



DERREG



Environmental Capital and Sustainable Rural Development: Case Study Region – West of Ireland

Dr. Maura Farrell

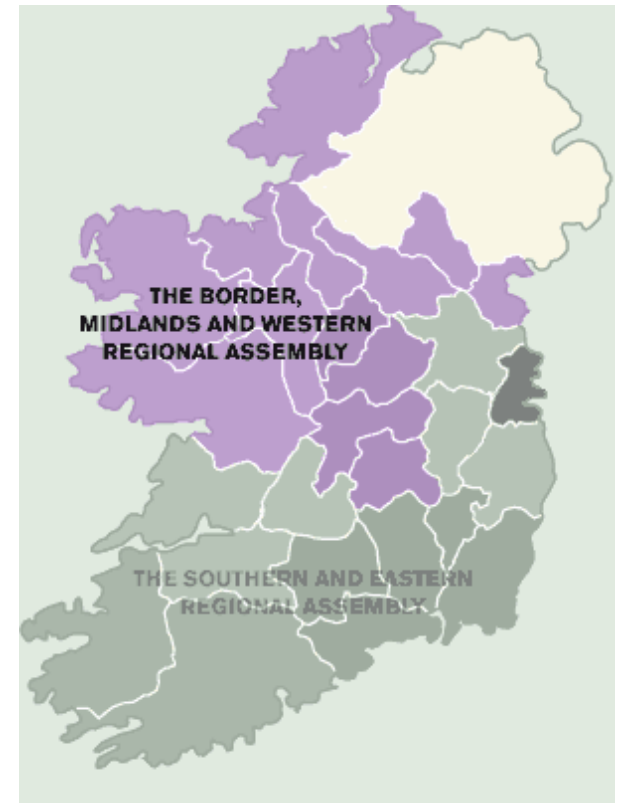
Dr. John McDonagh

Dr. Marie Mahon

DERREG Final Conference: Globalisation and Rural Regions in Europe: Impacts, Challenges and Lessons

West of Ireland: Case Study Region

- Region – Three counties, Galway, Mayo and Roscommon.
- Considered a NUTS3 region the area occupies a peripheral location on the north-western edge of Europe and is regarded as 'predominantly rural' in character.



Forestry in the West of Ireland

- Responding to globalisation requires the exploitation of the environmental capital of rural regions.
- One particular response endorsed as a global option with a local, regional and global focus is forestry.

Irish Forestry



- Forestry cover **—————>** up from 4.8% (1993) to 10% (2009)

- Policy support from Irish government – grants and premiums.

Media Analysis



Number of articles relating to forestry increased:

2000 = 4 \longrightarrow 2008 = 113

Positive Result.....but.....

Majority of articles from Government led forestry agencies promoting benefits of forestry

Question....

Forestry policy promotion rather than true reflection of market interest???

Key Interviews - Selected Findings

Positive

- Teagasc as promoters – extension advisors – inter-agency co-operation
- State involvement – Grants & Premiums
- No change since recession on government grants and premiums
- Huge potential - forestry for recreation and tourism.
- Huge potential for forestry as a rural development initiative

Negative

- Forestry Strategic Plan - macro level – not regional level.
- Strategic Plan – no consideration of issues - carbon emissions and renewable energy
- Little acknowledgement of the multifunctional use of forestry - no grants for amenity forestry.
- Cautionary approach from farmers - a lack of confidence, tradition and cultural barriers (particularly in the west of the country).
- Land structure - West region - a barrier to afforestation - small plots of land prevent a reasonable area of land being available for planting.

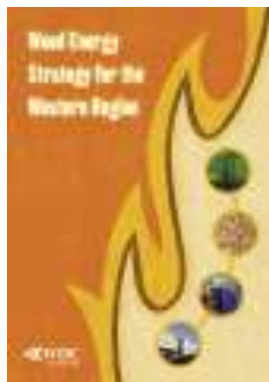
WP3 – Case Studies



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AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Forestry

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County Clare Wood Energy Project



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County Clare Wood Energy Project

Case Study Choice:

- Territorially, outside CS.....but links with suppliers, target groups & Teagasc advisors in CS - usable as a CS.
↓
- Roscommon Integrated Development Company – attempting to implement similar project
↓
- **The County Clare Wood Energy Project** (CCWEP) typifies many of the aims and objectives of the WP3 research.
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- This project - holistic example of the repositioning of a rural resource (forestry) & how it provides opportunities for eco-economy based regional development.

County Clare Wood Energy Project

Managed by Clare Local Development Company (CLDC) and Teagasc since 2005.



Funded by the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF) from 2005-8.

Aim:

To stimulate the market for pulpwood in the region by facilitating both the supply and demand of wood chips.



County Clare Wood Energy Project

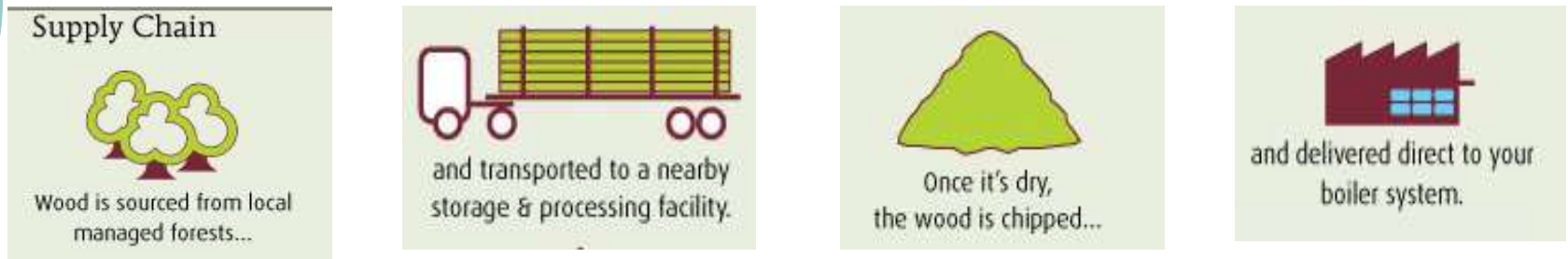
- Heat requirement, boiler size, wood chip requirement and storage for different large premises were identified.
- These specifications were used as the basis for boiler installation tenders & wood chip supply tenders.
- Under the Bioheat Programme - Sustainable Energy Ireland provider grant applications for the purchase of boilers.
- Farmers carry out thinnings - sell the palletwood and stakewood at a profit and sell pulpwood for wood energy locally as opposed to having to transport it long distances.
- Clusters of potential thinning sites in the vicinity of possible boiler locations were also identified so as to form the basis for a wood supply chain.

CCWEP: Regional Development Strategy



Good Practice

Supply Chain



Knowledge Transfer...

- Teagasc advisors, CLDC & Cluster Groups.....Training around negotiations with harvesting contractors/chipping contractors; informal learning.

Rural Development Initiative

Cluster groups – networking



Good Practice – Sustainable

Good Practice – yes...but based on supply and demand

Supply

- Global Trends in agriculture
 - World prices of wheat, meat, sugar and dairy products etc. - well above the average of the past decade.
- Results - Compounds farmer hesitation
- Small disperse plantations
- Little knowledge of forest thinning and harvesting
- Small margins on first thinning

Demand

- National recession
 - No capital
 - Boiler grants removed
- Convince heat users to consider wood chip

General Comments.....

- Huge potential – forestry as a development industry in the West of Ireland
- Potential for forestry in recreation and tourism.
- Huge potential for forestry as a rural development initiative

Thank you!

