

Gemserv's collaboration with government helped to inform future Biomass Strategy.

THE CHALLENGE

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), now the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) is a government department responsible for the energy and Net Zero commitments of the United Kingdom. They issued a call for evidence on biomass in April 2021 to explore the potential of the UK using it as an energy source.

The call for evidence was open for ten weeks and consisted of 26 questions across four chapters with respondents encouraged to provide supporting evidence. To assist with information extraction, BEIS required support from experts in the field to analysis the responses which would help shape and inform future strategies.

There were several key areas where BEIS wanted to gain respondents' views, rationale and evidence:

- Availability of sustainable biomass from domestic and international sources.
- Potential end uses to support our net zero target in the context of availability of sustainable biomass feedstocks.
- The sustainability of the supply chain and opportunities for strengthening existing criteria.
- Accounting of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from biomass use.
- Bioenergy with carbon capture and storage technology and its potential applications to deliver negative emissions.



THE SOLUTION

Gemserv took a professional and considered approach to deliver to the client's high expectations. We analysed each response in detail, collecting information on the respondent's viewpoint, the rationale behind it, and using any supporting evidence provided. This was an extensive task, but it built a strong foundation for the upcoming Biomass Strategy and enhanced our understanding of sustainable biomass as an energy and heating source.

Throughout the project, Gemserv provided regular updates to the client to ensure that a high level of quality was upheld and that the brief was met. There were two key milestones: an interim report and presentation to provide an overview of the key findings with accompanying evidence, and a further detailed analysis which was captured in the final report.

THE IMPACT

Through collaboration with its client, Gemserv has played a key role in analysing industry views on a subject that has a direct link to reaching Net-Zero targets. The work carried out by the team has informed the future Biomass Strategy, and helped the Government better understand the views of key biomass stakeholders and identified where future research or engagement may be needed to address industry concerns.

Following the delivery of the final report, the client informed us of how the project will help shape their view of biomass as a sustainable source of energy generation. Based on the responses and the report, the client has identified areas where further research, development, and innovation is needed. This was then communicated internally to the science and innovation department to steer investment in these areas.

The final report underwent extensive internal quality assurance. It was presented in Plain English to make it accessible for expert and non-expert readers. This involved engaging with the client to ensure that the report delivered consistent messaging and that recommendations were aligned with the objectives.

The approach involved four clear steps:

- Step 1 – responses broken down by call for evidence section
- Step 2 – responses were catalogued using standardised criteria
- Step 3 – analysis of emerging themes
- Step 4 – refinement of key themes, synthesis for BEIS & finalisation of report

The report has helped to refine policy thinking on the biomass sustainability criteria, being published alongside the 2023 Biomass Strategy document and feeding directly into the key commitments and actions from the Government. The outputs were used in stakeholder engagement workshops, and public dialogue forums, helping to refine questions and proposals, as well as providing feedback to industry on positioning for biomass policy.

Finally, the responses have provided insight on Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS) policy and BECCS business model development. Among the many policy decisions and updates to parallel policies within the Biomass Strategy, the project outputs will be used to inform an update to the Global Bioenergy Resource Model, a cross-sectoral sustainability framework for biomass production and imports, and much more.