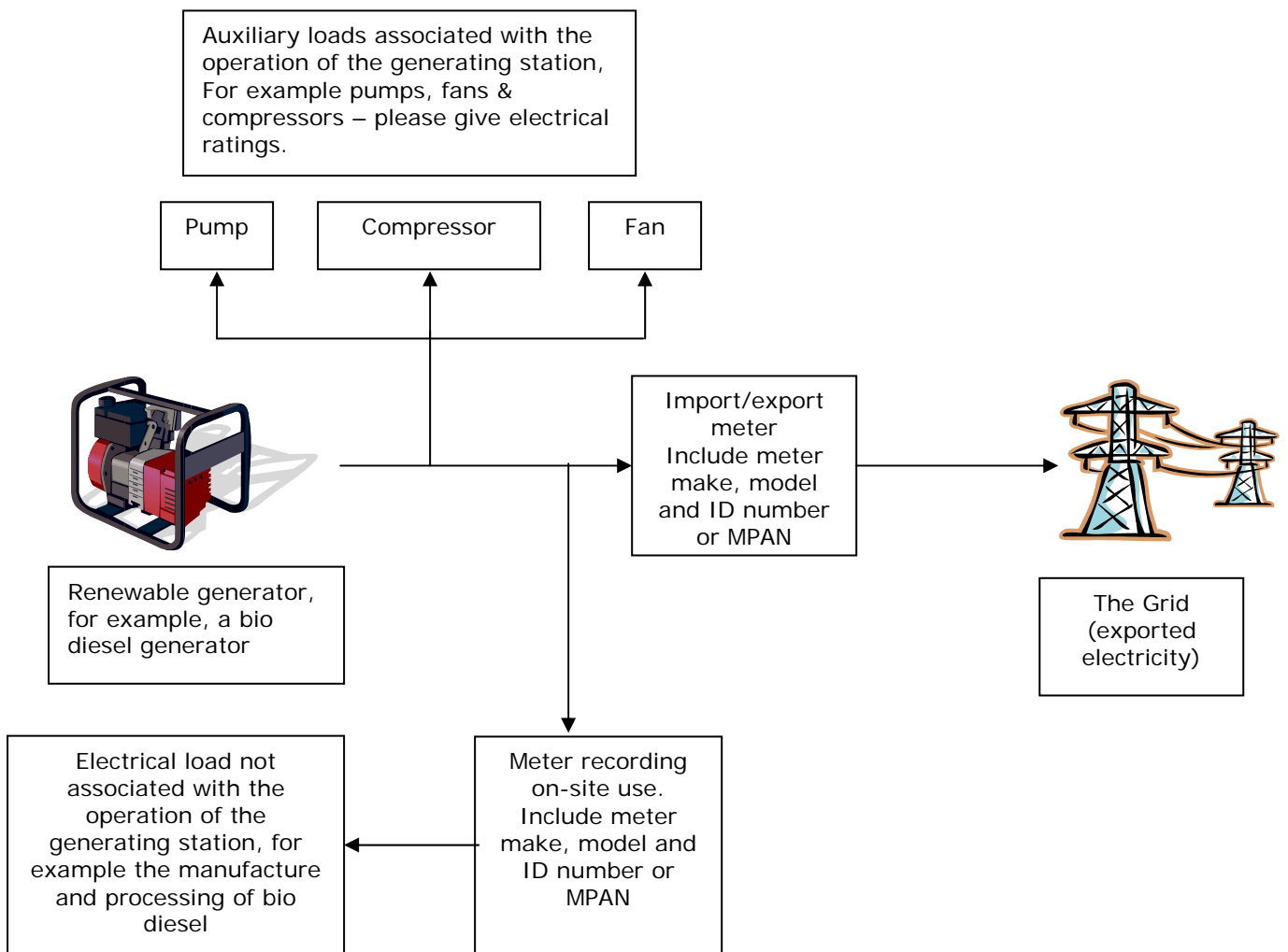
**Example 1:** – Generating stations wishing to claim for export of renewable electricity to the Grid and electricity used within their own property or on site:



**Example 2:** – Generating stations wishing to claim for export of renewable electricity and who have standby generation with mechanical interlocking:



**Example 3** – Generating stations with “input electricity” i.e. power consumed by auxiliary loads associated with the operation of the generating station. The schematic also shows a claim for export and onsite use.



