Action Renewables and University of Ulster Demonstrate that all good things come in the "SMALLEST" of packages

Two of the SMALLEST partners, Action Renewables and the University of Ulster, launched an innovative new service in May which will help make renewable energy more accessible to the smallest and most remote communities throughout Northern Ireland.

The 'SMALLEST' service (Solutions for Microgeneration that ALLow Energy Saving Technologies), is a European funded project which will establish a free 'hand-holding' service across all Northern Periphery Programme (NPP) partner regions, including Northern Ireland, providing support for rural communities interested in undertaking renewable energy projects.

The service is specifically designed to increase awareness of the potential benefits of renewable energy for small communities and will also provide support and assistance in the planning of green energy generation projects.

The 'SMALLEST' service will help communities identify the best way to convert from traditional to renewable energy generation and will provide communities with a mentoring service offering access to trained and qualified professional and practical support. The project will also introduce innovative training and mentoring programmes for existing advisory services.

The 'SMALLEST' project, which was officially launched at the Ecos Centre in Ballymena, will run for three years until June 2012 during which time Action Renewables and the Ulster Business School at the University of Ulster, Coleraine will also be working in collaboration with international project partners from Finland, Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, the Shetland Islands, Scotland and Sweden.

Terry Waugh, deputy director, Action Renewables commented: "The "SMALLEST" service will encourage and stimulate renewable energy generation in remote rural communities and as a result assist in reducing, costs, pollution, environmental damage, and encourage self-reliance for future energy generation. Most importantly,

this service will standardise support processes and allow communities to draw upon pooled skills and shared knowledge."

Terry continues: "In the past, organisations in rural communities have found it difficult to find the guidance and assistance needed to implement such projects. For example, Corrymeela, a cross-community residential centre for peace and reconciliation in Ballycastle is one such organisation which have benefited from renewable energies in the form of solar water heating panels and a 15kW wind turbine. They encountered a number of stumbling blocks during the process of sourcing and installing these technologies and found that grant application forms were difficult to understand and that there was a general lack of impartial, independent information and advice available to them. The SMALLEST project will address these shortcomings and provide training and further information on the various technologies available making renewable energy solutions more accessible to all parts of the community – no matter how remote."

The project is open to rural organisations throughout Northern Periphery Programme which covers Scotland, Northern Ireland, Faroe Islands, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Greenland, Norway, and Finland. Anyone interested in benefiting from this free service should contact the SMALLEST lead partner, the International Resources and Recycling Institute (info@recycling-institute.org). You can also contact specific partners directly using contact details on the Partners page.

For interested parties in Northern Ireland please contact **Leanne Rice** at Action Renewables on 028 9073 7868 for further information or log on to **www.actionrenewables.org**.

Action Renewables

Action Renewables is the leading organisation in Northern Ireland in the promotion and development of renewable energy.

Action Renewables delivers a large portfolio of programmes including:

- general awareness raising
- road shows
- seminars
- performance monitoring of technologies
- research and evaluation
- policy
- lobbying