

Wood Energy and Local Authorities: Donegal Case Study



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- the contribution made by the Teagasc representative, and
- the many organisations and individuals who participated in the consultation process including representatives from the Donegal CDB Forestry Forum, Donegal Woodland Owners Society Ltd and Forest Service.

Executive Summary

The following report outlines the experience of the Community & Enterprise (C&E) Division of Donegal County Council, working in the context of the County Development Board (CDB), to support the growth of the local wood energy sector. It is hoped that by documenting this experience we can firstly, highlight the potential benefits and outcomes from local authority involvement and secondly, inform on the role of local authorities in supporting the wood energy sector. This report is a recommended action under the Western Development Commission's (WDC) *Wood Energy Strategy and Action Plan*¹. The WDC delivered this report in partnership with the C&E Division of Donegal County Council.

Benefits of wood energy

This report shows how growth of the wood energy sector can address a range of county development goals for local authorities, and the private and public stakeholders in the CDB structure. The WDC's *Wood Energy Strategy and Action Plan* estimated that if wood fuel supplied 11% of the regional heat market by 2020 it would create over 900 jobs, add €15 million per annum to the regional economy and reduce CO₂ emissions by over 600,000 tonnes per annum.

The wood energy sector in County Donegal has developed rapidly in the last four years. There are ten commercial wood energy installations² in operation and several more in negotiation. Six of these are located in hotels and four are in publicly owned centres. In Donegal the recognised benefits of the wood energy sector include:

- **a financial benefit** - due to the direct cost savings of wood energy compared to oil. Savings of 50 to 70% have been quoted from wood energy installations in County Donegal.
- **an economic benefit** - as wood energy stimulates the local economy with new enterprise opportunities, job creation and job retention, e.g. Donegal Woodland Owners Society, Ecowood Energy Systems Ltd.
- **an environmental benefit** - due to the reduction in carbon emissions and support of increased carbon storage through forestry.

Wood energy and the Donegal experience

Donegal is a predominately rural county; agriculture and forestry remain important economic activities (12% of the total land area of the county is under forestry). Biomass based on the forestry resource presents significant development potential as forestry thinning and residues are a potentially major source of wood fuel (Donegal County Profile, 2002). The proportion of privately owned forestry is growing nationally with farmers accounting for 82% of all afforestation in Ireland between 1996 and 2003³.

The Donegal CDB, managed by the C&E Division of Donegal County Council, has been an effective vehicle through which to promote and co-ordinate development of the wood energy sector. In 2000 the CDB Forestry Focus Group was set-up, and chaired by Teagasc, to inform the consultation process to develop the County Development Strategy. The focus group developed Ireland's first integrated county forestry strategy that was incorporated into, and formed a central element of the resulting County Development Strategy. An Straitéis, the Economic, Social and Cultural Strategy for County Donegal (2002-2012) included specific wood energy goals set out under energy, forestry and, agriculture and food sectors. The forestry sector took the lead within the CDB structure to develop the wood energy sector.

¹ The full *Wood Energy Strategy and Action Plan* is available for download at www.wdc.ie.

² Approximately 4MW_{th} (10 units x 400kw) installed with an estimated total investment of €1.8 million, based on an estimated investment cost of €450,000 per MW installed.

³ Review and Appraisal of Ireland's Forestry Development Strategy, 2004.

The CDB Forestry Forum led by Teagasc was the follow-on structure from the focus group. The forum was the implementation body to oversee the delivery of the agreed wood energy actions. It built a local partnership, based on consensus, between the various stakeholders at a policy and operational level, and helped to support the emergence of local 'wood energy champions'. The C&E Division led the implementation of the wood energy actions, supported the forum to secure dedicated project funding for the Forest Link Project under the EU Peace II Programme, and supported the appointed project staff.

In Donegal the challenge going forward is to maintain the momentum and funding needed to continue the growth of the sector. The long-term objective of all the stakeholders is to establish a sustainable vibrant wood energy sector within County Donegal. The establishment of the Donegal Woodland Owners Society which now has 126 members is evidence that the sector itself recognises the need for collaboration and has come together to work collectively to that end. The need for continued political commitment and cross sector support will be vital for the on-going success of the industry.

Key issues and lessons

A number of key issues can be identified in the Donegal experience:

- The CDB and County Council made a **long-term commitment** to support the wood energy sector through the goals set for the energy, forestry and, agriculture and food sectors in An Straitéis.
- The CDB Forestry Focus Group delivered a county forestry strategy which was incorporated into An Straitéis. The subsequent CDB Forestry Forum was successful in achieving the forestry and wood energy goals of An Straitéis. This success was due to the **local partnership** which built understanding and consensus between the stakeholders and secured **dedicated funding** for projects such as the Forest Link Project.
- Though the CDB process '**wood energy champions**' emerged who actively promoted the wood energy agenda at both strategic policy and operational, grass-roots levels.
- The C&E Division committed **resources and staff**, and used innovative approaches to support delivery of the wood energy actions as stated in An Straitéis.
- The Forest Link Project increased the **local awareness** of forestry and wood energy issues, and actively supported the wood energy stakeholders in the county. The increased awareness among key decision-makers was a critical driver of the development process in the county.
- The project management of Forest Link through the C&E Division meant it was in a position to facilitate **inter-directorate integration and co-operation** within the local authority. This was instrumental in delivering on projects that needed multi-directorate involvement, e.g. use wood fuel energy in major capital programmes such as the Regional Cultural Centre and the Letterkenny Sports & Leisure Centre.

The Donegal experience highlights key factors to support wood energy development including:

- a coherent policy framework and the commitment of strategic policy decision makers
- the availability of a facilitator such as the C&E Division to ensure effective collaboration and partnership within the sector
- the need to build awareness of, and confidence in, the opportunities of the sector
- the necessity to have formal structures and resources in place to deliver on agreed actions

Role and guidelines for local authorities

Based on the Donegal experience, we can see that local authorities are well placed to support the development of the wood energy sector directly and indirectly. Local authorities can:

- promote and adopt wood energy systems in public buildings: demonstration projects by local authorities are highly significant as they create a demand for wood fuel and thereby support the development of the local supply chain, and instill confidence by sharing information with other potential end users
- create supportive CDB structure and strategy: as the lead agency for CDBs, local authorities are well placed to support the wood energy sector through the CDB structure, thereby promoting and co-ordinating local development and public service delivery at county level
- facilitate and lead the sector through C&E Divisions: in Donegal the C&E Division had access to resources, shared information and influenced decision makers. These actions had a positive impact on the wood energy sector. The C&E Division provided a range of services including: research (County Energy Audit, County Profile, Renewable Energy in Donegal – A Baseline Report); information and communications projects with relevant public and private stakeholders; assistance in securing dedicated resources for initiatives such as the Forest Link Project.

1.0 Introduction



1.1 Project background

The Western Development Commission (WDC) is a statutory body promoting economic and social development in the Western Region⁴. The Western Region has abundant natural resources with significant potential for the development of the renewable energy sector. The WDC is currently leading a wood energy project which aims to promote co-ordinated, strategic development of the sector. Forestry thinnings and residues are a potentially significant source of wood fuel, and the region has 40% of Ireland's afforested land.

The WDC established a Regional Wood Energy Advisory Group⁵ to guide the development of the project. The WDC, supported by the Advisory Group, prepared the *Wood Energy Strategy and Action Plan*⁶ (2007). This report was a recommended action under the *Wood Energy Strategy and Action Plan*. The WDC delivered this report in partnership with the Community and Enterprise (C&E) Division of Donegal County Council. The strategy highlighted the importance of local authority involvement in the sector including the need for a coherent, supportive policy framework at a county level to promote the development of the sector. Within Europe, such policies built confidence in the sector, as well as promoted long-term strategic planning and co-ordination in the sector. This report looks at these issues in the context of the Western Region and its local authorities.