If you are unsure of the category of usage into which the power that you generate falls, please contact us.

### 9. What electricity meters do I need to have in place at my generating station?

You must accurately measure the renewable output on which you are claiming your certificates, using a meter that meets the requirements of the relevant piece of legislation. ROCs, LECs and REGOs will only be issued on data that we consider to be reliable and accurate. For ROCs and LECs this will be generation data recorded using an Ofgem approved meter.

This requirement includes any meter which measures your own use (e.g. renewable electricity consumed in the home), any import/export meter or a meter which measures export to a third party through a licence exempt distribution network.

We publish an up-to-date list of approved meters on our website. It can be downloaded from our website at -

<http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Networks/Techn/Metrology/Pages/Metrology.aspx>. If you would like us to send you a copy, please contact us at [renewable@ofgem.gov.uk](mailto:renewable@ofgem.gov.uk).

If you already have a meter fitted, and it is not on our list of approved meters, we recommend that you contact your retailer, or the meter manufacturer, for further information about how an approved meter can be fitted.

#### **10. What is the declared net capacity (DNC) of my generating station?**

DNC is the highest generation of electricity which, on the assumption that the source of power is available continuously, can be maintained indefinitely without causing damage to the generator, less any electricity consumed by the generator. Please note that this question refers to *capacity* and *not* the output of the generating station.

DNC should not be confused with total installed capacity, which is simply the electrical power rating of your generation equipment.

#### **11. What is an MPAN?**

An MPAN (Meter Point Administration Number) is a unique number allocated to the electricity meter in your property or generating station. It contains information that energy companies use to identify your location and type of supply. The MPAN is on the electricity bills that your supplier sends to you. The full MPAN consists of 13 digits. For example:

|    |      |      |     |
|----|------|------|-----|
| 11 | 1626 | 8118 | 007 |
|----|------|------|-----|

If you 'spill' some of your generation to the Grid, as well as using some in your home, we need to be confident that you are connected to the Grid. An ideal way of proving this is by giving us your MPAN.

To find out what your MPAN is, you should check your electricity bill or contact your electricity supplier.

#### **12. Why do I need to state when my generating station was commissioned?**

We need to know when a generating station was commissioned because the legislation underpinning these schemes requires certain additional information from stations that commissioned before 1 January 1990. If your generating station was commissioned before this date, you should refer to our generator guidance documents, available on our website.

The commissioning date is also important because you can only apply for accreditation under the RO, CCL and REGO schemes two months before the generating station is due to commission.

The RO scheme allows generators to apply for preliminary accreditation i.e. a generating station can be awarded accreditation before it is built or commissioned, as long as planning permission has been granted. Once again, generators should refer to our RO guidance documents referred to in question 43 for further information on preliminary accreditation.

#### **13. How do I decide whether to claim ROCs annually or monthly?**

The following factors may be relevant when making your decision to choose a monthly or annual issue of ROCs:

- The meter reading requirements<sup>1</sup>

If you decide to have ROCs issued on an annual basis, you are only required to take the necessary meter reading(s) and complete and submit the data template once a year. If you claim ROCs monthly, you must take meter readings and submit your data each month.

Regardless of annual or monthly issue, the data must be both reliable and accurate and should reach us no later than the end of the second month following the month of generation. In the case of annual issue, the obligation year runs from 1 April to 31 March the following year and so the data needs to be submitted by 31 May at the latest if ROCs are to be issued.

- The amount of electricity generated in a month

ROCs can only be issued on electricity over 0.5 MWh of eligible output. If your station generates less than this each month, to ensure that you qualify for ROCs, you would probably opt for an annual issue.

If you are unsure about the potential monthly or annual output, you should contact the installer of your renewable generator. It is also important to bear in mind that ROC data submissions are rounded up (0.5 MWh or greater) or down (less than 0.5 MWh) to the nearest MWh.

Please note that monthly ROC issue is the default position, but you are asked on the application form which you would like. Please stipulate **monthly** or **annual** on the form. Renewable LECs can only be issued **monthly**.

If you apply for an annual issue of ROCs in the first instance, and your generating station has both commissioned and is eligible, your generating station will be **accredited** from the date on which we receive the application. You will be able to claim ROCs from that date onwards.

To obtain your first year's ROC(s), you need to take a reading from your meter on the day that you are accredited and another reading on 31 March of the following year. By subtracting the former from the latter, you will have your **gross annual renewable generation output**. You will have a 5 day window either side of 31 March in which to take your year-end meter reading.

