

Local Building Energy Standards in Ireland

Summary

Starting at the end of 2005, a number of progressive local authorities introduced building energy standards as part of planning requirements in their jurisdiction. These building energy standards require a substantial increase in the energy performance of new buildings (between 40% and 60% reduction in energy usage) as well as a mandatory contribution of renewable energy to their thermal energy requirement.

What is more, a new regulation at national level has been introduced in 2008. This shows clearly that the local energy standards adopted by several counties were a positive experience.



Ordinance Facts

Ordinance title	Local Building Energy Standards in Ireland.
Type of ordinance	renewable heat law
Starting date	The first County was Fingal in February 2005.
Duration	No closing foreseen.
Geographical area	Several Counties in Ireland.
No. of inhabitants	
Scope	New building developments, or non-residential new buildings, or new housing developments, or new housing developments > 10 houses & non-residential > 1000 m2.
Technology priorities	Not defined in details.
Size of the solar heating system required	Not defined (not solar thermal regulation).
Alternative measures	Not defined in details.
Executing authority	County Administration.
Execution mechanism	

Development and Implementation

Background	The Irish system is very centralised and local authorities have limited power and resources. The 26 County Councils are the most influential organ at a local level, including: planning, housing, waste management, water services, etc. Until recently, national government had exclusivity in terms of defining energy standards for buildings.
Objectives	Different targets for the Counties, e.g. on energy demand (maximum level or reduction), on CO2 emissions reduction or on renewable energy share (20-30%).
Process	Until 2005, national government had exclusivity in defining energy standards for buildings. This position was challenged in 2005 by a group of local councillors from the Green Party who put a motion to Fingal County Council for the introduction of improved building energy standards in the Local Area Plan (LAP) for the Cappagh Road. After much debate, this proposal was adopted by the Council.

Timing	The Cappagh Local Area Plan was voted in October 2005. Two months later, it was extended two more Local Area Plans. The new national ordinance will be active by July 2009.
Quality schemes product	no
Quality schemes installation	no
Quality schemes other	no
Flanking measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - support for the installation of solar thermal (300 Euro/m2) - information help desk - information of public personnel - training of technicians
Supervision	Within the Greener Homes Scheme a technical assessment is required. Random controls of plants is foreseen.
Sanctioning fees	Not defined.
Costs for implementing	No information available.

Monitoring and Results

Monitoring	No information available.
Quantitative results	Different for the Counties, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reduction in energy demand and avoided CO2 emissions - increase in renewable energy supply - uptake of active solar thermal systems
Costs borne by the enduser	No information available.
Effects on other sectors	Solar thermal in Ireland is currently undergoing a real boom, showing a trend of rapid growth, close to 100%/year. It is estimated that over 10,000 m2 were installed in the last year.
Communication	No information available.
Future outlook	

Lessons Learned

Barriers faced and overcome	The process started in 2005 by Fingal County Council, and rapidly followed by other local authorities, has had a dramatic impact on the standards of energy performance of buildings in Ireland. First and foremost, it has moved the agenda of building energy standards setting away from central government firmly into the hands of local government.
Success factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - local authorities have ability and legal right to impose higher standards in energy performance of buildings - energy standards give economic benefits at no cost for the government
Potential for improvement	The resistance of the construction sector, focused on quantity, very often at the expense of quality, in the process of upgrading Irish Building Regulations, should be overcome.
Recommendations	Building energy standards should be introduced in the planning process for retrofits and extensions to existing buildings.

This STO was provided by Xavier Dubuisson - xdubuisson@dwme.ie

Downloads and links related to this STO are available under the STO Database under www.solarordinances.eu

The ProSTO project is supported by:

Intelligent Energy  Europe

The sole responsibility for the content of this document lies with the authors. It does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Communities. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.