⁴ The Western Region consists of counties Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway and Clare.

⁵ Members include: SEI; Forest Service of Department of Agriculture and Food; Teagasc; Udarás na Gaeltachta; Institute of Technology Sligo; Rural Resource Development Ltd (LEADER programme); Rural Generation Ltd; Association of Irish Energy Agencies (Galway Energy Agency); Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources; Irish Farmers Association; Imperative Energy Ltd; Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs; Community & Enterprise Division of Donegal County Council.

⁶ The Wood Energy Strategy and Action Plan is available for download at www.wdc.ie.

“An Straitéis”, the Donegal County Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development (2002-2012) identified forestry as a national resource with potential for development within the county. The Donegal County Profile (2002) identified the significant potential of biomass using the county’s forest resource. Working through the County Development Board’s (CDB) structure and processes, Donegal County Council led on a range of renewable energy projects that have since assisted in realising the potential of the renewable energy resources of the county. Key public and private players in the forestry sector now recognise Donegal County Council as having taken a progressive lead role in the support of the county’s wood energy sector.

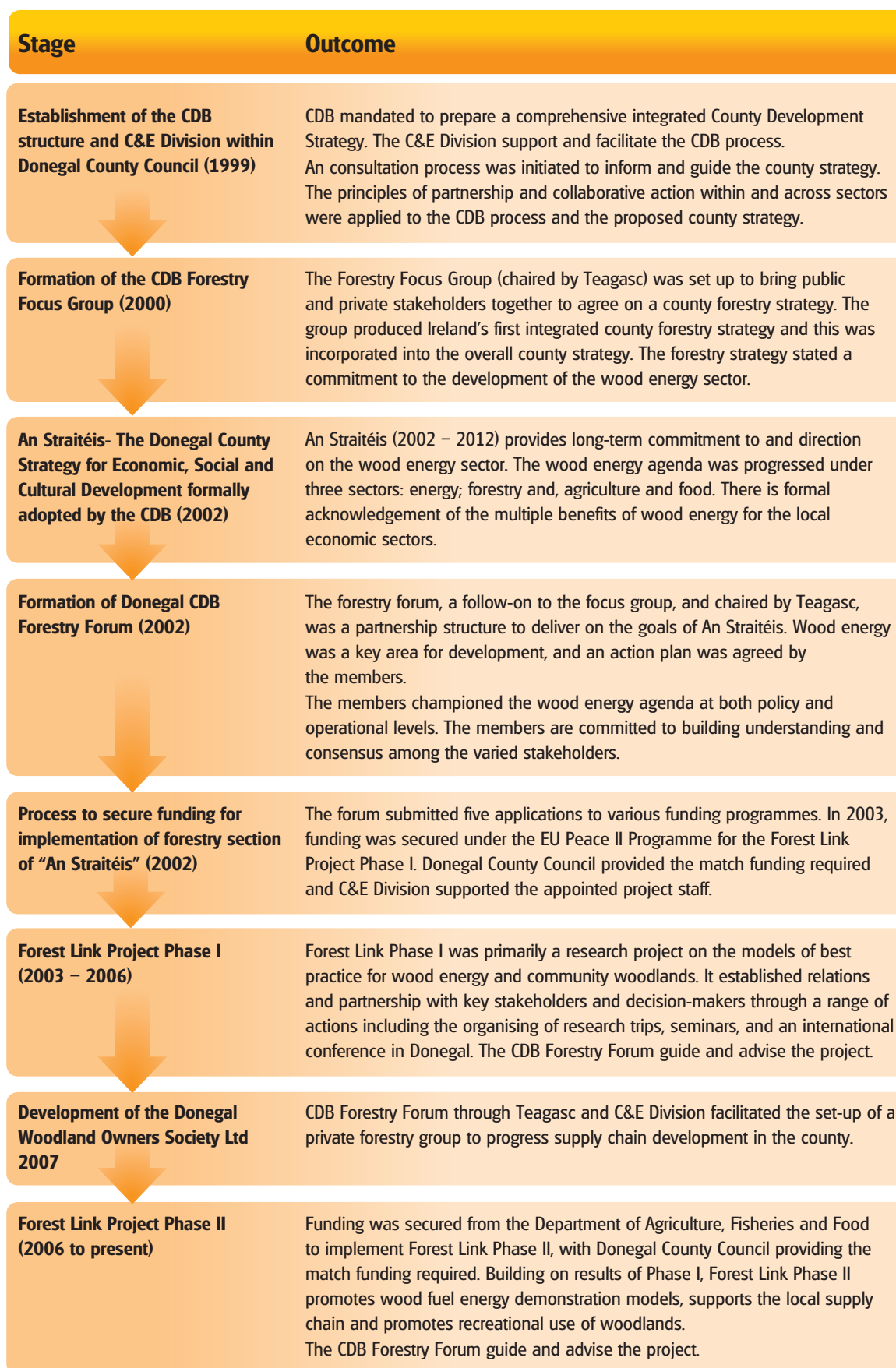
1.2 Aims of the report

This report aims to inform on the role of local authorities in supporting the wood energy sector and highlight the potential benefits and outcomes of local authority involvement in the sector. The WDC identified the C&E Division of Donegal County Council as a progressive local authority in regard to wood energy. By documenting the Donegal experience it is hoped that useful lessons can be shared with other local authorities. This report presents practical information that is of interest to directors and officials of local authorities, member agencies and partners of CDB, local development agencies and other local development stakeholders.

The report presents a case study on the role and experience of Donegal County Council in supporting the development of the wood energy sector in the county. The case study examines the following issues:

- the benefits and outcomes of local authority involvement in the sector
- the role of the various stakeholders in the context of the CDB structure
- the critical drivers in the development process
- the lessons learnt from the experience
- general guidelines for CDBs and local authorities in supporting the wood energy sector

The appointed consultant reviewed relevant background documentation and policies (see Appendix 1). Fourteen interviews were carried out (see Appendix 2 for list of those interviewed).



2.2.1 County Development Board Framework

Donegal County Development Board

In 1999 county councils were given the lead role and responsibility for the establishment of City and County Development Boards (CDB)⁹. The first task of each CDB was to prepare an integrated county development strategy to cover economic, social and cultural matters. The strategy was required to present a long-term (ten year) vision for the county and short to medium-term (five year) strategies. In the preparatory stage of Donegal's County Strategy, all relevant development bodies and organisations in the county were consulted to include their visions and gain their 'buy-in' to the county strategy.

In 2002 An Straitéis, the Donegal Strategy for Economic, Social & Cultural Development (2002 – 2012) was adopted by the CDB. Appendix 4 lists the 31 members of Donegal CDB and presents the CDB's roles as stated in An Straitéis.

The CDB Review of December 2005 re-established the importance of the wood energy sector within An Straitéis. The Implementation Plan (2006 – 2008) identified a range of actions to support the wood energy sector. The forestry forum, with Teagasc as lead agency, was the appointed structure through which to deliver the actions.

Through the CDB structure the potential of the wood energy sector was recognised by high-level strategic policy makers in the county. The **long-term commitment** to the sector by the CDB and Donegal County Council built public and private sector confidence in the potential for growth in the wood energy sector.

"Some work has recently been carried out looking at the effectiveness of the CDB. It has been found that they provide a fundamental forum for bringing people together e.g. the private and public sector, community groups and others." (Cllr. Francis Conaghan, Chairman, Donegal County Development Board).