Provided that no deductions for input electricity are required, that you have sent this figure to us within the relevant timescale, and provided that all other criteria are met, we will issue ROCs into your online account.

#### **14. How do I change the frequency of my ROC issue?**

If you wish to change from a monthly to an annual ROC issue, you must give us one full calendar month's notice before the beginning of the new obligation period. You cannot change in the middle of an obligation year.

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<sup>1</sup> Regardless of annual or monthly issue, the data must be both reliable and accurate and should reach us no later than the end of the second month following the month/year of generation.

If you wish to change from an annual issue to a monthly issue, you must give us one full calendar month's notice before the end of the respective obligation year, i.e. by 28 February at the latest.

If you appoint an agent, see question 22, the agent will have the option to change your claim from a monthly to annual issue or vice versa.

### **15. If I am exporting to a third party, what contract should be in place for ROCs?**

If you are exporting your electricity to a third party via a licence exempt distribution network, we require a copy of a contract demonstrating that this electricity is being supplied, by a licensed electricity supplier, to customers in Great Britain or Northern Ireland.

An example of such an export would be the net output from your renewable generator being exported to a housing estate or small business, where you, as operator do not consume the power yourself.

This contract should include:

- details of the generating station which generates the eligible output including RO accreditation number (this RO accreditation number may be added after the generating station has been accredited);
- the sale of a specified amount of eligible renewable electricity to a licensed electricity supplier;
- to where, and to whom, the electricity is being supplied (eg for the heating and lighting of local businesses);
- the meter that the station operator uses to measure the export to a third party, ie reference to the specific meter used to measure the export; and
- signatures from all three parties – the generator, the licensed electricity supplier and the third party consuming the exported renewable electricity.

### **16. Will I receive ROCs on all of the electricity that I produce?**

ROCs are issued for electricity generated from an eligible renewable source. Input electricity may, however, need to be deducted from your claim.

"Input electricity" refers to all the electricity used by a generating station in any month (or obligation period for small generators on annual issue) for a purpose directly relating to the operation of the generating station including: fuel handling, fuel preparation, maintenance, or pumping water.

Input electricity is not required to be deducted from the electricity that you produce where it is 0.5% or less than your gross output in a month or obligation period. You must supply us with evidence that the input electricity is less than 0.5% and we will determine whether or not you should send us monthly or annual volumes of the input electricity.

Electricity for this purpose must be metered using an accurate meter and deducted from the gross generation.

## 17. Will I receive LECs on all of the electricity that I produce?

If you are claiming LECs, we will issue them for any electricity that you export. If you do not have export metering, please contact us as we may be able to agree a reasonable basis on which to issue LECs.

If you use a mix of fossil fuel and renewable sources, claiming LECs is a bit more complex. Usually, though, it is just a matter of agreeing with us the proportion of electricity that you generate from renewable sources.

If you use fossil fuel to ignite gases, to heat up the combustion system or to control emissions, there is a different rule. If, in any year, the fossil fuel use is no more than 10% of the energy content of your renewable sources, we can ignore it and issue LECs on the full amount. If it is more than 10%, we will only issue LECs on the renewable proportion. In either case, we will ask you for evidence of the amount of fossil fuel that you are using.

## 18. Will I receive REGOs on all of the electricity that I produce?

We will issue REGOs on the proportion of your output that comes from renewable sources. If you are in doubt about how this applies to you, please contact us.

## 19. What is the purpose of a Fuel Measurement Sampling (FMS) questionnaire?

An FMS questionnaire is required for generating stations to be accredited as **biomass** generating stations. This questionnaire asks about the fuels used and about how they are measured and sampled. A separate copy should be completed for each generating station that you wish to accredit as a biomass station.

There are two sections to the questionnaire. The first deals with the fuel used and general information about the station. The second addresses fuel measurement and sampling arrangements. You can also submit any other additional supporting information that you consider necessary or appropriate. Copies of the FMS questionnaire and guidance to help you complete it are available on our website.

## 20. What are technology codes?

Technology codes are used to identify the technology used in your generating station. The code forms part of the unique ROC, LEC and REGO accreditation numbers assigned to your generating station.

