Exploring industry standards: a focus on MCS

Martin Cotterell
Founder and Technical Director, Sundog Energy
Ray Noble
Co-Chair, Solar Strategy, DECC, Associate, NSC, Storage and EV Advisor, Renewable Energy Association and Special Advisor, Rated Solar Installer,
Griff Thomas
Managing Director, GTEC Training
Chris Roberts
Solar Specialist, STA
Gideon Richards
Chief Executive Officer, Microgeneration Certification Scheme
Understanding MCS; Origins and Aims

Kunal Sharma
MCS Administrator, Gemserv Limited
Content

• Origins and Aims
• Certification Framework
• MCS Structure
Origins and Aims
Origins and Aims

• MCS began its development in 2006 by the microgeneration industry and government

• Its main aims were to:
  – build confidence in the microgeneration sector for consumers and industry alike
  – Provide a level of protection and support for consumers
  – Develop ever evolving industry standards focussed on a minimum level of service and quality, but based on European and international standards where available
Certification Framework
Certification Framework

• MCS operates within an established certification framework which is applicable to other established industries such as electronic devices and electronic components.

• This framework fits under the international standards BS EN IEC/ISO 17067 and IEC / ISO 17065

• MCS works to 17067 and the Certification Bodies to 17065
Certification Framework

IAF Accreditation Service Providers

Accredited or Approved Test Laboratories

Accredited Certification Bodies

Accreditation Body (UKAS in UK) provide independent accreditation of scheme documents

Contract With Scheme Owner
Certification Framework

• MCS is an independent third party certification scheme
• It utilises the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) framework to ensure consistency in approach to certification meaning...
Certification Framework

— Accreditation Body (UKAS in the UK) provide independent accreditation of:

• Accredited test houses and laboratories testing products to the MCS scheme documents; and

• Certification bodies certifying products and installation companies to the MCS scheme documents.
Certification Framework
Certification Framework

• Key points to note:
  – **MCS does not carry out** the certification, this is done by the Certification Bodies who are independently accredited to be able to carry certification out
  – **MCS is**, due to its relationship with FiT and RHI, a ‘technical de facto regulator’ under the eyes of the EU Commission which means that everything MCS or the CBs do has to be considered in the light of competition rules; barriers to trade; compliance with directives and how it interacts with government policy
Certification Framework

• Key points to note (cont...):
  – MCS must always utilise existing international and European standards where they already exist
  – MCS cannot go above and beyond these unless this can be justified
  – MCS has to work on a tightrope of providing confidence and trust to the stakeholders and balancing this against the effects and costs to comply for those required to comply with it – QA requirements for small companies; Competencies of Companies; Compliance Certificates etc.
MCS Structure
MCS Operating Structure
Technical WGs

- Open to anyone to join subject to them having a technical knowledge of the technology
- Develop the scheme documents
- All members are volunteers and do not get paid to complete the work
- All of the panel members here today are members of the MCS PV technical working group
Summary

• MCS has to work within established certification frameworks
• MCS itself does not carry out certification
• Due to link to the financial incentives, MCS is seen as a de-facto technical regulator with the EU Commission, so cannot create additional barriers over and above EU or International Standards unless justified
• Members of committees are all volunteers
Thank You

Web: www.microgenerationcertification.org

email: mcs@gemserv.com

tel: 020 7090 1082
Ensuring effective standards:
Ideas for improvement

SEUK: October 2014

Chris Roberts
Technical Specialist
Solar Trade Association
MCS – Broken?
Principles of Industry self-regulation:
1. Needs high consumer awareness
2. Needs to be enforced consistently, objectively and even-handedly
3. Needs to be seen to be taking action to inspire confidence
4. Sanctions need to be real, proportionate and meaningful
5. Needs to be transparent
Conundrum of Industry self-regulation:

- Somebody has to pay the operation costs
- Ends up being the participants
- So the “regulators” are paid by those they’re regulating = conflict of interest
- Therefore needs oversight body
- Participants want it easy for them but hard for their competitors
- Participants want it cheap
Operation & Management

- Professional management team properly remunerated (currently too reliant on volunteers)
- Certification Bodies enabled to take necessary action (including expulsion)
- Certification Bodies given clear SLAs on dealing with consistently non-conforming companies/products
Operation & Management (cont.)

- MCS to undertake enduring programme of random inspections of registered systems
- CB to randomly select site for annual surveillance audit
- Refocus audit away from manage system to technical assessment
- Mechanisms for whistleblowing
Marketing & Communications

- Consumer focussed marketing plan with agreed messaging
- Clear set of metrics to measure scheme effectiveness
- Communicate positive results to participants (rather than just just standards updates)
Finally…..

MCS needs to demonstrate value beyond simple access to subsidy schemes

It will do this by positively differentiating those certified from those that aren’t in the eyes of customers
16/10/2014

Check out YourRoof.info

One Million Solar Roofs 2015
Join the Solar Energy Revolution

Making Sense of Solar

Your Roof Calculator

Solar power is the only power generation technology with no moving parts and therefore no wear and tear.

Power from your roof
Heat from your roof
What to ask your installer
More info
Home

This is a simple PV calculator which uses all the assumptions generated from the Solar Trade associations modelling. It will give you a breakdown of your expected cash flows that you will receive as part of your Feed-in-Tariff, as well as the savings you will make from using your own electricity. You can produce a 2-page document “Export this report as a PDF” which you can keep and share with your installer.
The Future of MCS
Image, marketing, enforcement and installer support
How can we make it happen?

Griff Thomas (MD GTEC)
MCS Standards Management Committee
Chairman

GTEC
Contract reconciliation
Expert witness reports
Regulatory compliance audits
MCS is a 3\textsuperscript{rd} party certification scheme

It can be difficult to understand how it all works

The key factor is that MCS provides the standards and framework that are certified by 3\textsuperscript{rd} party certification bodies
MCS has evolved over the last 7 years and now has a legal structure that will enable it to more actively add benefits to the sector.

All technical working groups are attended on a voluntary basis.

Anyone wanting to be a technical working group member can ask to become one.
Recent changes means that initiatives can now be taken forwards in the next 6-12 months including:

- Development of an online Solar Thermal calculation tool
- Support of the DECC dRHI roadshows
Centralised insurance backed warranty scheme for certified contractors

A budget of £10k to support power generation uptake

A defined route for arbitration for certified contractors
- On-site random audits (~800-1000)

- Development of more robust sanctions where non-conformances are found / reported
Installer Support

MCS is always keen to ensure that it can support installers.

Moving forwards it is key that MCS is seen to be delivering a robust scheme but to do this it must connect with the SME installer.

GTEC

Contract reconciliation
Expert witness reports
Regulatory compliance audits
MCS added value as subsidies reduce?

As financial support reduces how can MCS maintain its market position and add value to the consumer and installer proposition?
MCS is largely a voluntary organisation and welcomes help and assistance to develop these new ideas.

MCS is industry led and as such the industry can change its shape and direction.

Have your say..... MCS wants to know what you want.
Over to you..................