Community and Enterprise Division

The C&E Divisions were mandated to act as the executive unit to facilitate and support the CDB process. The objectives of Donegal C&E Division of relevance to the wood energy sector include:

- co-ordination and assistance to CDB (and essential CDB structures) in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of An Straitéis
- management and administration of specific development supports, programmes and funds
- promotion and support of economic, social and cultural development initiatives in the county, and to co-ordinate the county council's activities in this context
- acting as a resource for strategic planning, policy and research in the county
- promotion of cross-border developments (economic, social and cultural) and establish partnerships for such developments with local authorities in Northern Ireland
- promotion and utilisation of EU resources, networks and models of good practice in the context of the implementation of An Straitéis
- undertaking the co-ordination and implementation of projects on behalf of the CDB

⁹ As recommended under the Report of the Interdepartmental Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems (1998). The CDBs were put in place as part of the process to bring about an integrated approach to the delivery of state and local development services at the local level. Donegal County Council was designated as the co-ordinating body for the establishment and management of the Donegal CDB. More detailed information is available at www.donegalcdb.ie.

Resources Available

In Donegal County Council, a Director of Services was appointed to the C&E Division, together with four C&E Development Officers and one Strategic Policy Development Officer. The high level of commitment by the County Council, County Manager and Director of the new division was demonstrated by the level of funding and support provided for the establishment and subsequent expansion of the division.

The C&E Division acquired additional functions including the management of various council development funds that could be applied in parallel with the objectives of the county strategy. These additional functions resulted in the C&E Division developing substantially from 2000 onward. (Approximately 30 staff are currently employed.) Approximately 50% of the staff are funded by Donegal County Council and 50% are employed as a result of external funding and, in some instances, co-funding being made available by the council. The external funding has come from a range of government and department sources, EU Peace & Reconciliation Programme and INTERREG Programmes.

2.2.2 Setting the County Strategy - An Straitéis

CDB Forestry Focus Group

In 2000, when the CDB was developing An Straitéis, 16 Sectoral Working Groups (SWG) were established to bring together relevant stakeholders who would undertake the necessary research and consultation required to prepare the ten year strategy¹⁰. A number of specific-interest focus groups were also set up to examine and report back on subjects and issues of interest to the CDB.

A special interest group for forestry, the Donegal CDB Forestry Focus Group (FFG), was initiated and led by Teagasc. The group's aims were to ensure that forestry issues were addressed within the county policy structures and agree a county forestry strategy that would form part of An Straitéis.

The FFG comprised various stakeholders that were considered, at that time, to be both supportive and opposed to the development of forestry in the county. The FFG actively sought to build mutual understanding and consensus among the members. Members of the CDB Forestry Focus Group were:

Organisation	Position
Teagasc (Chair)	Forestry Development Officer
Coillte Teoranta	Team Leader Representative
CDB Community Forum	Representative
Donegal County Council	Executive Chemist (Environment Division)
Donegal County Council	Senior Executive (Planning Division)
Donegal County Council	Development Officer, C&E Division
Donegal Farm Forestry Co-Op	Manager
Duchas	Regional Manager
Forest Service	Inspector
Tree Council	Representative
IFA	Spokesperson on forestry
McCool's Sawmills	Private Industry
Northern Fisheries Board	Inspector
Raudon Teoranta (Sawmill)	Private Industry
Teagasc	Agricultural Adviser
The Loughs Agency	Representative

¹⁰ The SWGs were grouped under the three pillars of the National Development Plan 2000 – 2006 (NDP) namely: Production; Human Resources, Culture and Social Inclusion; and Social and Economic Infrastructure.

By having a truly representative group (supportive and opposed) for the local forest industry, members came to understand the issues and concerns of the varied sectors and stakeholders. Over time members accepted the value of working to build consensus and taking a **partnership approach** to the development of the forestry and wood energy sectors.

After two years work by the FFG, Ireland's first integrated **county forestry strategy** was developed, setting out forestry goals for the next ten years. The forestry strategy was adopted by the CDB and formed a central part of An Straitéis. The wood energy market was identified as a significant opportunity for the forestry sector given that forestry thinnings and residues are a source of wood fuel. The FFG delivered a key component of the county policy framework that led to the future successful development of the wood energy sector.

An Straitéis Donegal County Strategy 2002 – 2012

Of relevance to the wood energy sector, An Straitéis included the following three goals:

1. Energy

The Energy Vision: 'Where the social, economic and cultural development of Donegal is promoted through the implementation of efficient and sustainable energy policies and practices'. The goals included the following:

- to develop policy and to achieve sustainability and greater self-sufficiency in energy, based on national and international practices
- to improve the health and quality of life of all members of society through a more efficient use and generation of energy
- to integrate energy supply and use issues with respect to all spatial infrastructural and development plans

Of specific relevance to wood energy was the stated energy objective '*to encourage the reduction and replacement of fossil fuels with renewable sources within the county wherever possible*'.

It is evident from An Straitéis's energy vision and goals that there was a long-term commitment by the CDB to the development of the renewable energy sector. Within this renewable energy vision there was a clear role for and understanding of the benefits of increased deployment of wood energy in the county.

2. Forestry

The Forestry Vision: 'To protect, establish and manage trees and woodlands in County Donegal in a sustainable manner that is socially acceptable, economically viable and environmentally sound'. The six forestry goals provided a strong context and support for the wood energy sector (See Appendix 5 for forestry goals and objectives). Two goals with objectives specific to wood energy were:

- to develop and manage forestry as a natural renewable resource in an economic, social (recreational) and environmentally sustainable manner

Objectives

1. to investigate appropriate systems to produce quality timber and added value products within the county
2. to examine opportunities for job creation/ social economy/enterprise development projects throughout the county
3. to improve local level consultation on planting issues
4. to recognise the economic opportunities from forestry development in sustaining rural communities

- to utilise and develop non-wood benefits of forestry

Objectives

1. to encourage the development of community forests (both rural and urban) through the involvement of the community and voluntary sector throughout the county
2. to support schemes that provide energy from short rotation forestry

It was acknowledged by the CDB that the forest resource was an economic opportunity for the county and this was recognised and defined in An Straitéis¹¹. Supporting the growth of the wood energy sector was accepted as a complementary development strategy for the forestry sector.

3. Agriculture and food

The Agriculture and Food Vision: 'Agriculture, forestry and food in County Donegal promoted, managed and developed in a balanced way that is economically viable, environmentally sound and resulting in vibrant rural communities'. One of the goals was 'to optimise the benefits of renewable resources to the farming community', which has direct relevance to wood energy, given the instance of private farm forestry in the county. The stated objectives of this goal were:

1. to raise awareness of the potential of all forms of alternative energy and renewable resources
2. to empower community to realise the benefits of renewable resources
3. to improve co-ordination between the actions of relevant agencies and groups
4. to identify opportunities in renewable resources for County Donegal

The agriculture and food goals further emphasised the role of and support for the development of renewable energy as a means to support on-farm enterprise diversification.

2.2.3 Delivering the strategy

CDB Forestry Forum

The Forestry Focus Group (FFG) was formed to agree a county forestry strategy that would form part of the overall An Straitéis. When the FFG had successfully delivered the forestry related elements of An Straitéis it had essentially completed its work. The FFG then began to consider how the strategy would streamline into An Straitéis and how the associated implementation plan was going to be delivered.

Following the formal adoption of An Straitéis, the CDB established a range of sub-structures to oversee the implementation of the various sectors of the county strategy. In many instances the new sub-structures included the same stakeholders that were involved in the preparation phase of the strategy. In the case of the forestry sector many of the members that were involved in the FFG continued their participation on the implementation body, the CDB Forestry Forum and undertook an active role in the delivery of strategy's objectives.