The table below shows the current small generator technology codes:

| Technology type    | RO Code | ROS Code | NIRO Code | CCL Code | REGO Code |
|--------------------|---------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Photovoltaics (PV) | RW      | SW       | NG        | PV       | PV        |
| Biomass            | RX      | SX       | NX        | BW       | BW        |
| Hydro              | RY      | SY       | NY        | SH       | HY        |
| Wind               | RZ      | SZ       | NZ        | NW       | NW        |

If the technology used at your generating station does not fall into any of these categories, please contact us to discuss your application.

## **Use of agents**

### **21. Can I appoint an agent to work on my behalf?**

You can nominate an agent to deal with most of the administration, such as completing the application for accreditation, submitting data and signing declarations on your behalf. Agents can also claim ROCs on your behalf.

In the case of ROCs, agents will aggregate output from a number of generators for its ROC claim.

### **22. How do I appoint an agent?**

You write to us, using a standard form, setting out the activities that you would like the agent to carry out on your behalf. This form is available on our website and is also attached to the application form for accreditation. You should return this form directly to us, along with a suitable covering letter.

We provide details of those agents currently representing small generators on our website. We do not however, endorse any of the agents listed.

For full details on how to appoint an agent, and on how your accreditation will then be administered, please refer to our guidance for small generators.

### **23. How do I terminate my agreement with an agent?**

You can terminate your agency agreement. As an operator, you have the choice to either change agents or to manage your own accreditation.

Under your ROC accreditation, you can only terminate your agreement with your agent once a year. You should contact us in writing before the beginning of the next obligation period (ie before 1 April) to terminate your contract in readiness for the next year. In exceptional circumstances, you may change agent in the middle of the year. You should contact us if you believe your situation is exceptional.

Under your LEC and/or REGO accreditation, you can terminate your contract with your agent at any time. You should contact us within 14 days of terminating the contract with your agent.

## **Submitting data and how certificates are issued**

### **24. How do I submit my ROC data?**

As ROCs are issued on the output of the generating station, we need to know how much electricity your generating station has generated in a particular period.

We require details of gross generation (in kilowatt hours) and also any "input electricity". This information must be submitted using one of our standard templates, which are available on our website. This template must be submitted no later than the end of the second month following the month of generation. If you are claiming ROCs annually, you should submit your data to us no later than 31 May. We will send you an email to remind you of this deadline.

The data should be sent to our dedicated email account - [monthlyoutputdata@ofgem.gov.uk](mailto:monthlyoutputdata@ofgem.gov.uk). Emails to this account receive an

automatically generated response to confirm receipt. You are encouraged to keep this email.

This timetable is published on our website, together with details about when we shall issue ROCs. Typically, this is in the middle of the third month after the month of generation.

## **25. How do I submit my monthly LEC data?**

As Renewable LECs are issued on the output of the generating station, we need to know how much electricity your generating station has generated in a particular month.

We require details of gross generation (in kilowatt hours). This information must be submitted using one of our standard templates, which are available on our website. The template must be submitted no later than the end of the second month following the month of generation. For example, if electricity was generated in January, the operator of the generating station must provide the relevant information to us no later than 31 March.

The data should be sent to our dedicated email account - [monthlyoutputdata@ofgem.gov.uk](mailto:monthlyoutputdata@ofgem.gov.uk). Emails to this account receive an automatically generated response to confirm receipt. You are encouraged to keep this email.

These timeframes are published on our website, along with details about when we shall issue Renewables LECs. Typically this is in the middle of the third month, after the month of generation. To remind you of this deadline, we will send you an email.

## **26. How do I submit my monthly REGO data?**

REGOs are issued into the online REGO register, for the renewable proportion of output of the generating station entered. Once you are accredited we will create an online account for you.

REGOs may be requested via the REGO Register at any time for a period greater than one month and up to one year (1 April to 31 March). They will be issued immediately.

The REGOs section of our website gives further guidance on this.

## **27. How will my ROCs be issued?**

The application form for accreditation asks you for information that will allow us to set up an online ROC Register account. The ROC Register is an electronic, web-based system that allows you to view the ROCs you hold, and to transfer them to other parties. Once we have completed the final ROC issue for a particular month or year, we will issue ROCs to your account. You will also receive an automatically-generated email to notify you of this.

If an agent is acting on your behalf, ROCs due to you will be issued into the agent's ROC account.

