



Newsletter n°7 – Special issue: France



Last phase for the QualiCert Project

As already seen in the previous country-specific issues of the QualiCert newsletters, the project is entering the last phase of its activities and a series of so-called **implementation workshops** were organised in order to make sure a common approach for certification/equivalent qualification of RES installers is adopted in each of the five countries initially targeted by the project (i.e. Austria, France, Greece, Italy and Poland). Examples on how it could be achieved were given in the QualiCert recommendations which were again presented during these events.

In order to provide our QualiCert readers with an overview of the status of certification/equivalent qualification of RES installers in the countries that hosted implementation workshops, a series of country-related special issues of the QualiCert newsletter were published before each event.

The first one presented the Italian situation and the second one introduced what has been done so far in Poland.

This number is meant to give insights on the **French state of the art**.

Enjoy your reading...

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What is QualiCert about?

QualiCert stands for “Common approach for certification or equivalent qualification of installers of small-scale renewable energy systems in buildings”. The project started in July 2009.

QualiCert was launched in anticipation of the implementation of Article 14 of the Directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (2009/28/EC), obliging Member States to develop and mutually recognize certification or equivalent qualification schemes for installers of small-scale renewable energy systems (e.g. biomass boilers and stoves, solar photovoltaic and solar thermal systems, shallow geothermal systems and heat pumps) by December 2012.

The project has identified a number of key-success criteria that should be taken into account when designing a certification or equivalent qualification system. Any certification or equivalent qualification scheme needs to be embedded in the national training and quality framework of the Member State. Therefore, the development of one European scheme that could be applied to all EU Member States is inappropriate.

The approach taken by this project is in line with the requirement of Art. 14 of the European RES Directive asking Member States to provide such schemes by 31 December 2012. The project involves the national stakeholders of five core countries (Austria, France, Greece, Italy and Poland), the other EU Member States being involved through a wide dissemination activity.

France: where we stand with certification/equivalent qualification of RES installers

On 9 of November 2011, the French ministry of Environment, together with ADEME (French Environment and Energy Management Agency), signed the charter “Reconnu Grenelle Environnement” with three certifying bodies (Qualit’EnR, QUALIFELEC and Qualibat and two national building sector federations (FFB - French Building Federation - and CAPEB – Trade confederation and small building companies) who had also set up their quality schemes. This national roadmap is launching concerted actions and efforts from the certifying bodies and the building sector to work on the same basis for the qualification and certification of installers of renewable energy systems and general energy improvements works in France. The Grenelle objectives are to reduce by 38% the energy consumption of buildings, and to increase by 23% the use of renewable energies in buildings, by 2020. To meet these objectives, an important effort from the housing sector is needed, especially with regard to renovation, and the quality of energy improvement works and RES installations in private households is essential to ensure maximum benefits. “Reconnu Grenelle Environnement” will become a mark for end-users that will apply to installers companies, showing that the company has undertaken the required steps to be granted the certification “Reconnu Grenelle Environnement”. To support its implementation at national level, a wide communication campaign, targeting households, will run during the coming months.

The decision to harmonise the work and procedures of the different organisations delivering certifications and quality marks in France was taken because instead of guiding consumers towards the best choices, the existence of different certifications in the building sector were in fact confusing end-users. It is essential for end-users to find clear information when they undertake energy renovation work, or wish to install RES systems.

Therefore a reliable certification for installers, coordinated by a public authority, was needed. A single set of criteria, on which all certifying bodies agree to develop their qualification certification and certification schemes as well as their operations, will bring greater transparency to the schemes, and therefore encouraging a better market uptake.

Not only the Charter aims at harmonising the different existing qualification and certification schemes which started on a voluntary basis at national level, but it also intended to make the schemes more demanding on qualification they deliver to installers and craftsmen. It also plans to increase the control they exercise on completed installations (on site audits). Its objective is greater skills and competences of the workforce and reliability of the schemes in general.

Qualit’EnR, Qualibat, QUALIFELEC, Les Pros de la Performance Energétique (FFB quality label) and ECO Artisan (CABEP quality label) have been given the certification “Reconnu Grenelle Environnement” for an approbatory period of two years. By then, they should have complied entirely with the Charter requirements. Other certification bodies can apply for the mark “Reconnu Grenelle Environnement” until the end of 2012, in then comply by end of 2013.

More information on the French Charter was given during the French Implementation workshop, on the 1 December 2011 in Paris and is also available on <http://ecocitoyens.ademe.fr/mon-habitation/opter-pour-la-qualite/choisir-des-professionnels-competents> (in French).

You can find the agenda of the event here

Visit our website www.qualicert-project.eu for more information!

The QualiCert implementation workshops

Italy: 11 November 2011, in Rome

Poland: 23 November 2011, in Poznan

France: 1 December 2011, in Paris

Greece: 2 December 2011, in Athens

Some sectoral updates

Promoting geothermal development in France

In addition to the supporting framework for geothermal in France, a National Geothermal Committee has been set up, with the specific aim of fostering the deployment of geothermal energy, and to accelerate this process. It is specifically tasked with proposing activities and recommendations to encourage the development of each type of geothermal activity. Its three priorities are; the simplification of administrative procedures, raising awareness amongst stakeholders, and crucially in light of the QualiCert project, to improve the quality of training of geothermal professionals.

This Committee consists of a mix of 35 experts from all groups of stakeholders; public, non-governmental and private, all involved in the full cycle of geothermal activity. The committee is working towards consolidating geothermal as a 'green priority', not only helping France achieve its RES targets, but also bolstering the potential of the geothermal industry to create jobs.

French installers promote Renewable Energy

The European Solar Days (www.solardays.eu) is a European-wide campaign raising the awareness in European consumers about the potential and benefits of intelligent energy solutions, especially solar energy, both solar thermal heating and cooling and photovoltaic electricity.

Today, this campaign is a great success, with over 8000 events in 17 countries, and more than 600 000 people attending the 2011 edition. This success is due to the grass-root support behind this campaign: it relies on the involvement of citizens and different entities (Municipalities, NGOs, companies and other) to organise events dedicated to the sun and to the use of solar energy.

With 1 070 events organized over the whole territory, France positioned itself as one of the top countries in the Solar Days campaign, just behind Germany. This is also the result of the strong commitment from French installers to this campaign. Solar professionals (mostly installers) were mobilized to organize events. They organised 787 events (73% of the total), mostly open days and/ or visits to installations.

This example shows the relevance given by the French solar energy installers to the awareness-raising achieved within the European Solar Days campaign. With such events, they contribute to drawing attention to the potential of solar energy and to help to inform potential consumers on how they can apply solar energy and therefore actively contribute to the increased use of renewable energies and to the reduction of CO2 emissions.

Thank you for reading us and do not miss next issue on Greece!