¹¹ The adopted strategy for forestry development in County Donegal is based on the economic, social and environmental aspects of forestry use. The strategy is set within a national policy framework, which includes: National Climate Change Strategy (Department of the Environment and Local Government, 2000); Growing for the Future (1996) Strategic Plan for the Development of the Forest Sector in Ireland (Forest Service); Irish National Forest Standard (2000, Government publication); Code of Best Forest Practice – Ireland (2000, Government publication).

The CDB Forestry Forum members included:

Organisation	Position
Teagasc (Lead Agency)	Forestry Development Officer
National Parks and Wildlife Service	Regional Manager
Ecowood Energy Systems Ltd	Director
Ecowood Energy Systems Ltd	Director
Donegal Woodland Owners Society Ltd	Chairman
Donegal FRS Group	Manager
Northern Region Fisheries Board	Senior Fisheries Environmental Officer
Forest Service	District Inspector
Green Belt Ltd	Forester
Coillte Teoranta	District Manager
Tree Council of Ireland	Representative
Water Pollution Laboratory	Executive Scientist
Raudon Teo	Private Industry
CDB Community Forum	Representative
EnviroGrind Ltd	Managing Director
Donegal County Council	C&E Area Manager
Donegal County Council	Forestry Development Officer
Donegal County Council	Chair of CDB

The CDB Forestry Forum meets approx four times a year, is facilitated by the C&E Division and supported by the CDB Forest Link Project (as outlined in the next section). Similar to the FFG, the forum sought to build partnership and consensus among the various stakeholders.

Through this CDB structure, the bringing together of this diverse group of county stakeholders has contributed greatly to the development of the wood energy sector in County Donegal because:

- it provided a forum where issues could be discussed openly by those stakeholders within the sector who have a collective ability to shape the future development and direction of the sector
- it provided a platform for integration of work programmes involving the local authority, development agencies and the private sector to promote the development of the wood energy sector
- it improved the awareness of issues between the participating stakeholders and allowed for the sharing of information and expertise
- it allowed for the strategic level discussion that is necessary for the planning of the forestry and wood energy sectors
- it facilitated the bringing together of all stakeholders in the sector and those impacted by it, as well as increased co-ordination of the players
- it enabled the development of an open and partnering approach by the private sector

The CDB Forestry Forum has, since its inception, been highly successful in achieving the forestry goals outlined in An Straitéis, particularly in relation to wood energy and the development of recreational woodlands. Much of the success has been due to the joint working, integration of work programmes and local partnership of the stakeholders, together with the securing of funding for innovative development initiatives.

The forum engaged with the public and private stakeholders who were critical to the development of the wood energy sector in the county. A number of forum members championed the cause of wood energy at both the strategic policy level and at the operational, 'grass roots' level. These '**wood energy champions**' were a critical driving factor in progressing the wood energy agenda within the CDB structure and county policy framework.

Forest Link Project

Forest Link Phase I (2003 – 2006)

The Forestry Forum's main aim was to implement an initiative that would assist in the development and management of forestry as a key natural resource to generate the maximum economic, social and environmental benefits from it. Dedicated resources were required to deliver on this aim. The forum prioritised actions on the basis of agreed industry needs and practicality. Five applications for funding were made by the forum, led by the Teagasc and the C&E Division. Funding was secured in 2003 through the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation, under Measure 4.1 'Outward and Forward Looking Regions'. The Forest Link Project was launched in early 2004 and was the first of its kind in Ireland.

Aims

The Forest Link Project aims were:

1. to create and enhance existing linkages to promote collaborative partnerships
2. to provide information on models of best practice to add value to the timber resources of private growers and the creation of community forests
3. to develop awareness of a best practice for creating employment opportunities for local communities and developing community forests, leading to the creation of a social, environmental and educational resource for the county
4. to act as a catalyst in the strengthening of the forestry sector by promoting new opportunities for growth and development

Wood energy was identified as a key action area for the project as it is a means to add value to the forest resource and promote new opportunities for private forestry owners.

Project resources

The Forest Link Project was awarded €329,000 over the three year period 2003 to 2006. The project was led by Donegal County Council and managed through the structures of the C&E Division, with necessary specialist advice and guidance provided by the CDB Forestry Forum. Donegal County Council, as the lead partner, employed a Forest Link Co-ordinator with relevant development and forestry experience, and provided administrative support to the project. **Donegal County Council was the first county to employ a development officer with forestry expertise.**

Actions delivered

The Forest Link Project delivered a range of actions¹² and those of relevance to wood energy included:

- submission to the mid-term review of COFORD RTDI programme
- development of the Forest Link Website (www.forest-link.com)
- research into opportunities for adding value to and marketing of the timber resource
- workshops with stakeholders, including Donegal CDB and elected members of Donegal County Council
- facilitating seven research trips¹³ for relevant stakeholders. County councillors and senior officials of stakeholder agencies participated in these trips
- production of 'seed to sawdust' directory of forestry, wood industry and related businesses
- hosting of wood task force meetings
- renewable energy installer training course
- produced guidance notes on developing a wood fuel supply business
- hosting of field visits to installations in the county
- identification of potential wood heating sites
- hosting of international Conference "Linking Communities to Policies", which looked at international models of best practice relating to wood fuel energy installations

Phase I of the Forest Link Project was very much research based and identified international best practice for different elements of the forestry and wood energy sectors. The project increased the **local awareness** and understanding of many forestry and wood energy issues. County councillors and senior officials of stakeholder agencies participated in the various actions including the research visits and seminars. The project actively sought to foster positive relations and build partnerships with all parties involved in forestry in Donegal. It directly **engaged with key decision makers** in the county and built a profile for the potential economic, social and environmental benefits of the wood energy sector.

Forest Link Phase II (2007 – 2008)

In 2006 the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food agreed to provide a 75% grant to support Phase II of the Forest Link Project (the grant awarded in 2007 was €80,000 and €75,000 in 2008). The County Council agreed to provide the match funding and support the continuation of the project. Forest Link Phase II sought to build on the outcomes of Phase I by implementing the lessons learned from the best practice research and thereby support the delivery of the goals as set out in An Straitéis. The two key areas for development were forest recreation and wood energy. The CDB Forestry Forum continues to provide guidance and advice to the project.

The Forest Link Phase II aims are:

1. to develop the wood fuel energy market in County Donegal by promoting demonstration wood fuel installations within the public and private sectors
2. to promote the development of the supply chain required to meet the demands of the growing market and in turn support the private/small scale forestry woodland sector
3. to maximize the woodland resource as a community and recreational amenity

¹² The key activities and benefits of the Forest Link Phase 1 project are outlined in the Forest Link Final Report of August 2006 available at www.forest-link.com.

¹³ Belgium, January 2004; Austria, February 2004; Wales, June 2004; Scotland, Sept 2004; Denmark, March 2005; Finland, April 2005; Sweden, June 2005.

Substantial work and progress has been made in achieving these aims. To date, the following actions have been implemented:

- development of nine wood energy demonstration projects in Donegal
- development of the wood fuel supply chain including formation of Donegal Woodland Owners Society
- formation of the Community Woodland Development (Tionscadal Scáthlán)
- production of the second edition of Forest-Link Directory

As a result of the actions undertaken under Forest Link Phase I and II, Donegal is now recognised as a national leader in developing the wood fuel energy sector as a local economic and environmental resource.