## **28. How will my LECs be issued?**

Once we have issued all Renewables LECs for a particular month, we will send you an automatically-generated email to notify you of that fact. This email represents the LECs. It also provides the unique number of each LEC. In circumstances in which an email address is unavailable, LECs may be issued by fax or post.

### **29. How will my REGOs be issued?**

The application form for accreditation asks you for information that will allow us to set up an online REGO Register account. The REGO Register is an electronic, web-based system which allows you to request, view and transfer your REGOs to other parties.

In order for your REGOs to be issued, you must enter your generation data into the Register. This data is checked automatically, and REGOs are issued on eligible generation.

Further information on the REGO Register is available in the REGO section of our website.

### **Certificate value, trading and lifespan**

#### **30. How much is a ROC worth?**

Ofgem has no role in setting ROC prices. This is left to the market and is for each party (i.e. seller and buyer) to negotiate.

To find out more information, we suggest that you refer to our Annual Report for the Renewables Obligation, which details what a ROC was worth to a licensed electricity supplier in previous obligation periods. This report is published before 1 April each year. Copies are available from our website.

#### **31. How much is a LEC worth?**

The value of a LEC to a licensed electricity supplier is £4.41. This is set out in legislation. However, you may not receive this amount. This is a matter for you and your electricity supplier to determine.

#### **32. How much is a REGO worth?**

As far as we are aware, REGOs do not have a financial value. You should contact the supplier who requests your REGOs for further information.

#### **33. How do I trade my ROCs/LECs/REGOs?**

Ofgem has no role or in the trading ROCs, LECs or REGOs. It is a contractual matter between the relevant parties.

#### **34. Do ROCs have a shelf life?**

ROCs have a shelf life of two obligation periods. This means that a ROC issued in 2006/07 is eligible to be redeemed by licensed electricity suppliers to meet their obligations in the 2006/07 and 2007/08 obligation years, i.e. 1 April – 31 March.

#### **35. Do LECs have a shelf life?**

According to the legislation, LECs do not have a shelf life; however, suppliers are required to allocate LECs against a supply of renewable electricity in the UK within 2 years of generation.

### **36. Do REGOs have a shelf life?**

According to the legislation, REGOs do not have a shelf life; however, REGOs are only valid for one obligation year i.e. 1 April to 31 March for Fuel Mix Disclosure purposes. This means that a REGO issued in the 2006/07 obligation year is only eligible to be redeemed by suppliers for Fuel Mix Disclosure purposes in that obligation year.

### **Making changes to your station**

### **37. What happens if I make changes to my accredited generating station?**

You must tell us, within two weeks, about any change that you make to your generating station. In order to do this you may have to send us, for example, a revised facility description or schematic diagram. It is particularly important that you do this if you are increasing the installed capacity of the generating station. We will assess these changes, and will decide whether the generating station remains eligible for the scheme(s) for which it is accredited.

If you sell your generating station (for example, if you move house and leave the equipment behind) the new owner need not re-apply for accreditation. However, we require notification of the change in ownership. The new owner should also re-submit the relevant declarations and contact details in order to amend the necessary accounts.

### **38. What if I add a new technology to my generating station?**

Changes to a generating station may affect its eligibility. If, for example, you add a photovoltaic (PV) array to your existing wind turbine generating station, you must submit a revised schematic diagram or single line drawing that shows the new layout of your generating station. Please include any additional metering details.

If the new layout and technology is acceptable, we will issue you with an additional technology-specific accreditation identification number.

### **Further information**

### **39. Where can I find out more information about the schemes?**

We have published the following documents on our website. They give further information about the RO, CCL and REGO schemes:

- Renewables Obligation: Guidance for small generators (50kW or less)
- Climate Change Levy: Guidance for generators and suppliers
- Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin: Ofgem's Administration Procedures

### **40. What is Ofgem's role?**

The RO, CCL and REGO legislation gives Ofgem powers and functions to administer the main schemes to promote renewable electricity generation (the RO, the CCL and the REGO scheme). In general these functions include:

- accrediting generating stations as being capable of generating from eligible renewable sources;
- issuing, and revoking or deleting (where appropriate) ROCs, Renewable LECs and REGOs;
- establishing and maintaining a ROC and REGO register;
- in relation to the RO, receiving buy-out payments and redistributing payments to suppliers presenting ROCs; and
- in relation to Renewable LECs, notifying HM Revenue and Customs of the certificate numbers allocated by a supplier to a renewable source contract.
- publishing an annual report on the RO