

REASON 32

WE INCORPORATE PROJECTS AND SET ASIDE SPACES TO GENERATE CLEAN ENERGY

In recent years, a series of extreme weather episodes has pushed the Catalan forestry management model to its limit, which is already difficult and costly. INCASÒL owns numerous forested areas and two of these estates were impacted by the consequences of these weather episodes. The Masia Molins estate, in Sant Climent de Llobregat, suffered the worst winds in Catalonia, in 2009. In this episode, eight people died in Catalonia due to wind-related accidents and hundreds of trees were blown over. The Can Vilallonga estate, in the Gavarres Protected Natural Area, suffered the effects of the great snowstorm of 2010, the worst in the past 60 years, which paralysed Catalonia. Likewise, other plots of land owned by the Institute, smaller in size, have been affected by extreme weather, which damaged the forests: Mollet del Vallès, Collbató, l'Arbolí, Sant Cugat del Vallès, Polinyà, Terrassa, etc.

In each of these catastrophes, INCASÒL did what had to be done (healing trees, removing dead wood, clearing fallen branches, etc.) to limit the risk of forest fire and the spread of pests, and to help the forests affected recover and regain their environmental functions, especially in terms of protecting the soil from erosion, ensuring its hydraulic functions and ability to act as a CO2 sink. Forest management is costly and complicated. One solution that could benefit the environment and the economy would be to use the plant mass removed to generate power, turning waste into a resource.

INCASÒL and the Biomass Cluster of Catalonia have signed an agreement to promote this renewable energy source. Biomass is an opportunity to improve decarbonisation, prevent fires and fight climate change, plus it is readily available in our immediate surroundings. Biomass is the main renewable energy in the European Union, where it makes up nearly 60% of all power from renewable sources.

INCASÒL also plans to set aside land for solar parks and to promote several areas of priority development for wind park developers. This package of measures aims to promote green energy in an organised way in the territory. This seeks to accelerate implementation of these alternative sources after a long delay.

The plots that will be set aside for solar parks meet optimal requirements in terms of landscape, the environment, and connections to the power grid. Essentially, the regulations lay out that solar parks must be located in industrial estates or near agricultural or animal farming facilities. One of the formulas to be trialled is leasing land where developers can carry out their projects in areas that are perfectly prepared, in exchange for long-term income. In theory, this system targets small and mid-sized developers, but doesn't rule out other types of larger companies. To produce a significant amount of solar energy, it takes two to three hectares per megawatt and up to six for solar trackers. This is on top of fostering solar parks on the roofs of new buildings in industrial spaces and public buildings that the Institute develops.



Biomass recovery project