“Co-ordinated planning is needed to give the process of developing these markets some impetus. A lot of good work has already been done in Donegal and Clare. Other counties might look to follow their lead.”
(Irish Independent, 9th July, 2008)

Donegal County Council, through the C&E Division, as the lead partner in Forest Link, provided two vital driving factors.

- The project management was in a position to facilitate **inter-directorate integration and co-operation** within the local authority. This was instrumental in progressing new projects that were only possible through multi-directorate intervention, e.g. input of forestry issues into the strategic planning process of the council and agreement of the council to use wood fuel energy in major capital programmes such as the Regional Cultural Centre and the Letterkenny Sports & Leisure Centre.
- Working through the CDB structure and processes, initiatives were developed that involved and impacted on both the **public and private stakeholders** of the wood energy sector, e.g. public information campaigns on the benefit of conversion to wood fuel energy.

Donegal Woodland Owners Society

The CDB Forestry Forum recognised the critical need for the development of the local wood energy supply chain. During 2006, the CDB Forestry Forum through Teagasc’s Forestry Development Officer and the Forest Link Co-ordinator organised and facilitated a number of stakeholder meetings throughout the county. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss how supply chain development could be addressed and to identify possible solutions. Meetings were held in four locations throughout the county: Ballybofey; Dungloe; Inishowen; and South Donegal.

Discussions at these meetings highlighted the need, and critically, the willingness among private growers to establish a structure that would allow them to be in control of their own produce and maximise benefits to forest owners. The outcome of this consultation process was the set-up of the Donegal Woodland Owners Society, with the aim of addressing supply chain development. The group is organised on the basis of a ‘ground-up’ structure with membership currently comprising 126 private woodland owners throughout the county with a total land area of approximately 10,000 acres.

The objectives of the group are:

- to provide information and support to owners wishing to be proactive in the management of their woodlands
- to involve owners in the management decisions relating to their own woodlands
- to market timber for private growers
- to maximise the benefits to the growers
- to ensure the best interests of the growers and their plantations are at the core of activities

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food provided part funding for Donegal Woodland Owners Society, with the balance provided by the private sector. The society was formally launched in June 2008 by An Tanaiste, Mary Coughlan, T.D Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, who has been aware and supportive of the work of the CDB Forestry Forum from the early stages of its inception.

2.3 Key issues

In County Donegal, the CDB structure and the county strategy, as supported by the C&E Division, provided a mechanism to initiate and facilitate a development process to support the growth of the wood energy sector. The CDB structure provided leadership and a clear direction to progress the sector within the county. In looking at the Donegal experience a number of key issues can be identified.

- The CDB and county council made a **long-term commitment** to support the wood energy sector through the stated goals and objectives for the energy, forestry and, agriculture and food sectors in An Straitéis. This resulted in an increased public and private sector awareness and confidence in the potential for growth in wood energy sector.
- The **CDB structure and processes provided a mechanism** to engage with the public and private stakeholders of the wood energy sector, e.g. through public information campaigns and events. The co-operation between private interests, the county council and other organisations has been a driver of development in County Donegal.
- The commitment of Donegal County Council, County Manager and Director of C&E to the new Division was very high, and this impacted positively on the wood energy agenda, e.g. provision of funding, resources and support to new initiatives. The **C&E Division allocated resources and staff** to deliver the wood energy actions of An Straitéis.
- The CDB structure was an ideal mechanism through which to formally bring together the varied stakeholders and agree on a coherent county policy framework for wood energy. The CDB **Forestry Focus Group** delivered a county forestry strategy which built a strong foundation for the future development of the wood energy sector. The CDB **Forestry Forum** has been highly successful in achieving the goals outlined in An Straitéis, due to strong local partnership of the stakeholders and by securing dedicated project funding.
- Through the CDB process, **'wood energy champions'** emerged who actively promoted the wood energy agenda at both strategic policy and grass-roots levels. These champions were internal (county councillors, senior officials) and external (partner agencies, private sector) to the county council.
- The Forest Link Project increased the **local awareness** and understanding of forestry and wood energy issues. County councillors and senior officials of stakeholder agencies participated in the various actions. The project actively built a **local partnership** to support forestry and wood energy in Donegal. It directly engaged with key decision makers and built an understanding of the potential economic, social and environmental benefits of the wood energy sector. This increased awareness among key decision makers was a critical driver of the development process in the county.
- The project management of Forest Link through the C&E Division meant it was in a position to facilitate **inter-directorate integration** and co-operation within the local authority and thereby actively progress new initiatives that required such multi-directorate involvement, e.g. use of wood fuel energy in major capital programmes such as the Regional Cultural Centre and the Letterkenny Sports & Leisure Centre.
- As a result of **continued consultation** by the CDB Forestry Forum through Teagasc and the Forest Link Co-ordinator, the Donegal Woodland Owners Society Ltd was set up to address supply chain development. The society is a **private-led initiative** whose primary aim is to develop the wood energy sector, which is an outcome of the CDB process.

3.0 The Donegal experience

3.1 Benefits of wood energy

The Donegal experience shows how growth of the wood energy sector can address a range of county development goals. Increased local, sustainable energy supply creates new enterprise opportunities for the agriculture and forestry sectors, and generates a range of environmental, economic and social benefits.

Wood energy utilises existing natural resources and creates rurally based employment. The economic benefits of the sector are retained in local communities as wood fuel systems are based on local loops of fuel demand and supply. The high costs of fuel transport mean that activities must be locally based to achieve commercial viability. The increased viability of farming businesses and their associated community cohesion are also important in this regard. Developing a market for wood thinnings and by-products can improve the management of forestry and provide benefits in terms of the quality of wood at final harvest and of the wider environmental quality of the woods and forests themselves.

The approach taken by the C&E Division of Donegal County Council to support the development of the wood energy sector in the county has proved highly effective. Today there are ten commercial/public sector wood energy installations in operation, an estimated direct investment of €1.8 million (See Appendix 3 for a list of installations).

Donegal County Council has installed wood energy heating systems in two local authority facilities. These demonstration projects have had a significant impact as they inform other potential users of the benefits of wood energy, as well as support the development of a local fuel supply chain by increasing demand levels. The recognised benefits include:

- **a financial benefit** - due to the direct cost savings of wood energy compared to oil. Savings of 50 to 70% have been quoted from wood energy installations in County Donegal.
- **an economic benefit** - as wood energy stimulates the local economy with new enterprise opportunities, job creation and job retention. The WDC *Wood Energy Strategy* estimated that over 900 jobs would be created if 11% of the regional heat market was supplied by wood energy.
- **an environmental benefit** - due to the reduction in carbon emissions and support of increased carbon storage through forestry. Development of the sector will give rise to greater awareness of the carbon economy and environmentally sensitive behaviours (both personal and corporate). These include the wider use of green technologies that in turn will have benefit to the wider economy and, of course, the environment.

3.2 Role of local authority

Based on the Donegal experience we can see that a local authority can directly and indirectly support the sector in the following ways:

1. create supportive local policy structures and framework
 - In Donegal the Forestry Focus Group and the Forestry Forum structures linked into the overall CDB's county development strategy. An Straitéis committed to deliver on wood energy goals under the energy, forestry and, agriculture and food sectors. The Forestry Forum is the active lead CDB structure on progressing wood energy.

2. provide facilitation and support services to progress the sector
 - The C&E Division as the executive of the CDB provided expertise and resources to initiate new projects to deliver on An Straitéis. By working together the Forestry Forum and C&E Division secured funding to set up the Forest Link Project that had a specific focus on wood energy. The C&E Division facilitated inter-directorate integration and co-operation within the local authority to support the wood energy agenda. Donegal County Council through the CDB structure, and the C&E Division, provided leadership and direction in the wood energy sector.
3. direct use of wood energy fuel within public buildings
 - Donegal County Council is committed to using wood energy as shown by the installations in the Regional Cultural Centre and Letterkenny Sports & Leisure Centre. These demonstration projects have a positive impact on the confidence of other stakeholders in the sector.

