

Decree on the conformity assessment of solid biomass for energy applications

The Ministries of Infrastructure and the Environment and Economic Affairs are preparing a draft decree entitled 'Conformity assessment of solid biomass for energy purposes' (hereinafter referred to as 'the Decree'). Wood from production forests and other biomass can be co-fired in power plants to reduce CO₂ emissions. Biomass is more expensive than coal, so the energy companies receive a subsidy for burning it, provided that this biomass is sustainable. This was agreed in the National Energy Agreement.

Details of consultation

Publication date

01-04-2016

Closing date of consultation period:

27-05-2016

Status

Draft

Type of scheme

AMvB (governmental decree)

Organisations

Ministries of Infrastructure and the Environment and Economic Affairs

Goal of the scheme

Within the framework of the Energy Agreement for sustainable growth, agreements have been made concerning the co-firing of solid biomass in power plants. The SDE+ (Sustainable Energy Production Incentive) scheme is used to incentivise co-firing. In this way, the co-firing of biomass in power plants is helping the Netherlands to achieve its objectives in the area of renewable energy (14% in 2020). In addition, the biomass used for this purpose must be sustainable. This is to ensure that such co-firing does not have a negative impact on forests or on the living environment. To this end, various sustainability criteria have been drawn up. The Decree regulates the government's ability to carry out monitoring and enforcement activities. It also provides a basis for incorporating sustainability requirements in ministerial regulations.

The target groups affected by the scheme

Energy companies, conformity assessment bodies that must apply for accreditation before they can be authorised to assess the sustainability of biomass, managers of certification schemes, and wood pellet producers, as well as forest owners who supply wood to these pellet producers and must meet sustainability criteria.

Anticipated impact of the scheme

The draft decree stipulates that private parties must follow the proper procedures when assessing the sustainability of biomass. Government-accredited and approved conformity assessment bodies assess the sustainability of biomass based on requirements set out in private certification schemes. These certification schemes must be approved by the Minister of Economic Affairs. The government has the power to take enforcement action in cases where the use of non-sustainable biomass is suspected. As a result of this scheme, subsidies are only provided for biomass that poses no harm to the environment. Another condition is that the indirect and direct co-firing of such biomass in power plants and heat production in bio steam boilers must deliver significant CO₂ reductions relative to fossil fuels. Non-sustainable biomass may be used for this purpose, however, it is not possible to apply for subsidies in this case. The sustainability requirements do not apply to other SDE+ categories.

Goal of the consultation

The goal of the consultation is to provide any interested parties with an opportunity to comment on the draft decree.

On which parts of the scheme are people being asked to comment?

Interested parties can comment on any of the contents of the draft decree and the policy document. The closing date for those wishing to submit a comment is 27 May 2016. The Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment will review your comments carefully and, where possible, use them to improve the regulations.

Publication of comments

Comments will be published during the course of the consultation period. Comments will only be published if the individuals who submitted them have indicated that they have no objection to their comments being made public. Before they can be published, these comments are inspected for any abusive or offensive statements. This inspection can take several days.