In examining the role of local authorities to support wood energy, the Donegal experience highlights many important points.

- The CDB process as supported by the C&E Division provided a framework for an integrated inter-agency approach to the sectors development.
- The local authority was uniquely placed to co-ordinate and facilitate the agenda. They were generally perceived by public and private organisations to have a neutral stance, and they had access to the necessary resources to provide a facilitating role.
- The local authority was able to manage a level of risk in developing the wood energy sector that individuals or other organisation would not have been able to take.
- The local authority's involvement generated confidence in other relevant stakeholders and supported long-term planning of the sector.
- Having key development projects within the local authority structure allowed for an inter-directorate approach to be taken to wood energy development.
- Public leadership by the local authority encouraged others to take action. In Donegal two of the wood energy installations were established in public sector buildings.
- The CDB approach through the Forestry Focus Group, Forestry Forum and the Woodland Owners Group has proved effective to drive development of the sector. These groups provided a formal mechanism for stakeholders to become directly involved in the sector.
- The Forestry Focus Group and Forestry Forum were inclusive of all stakeholders, supportive and opposed, involved in the forestry and wood energy sectors. The process that was adopted sought to build understanding and consensus among the stakeholders.

The approach taken by Donegal CDB demonstrates that considerable progress can be achieved in a sector, if the appropriate decision makers and stakeholders are involved, and resources are allocated accordingly. Donegal CDB has had a positive impact, as illustrated by the increase in the number of wood energy installations in the public and private sectors. There was commitment at a policy level to deliver the goals outlined in An Straitéis and suitable expertise present in key positions, to make things happen at ground level. The Forest Link Project and CDB Forestry Forum worked directly with public and private stakeholders to progress projects. This, coupled with the support mechanisms provided by the CDB and C&E Division, has created a positive environment for the wood energy sector.

3.3 Lessons from the Donegal experience

In looking at the Donegal experience, the following lessons were identified as critical to supporting the wood energy sector.

Coherent policy framework

Donegal's An Straitéis (2002 – 2012) included specific reference to wood energy under the energy, forestry and, agriculture and food agendas. The forestry sector through the CDB Forestry Group, and later the Forestry Forum, took the lead on progressing the wood energy actions. The CDB structure ensured that the efforts of everyone in, or associated to, the forestry sector were co-ordinated in order to achieve the agreed development goals. Wood energy was embedded in the county strategy and its implementation plan, and this ensured that it was considered within the agenda of the county council and that it attained the level of commitment necessary to make progress.

Collaboration and partnership

The collaborative approach of the CDB was central to achieving the outcomes attained in County Donegal. The establishment of the CDB Forestry Focus Group allowed for a representative strategy for forestry to be agreed. The Forestry Focus Group, and subsequent forestry forum, ensured that all issues (positive and negative) relating to forestry were considered, and that realistic goals were agreed for the sector. In Donegal, this inclusive approach had a number of positive outcomes:

- enhanced relationships between agencies and stakeholders
- created a partnership approach between the public and private sectors
- increased understanding of forestry and wood energy issues with relevant stakeholders
- increased the county councils and stakeholders understanding of the potential for the wood energy sector
- created a more positive perception of forestry within the county
- supported increased openness and transparency among partners due to greater understanding of individual situations and needs

Awareness and communications

In Donegal, effective communications between the partners ensured that the relevant information was being communicated to the appropriate stakeholder, at the most opportune time to have the maximum impact. This was true both internally (between different Council Divisions, e.g. roads, planning, water and environment, etc) and externally between the county council and external agencies, and stakeholders. The Forest Link Project dedicated a considerable amount of resources to communications, awareness-raising actions, and information dissemination. These actions greatly benefited the development of the sector by building strong local partnerships.

Mobilisation and commitment of stakeholders

In Donegal the development of the sector was as a result of high-level officials/executives within the relevant stakeholders agencies buying into the concept of working within the CDB process from an early stage. The enthusiasm and dedication of public and private stakeholders to the CDB process, contributed greatly to the successful development of forestry and the wood energy sector in the county. In addition to the commitment to the process, 'wood energy champions' emerged from the CDB process, championing the sector at strategic policy and operational grass roots levels.

Structures for action

The CDB Forestry Focus Group and Forestry Forum were recognised as formal development structures in the county. The focus group, initiated and led by Teagasc, brought together all relevant stakeholders to design a forestry strategy which was adopted by the CDB as part of the county strategy. The forum was a mechanism to deliver and assess progress of the agreed actions. The C&E Division was responsible for co-ordinating the implementation and monitoring of the county strategy, thereby establishing clear lines of responsibility for delivery of goals.

Dedicated resources and expertise

The C&E Division provided facilitative support and leadership to the forestry forum. A C&E Officer was responsible for monitoring the delivery of the objectives as set out under the county strategy. The relevant partners provided benefit-in-kind (including administration, training rooms, etc) together with specialist expertise. Since 2003, a dedicated Forestry Development Officer was employed by Donegal County Council to progress the objectives of the Forest Link Project and support the work of the CBD Forestry Forum.

3.4 Guidelines for local authorities

The following section sets out general guidelines for local authorities to support the development of the wood energy sector based on the Donegal experience.

3.4.1 Demonstration projects by local authorities

Local authorities can impact directly on the development of the wood energy sector by leading on actions to consider and adopt wood energy systems e.g. assess the viability of using district heating systems¹⁴ in all new developments. Local authority owned/managed public buildings (including offices, libraries etc) can be examined in order to assess their potential for using renewable energy. This approach would increase awareness across the public and private sectors of the financial, economic and environmental benefits of wood energy.

If local authorities install wood energy systems, such public demonstration projects are highly significant as:

- they create a demand for wood fuel and thereby support the development of the local supply chain. Demonstration projects build confidence, expertise and capacity in the sector and ensure that the sector can meet its full potential.
- quality assurance is a particular concern for potential wood energy users in regard to wood fuel quality, equipment and service provision. The local authority is ideally placed to lead by example and can instill confidence by sharing information from the demonstration projects.

3.4.2 Policy framework and structures

The Donegal experience show that the CDB structure and process is an ideal mechanism through which to support the wood energy sector. Through the CDB, local authorities can carry out the following:

- **establishment of a wood energy policy framework:** local authorities can ensure commitment to the wood energy sector by developing a policy framework for the sector in the CDB County Development Strategy. In Donegal, wood energy goals were delivered under energy, forestry, and, agriculture and food. This approach has worked well in County Donegal. There must be explicit policy commitment to develop the local renewable energy sector. Alternatively, it may be possible to have an explicit wood energy strategy in a county.

¹⁴ A district heating system is where one boiler heats a network of separate buildings. District heating is used widely across Europe and to a much lesser degree in Ireland.

- **establishment of a stakeholder partnership to drive development:** in Donegal, the CDB sub-structures of the Forestry Focus Group agreed the county forestry strategy with specific reference to the role of wood energy. The Donegal CDB Forestry Forum was the mechanism to initiate, deliver and monitor actions. The forum, supported by the C&E Division, proactively secured funding to deliver innovative new projects dedicated to the agreed priority actions.
- **creation of structures to allow continued consultation:** a dynamic mechanism such as the Donegal CDB Forestry Forum is required to ensure development issues associated with the wood energy sector can be discussed on an on-going basis and their progress monitored. There must be flexibility to adopt and respond to changing circumstances as appropriate.
- **agreement by stakeholders on implementation plan:** it is essential to develop a practical implementation plan to achieve the stated policy aims, and then secure the resources and put lines of responsibilities in place to deliver on actions. The Donegal CDB Forestry Forum set development goals and each stakeholder accepted their respective roles and responsibilities in delivering on the actions.
- **employ an effective communications strategy:** communications on the benefits and development issues for wood energy is required within the county council itself and also externally between the council and other interest groups/ stakeholders. Local authorities should link to other regional and national agencies to ensure a complementary approach to what is happening in the wider sector¹⁵. In Donegal the Forestry Link Project was a key action to achieve the level of communication necessary to build an effective partnership.

3.4.3 Facilitate and drive initiatives

Local authorities are ideally placed to provide a facilitating and supportive role to the development of the sector. In Donegal, the C&E Division had access to resources, the capacity to share information and influence decision makers. These actions combined had a considerable and positive impact on the wood energy sector in a relatively short time frame. The potential facilitative services include:

- **research and consultation:** the potential for the wood energy sector will vary depending on the characteristics of the local authority area. In Donegal, the research and consultation carried out by the C&E Division and the Forestry Focus Group was vital in assessing the actual potential for and mapping out of a development strategy for the county, e.g. County Energy Audit, County Profile, Renewable Energy in Donegal – A Baseline Report.
- **information and communications:** local authorities can support the sector by providing information to relevant public and private stakeholders through a variety of actions, e.g. dissemination of information, guidance and support, provision of resources through schemes and funds. In Donegal, the Forest Link Project was central to delivering on these services to the various stakeholders.
- **wood energy champions at policy and operational levels:** from the Donegal CDB process emerged wood energy champions and this ensured the necessary people were involved at the required policy and operational levels, i.e. committed champions at policy level and well informed practitioners at ground level. This approach has worked very well within County Donegal.
- **securing resources:** in Donegal, the CDB and C&E Division ensured that there were adequate resources available to make things happen and that these were allocated on a medium-term basis, e.g. the Forest Link Project Phase 1 had a three year funding programme. It is difficult to plan for the long term if resources are only made available on a short-term basis. Local authorities can provide resources to the wood energy sector for the medium to longer term.

¹⁵ For instance, Sustainable Energy Ireland, WDC, Clare Wood Energy Project, Forest Service, Teagasc, Forest Link, COFORD, IrBEA.

Appendix 1 Information sources

Renewable Energy in County Donegal – A Baseline Report. Donegal Community & Enterprise Division. 2007.

An Straitéis, Donegal County Strategy 2002 – 2012. Donegal Community & Enterprise Division. 2002.

Donegal County Profile. Donegal Community & Enterprise Division. 2002.

Energy Issues in Ireland. National Spatial Planning Unit. Department of Environment of Local Government. 2002.

Renewable Energy – A strategy for the future. Department of Public Enterprise, Trade and Employment. 1996.

Donegal Energy Audit. Donegal County Council. 1997.

Wood energy from farm forests: A basic guide (2nd edition). Teagasc publication. 2006.

National Climate Change Strategy: Ireland. Department of the Environment and Local Government. 2000.

A review and appraisal of Ireland's forestry development strategy. Peter Bacon and Associates 2004.

Farm Forestry Series no. 11. Teagasc publication. 2007.

Simple energy saving tips. Donegal Community & Enterprise Division. 2007.

Websites

Forest Link: www.forest-link.com

Donegal County Council: www.donegalcoco.ie

Western Development Commission: www.wdc.ie

IrBEA: www.irbea.org

SEI: www.sei.ie

Teagasc: www.teagasc.ie/forestry

Clare Wood Energy Project: www.ccwep.ie

Appendix 2 Interviewee list

Interview Number	Name	Title	Organisation
1	Michael Heaney	Director Community Enterprise and Culture	Donegal County Council
2	Aoife Smith	Forest Link Co-ordinator	Community and Enterprise Unit Donegal County Council
3 4	John Jackson	Chairman Chairman	Donegal Forestry Forest Forum Donegal Woodland Owners Society Ltd
5	Barry Jackson	Owner	Jackson's Hotel, Ballybofey
6	Steven Meyen	Forestry Development Officer North West Region	Teagasc
7	Paul McGonigle	Director	EcoWood Energy Systems Ltd
8	Martin Regan	District Inspector	Forest Service
9	Toni Needham	Energy Development Officer	Donegal County Council
10	Francis Conaghan	Councillor	Donegal County Council
11	John Duffy		Coillte
12	Lewis Griffith	Farm Forester Vice Chairman	Donegal Woodland Owners Society Ltd
13	Cathal Mac Suibhne	Regional Manager	Údarás na Gaeltachta
14	Dessie Larkin	Councillor	Donegal County Council
15	Fionnuala Mc Kelvey	Community and Enterprise Development Officer	Donegal County Council
16	Geraldine O'Sullivan	Forest Link Coordinator 2003 - 2006	Donegal County Council

Appendix 3 Wood energy installations in County Donegal (July 2008)

Installation location	Installed	Feedstock	Supplier	Approx. Savings
Gartan Outdoor Centre	2006	willowchip	Rural Generation	unknown new build
Innishowen Gateway Hotel, Buncrana	2006	woodchip	Eco Wood Energy	unknown
Mount Errigal Hotel, Letterkenny	2006	woodchip	Eco Wood Energy	unknown
The Abbey Vocational School, Donegal Town	2007	woodchip	Imperative Energy Ltd	approx 40%
Villa Rose Hotel, Ballybofey	2007	woodchip	Local sawmill material	70%
Regional Culture Centre, Letterkenny	2007	wood pellets	Balcas	new build approx 35%
Solis Lough Eske Castle Hotel, Donegal	2007	woodchip	Eco Wood Energy	unknown
Letterkenny Leisure & Sports Centre	2007	woodchip	Eco Wood Energy	unknown
Jackson's Hotel, Ballybofey	2008	woodchip	Eco Wood Energy	50%
Raddison Hotel, Letterkenny	2008	woodchip	Eco Wood Energy	unknown

Appendix 4 County development board roles and membership

An Straitéis, the Donegal Strategy for Economic, Social & Cultural Development (2002 – 2012), states the roles of the CDB as:

- observation and monitoring - identifying baselines, monitoring trends, planning contingencies
- diagnosis - of needs, opportunities, threats and spatial patterns
- co-ordination - providing a link point between all of the elements of the local community and its service providers
- facilitation- of joint planning between different bodies
- evaluation - of its effectiveness
- initiation - of key strategic actions
- implementation - of projects where appropriate
- brokering- alliances between different sectors
- informing - communicating with the community, sectoral groups, other local governments, central government and key agencies.

These roles are the responsibility of the Director of C&E as supported by the CDB and partner agencies. The day-to-day management of the various projects associated with the implementation plan of An Straitéis lie within the ambit of a nominated member of the lead agency for that project. In regard to the wood energy sector, these roles provide the context for the potential functions that the CDB could apply within the sector.

David Alcorn	Donegal County Council / Údarás na Gaeltachta
Tiernan Brady	Bundoran Town Council
Francis Conaghan	Donegal County Council
Gerry Crawford	Donegal County Council
Dermot Mc Laughlin	Buncrana Town Council
Patrick Mc Gowan	Donegal County Council
Terence Slowey	Donegal County Council
Jean Crossan	Letterkenny Town Council
Phonsie Travers	Ballyshannon Town Council
Dessie Larkin	Radharc an Dúin
Enda Boland	Bord Iascaigh Mhara
Brian Doherty	D.S.F.A.
Kieran Doherty	Regional Manager HSE
Frank Fox	An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíocht
Maire Aine Gardiner	Regional Executive N.W. Regional Tourism
Martin Gormley	Chairperson Donegal Childcare Committee
Paul Hannigan	Director Letterkenny Institute of Technology
Paddy Harte	International Fund for Ireland
Diarmaid Ó Mórdha	An Roinn Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta
John Mc Carter	Donegal County Enterprise Fund

Mary O'Malley	FÁS
Joe Mc Hugh	Regional Manager, I.D.A.
Cathal Mc Suibhne Uas	Bainisteóir Réigúnda, Údarás na Gaeltachta
Denise Mc Cool	Manager
Henry Mc Garvey	Pramerica Systems Ireland Ltd.
Gerard Grany	Pramerica Systems Ireland Ltd.
Terry Mc Ginn	Garda Siochána
John Henry McLaughlin	County Community Forum
Paula Leonard	County Community Forum
Mairín Uí Ferraigh	County Community Forum
Méabh Ní Chonnacháin	Regional Executive Enterprise Ireland
Eithne Nic Lochlainn Uas	Bainisteoir, Meitheal Forbatha na Gaeltachta Teo
Sean Ó Longáin	Príomh Fheidmeannach, Coiste Ghairmoideachas, Dhún na nGall
James O'Donnell	ICMSA
Paul Skinnader	Border Action Office,
Jim Slevin	Chairperson
Michael Tunney	CEO, Donegal County Enterprise Board
Andrew Ward	Manager Inishowen Rural Development - I.R.D.L.
Pauline White	Policy Analyst, Western Development Commission
Anne Wilkinson	SIPTU
Martin O'Rourke	SIPTU
Maire B O'Leary	Health & Social Policy Officer
Michael Mc Loone	Donegal County Council
Micheál O'hEanaigh	Director of Service
Aidan McNicholas	Director of Service
Francis Coyle	Director of Service
Sean Sheridan	Director of Service
John McLaughlin	Director of Service
Liam Kelly	Director of Service
Chris Lyons	Director of Service
Garry Martin	Divisional Manager
Eileen Burgess	Divisional Manager
Barney McLaughlin	Administrative Officer
Charles Sweeney	Administrative Officer/Fisheries
Aideen Doherty	Administrative Officer
Anne Marie Conlon	Administrative Officer
Loretta McNicholas	Manager-Research and Policy
Maria Ferguson	Administrative Officer
Colin McNulty	Administrative Officer
Jaclyn Harron	Research Officer
Siobhán McDevitt	Clerical Officer
Roisin McBride	Research Officer
Rosita McFadden	Research Officer
Tom O'Dwyer	Teagasc

Appendix 5 Forestry goals and objectives of the County Development Strategy

Goal A. To foster education, training, awareness and the enhanced perception of forestry in Donegal

Objectives

- A.1** To raise awareness in relation to forestry and forestry related issues using models of good practice from elsewhere.
- A.2** To provide advice and training to landowners, e.g. Health and Safety issues, use of IT (bilingually where appropriate).
- A.3** To encourage all landholders to plant 1% of their arable land with broadleaves.
- A.4** To promote a common understanding of the importance of good landscape design.
- A.5** To integrate services between all stakeholders.
- A.6** To create training opportunities in forest management skills for socially excluded and marginalised groups.

Goal B. To develop and manage forestry as a natural renewable resource in an economic, social (recreational) and environmentally sustainable manner.

Objectives

- B.1** To achieve SFM (Sustainable Forest Management) certification for all timber/forestry providers.
- B.2** To investigate appropriate systems to produce quality timber and added value products within the county.
- B.3** To examine opportunities for job creation/ social economy/ enterprise development projects throughout the county.
- B.4** To improve local level consultation on planting issues.
- B.5** To recognise the economic opportunities from forestry development in sustaining rural communities.

Goal C. To provide and develop the infrastructure necessary in order to service the developing industry (in accordance with the National Spatial Strategy).

Objectives

- C.1 To ensure internal road infrastructure and adequate fire prevention measures are fully addressed at approval stage.
- C.2 To provide a designated road infrastructure capable of meeting the needs of the industry.

Goal D. To ensure that the developing forest industry is in harmony with the environment (aquatic habitats, landscape archaeology, wildlife).

Objectives

- D.1 To adopt good management practices at all stages, i.e. from seed to sawdust.
- D.2 To research good forest management practices in Donegal with regard to the environment.
- D.3 To encourage the promotion, management and regeneration of indigenous native woodlands and scrubs.

Goal E. To utilise and develop non-wood benefits of forestry.

Objectives

- E.1 To encourage the development of community forests (both rural and urban) with the involvement of the community and voluntary sector throughout the county.
- E.2 To support schemes that provide energy from short rotation forestry.
- E.3 To further develop and highlight the recreational, cultural value and tourism potential of Donegal forests, including all broadleaf forests, e.g. Ards Forest Park, and to improve access to forests.

Goal F. To maintain the health and disease-free status of forests in Donegal.

Objectives

- F.1 To establish disease prevention measures.
- F.2 To raise awareness of the importance of disease control.

Appendix 6 Organisations explained

Coillte – is a commercial company operating in forestry, land based businesses, renewable energy and panel products. <http://www.coillte.ie>

COFORD – the National Council for Forest Research and Development - is an agency of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and is responsible for the development of national forest research and development policy and priorities, the formulation and implementation of programmes that address these priorities, and transferring the knowledge generated into practice. <http://www.coford.ie>

Donegal County Council – as the local authority for County Donegal (exclusive of four town council areas) provides an extensive range of services in the county. These services range from planning control, to the provision of social housing, to the upkeep and improvement of roads, to pollution control, to fire services, library services and sanitary services. <http://www.donegalcoco.ie>

Donegal County Development Board (CDB) – The Donegal CDB was set up in recognition of the need to integrate and co-ordinate the various elements of development and service delivery at local level. Donegal CDB has 42 members comprising of representatives from local government, local development, the relevant state agencies active at local level, and the social partners (including the Community and Voluntary Sector). <http://www.donegalcdb.ie>

Forest Service – is responsible for ensuring the development of forestry within Ireland, in a manner and, to a scale that maximises its contribution to national socio-economic well-being on a sustainable basis that is compatible with the protection of the environment. <http://www.agriculture.gov.ie>

Irish Bioenergy Association (IrBEA) – was founded in May 1999. It has been formed to promote the bioenergy industry and to develop this important sector in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. <http://www.irbea.org>

Irish Farmers Association (IFA) – is the largest farming organisation with 85,000 members in 945 branches nationwide. <http://www.ifa.ie>

Teagasc – the Agriculture and Food Development Authority – is the national body providing integrated research, advisory and training services to the agriculture and food industry, and rural communities. It was established in September 1988 under the Agriculture (Research, Training and Advice) Act, 1988. Teagasc's Forestry Development Unit provides independent advisory, training and research services to the farm forestry sector. <http://www.teagasc.ie/forestry>

Údarás na Gaeltachta – is the regional authority responsible for the economic, social and cultural development of the Gaeltacht. <http://www.udaras.ie>

Western Development Commission (WDC) – is a statutory body promoting economic and social development in counties Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway and Clare. <http://www.wdc.ie>

For further information please contact:

Western Development Commission, Dillon House,
Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon, Ireland

Telephone: 00 353 94 986 1441

Fax: 00 353 94 986 1443

E-mail: info@wdc.ie

Websites: www.wdc.ie www.LookWest.ie