

*From May 7th 2013, MCS solar photovoltaic installers will be using a new method to provide their customers with an estimate of the energy output from their system. What do these changes mean for customers and installers?*

## Why Change?

Solar installation companies operating under the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) are required to include an energy generation estimate along with every quotation.

The MCS dictates how this estimate should be calculated, which has the advantage of putting everyone on a level playing field.

However, until recently the calculation was the same irrespective of whether you lived in Islington or Inverness. It was based on the government's Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) which (up until now) assumes we all live in Sheffield.

Solar installation companies had been criticised for their energy estimates failing to take geographical location into consideration by consumer groups, despite the fact that the estimation method was prescribed by MCS.

Another reason for a change was a growing body of evidence that the previous calculation was underestimating the year one energy performance.

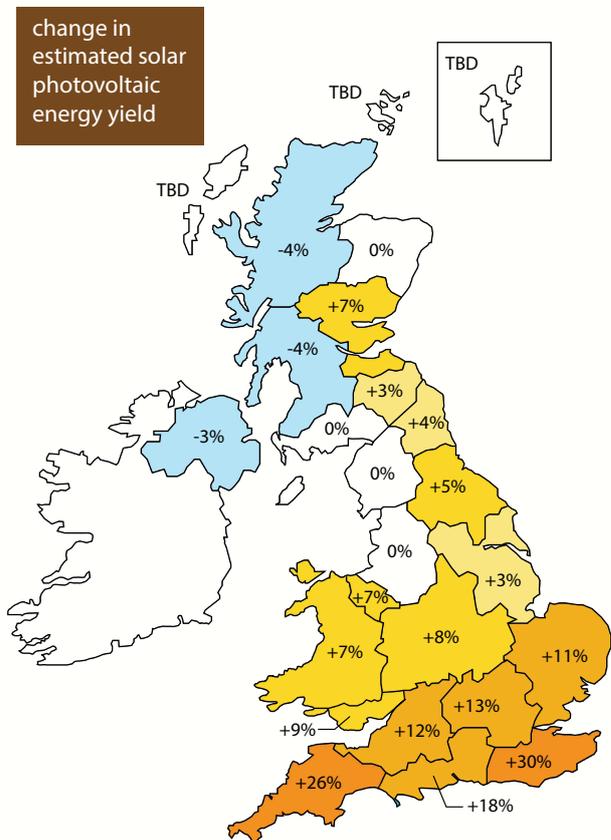
See [Viridian Solar Case Study 009](#) here for an example showing the outperformance of solar photovoltaics in real life.

## The New Method

A new calculation based on dividing the country into 25 regions aims to strike a balance between keeping things simple and improving the accuracy of the estimate. The level of irradiation for each region is the level of irradiation (taken from PVGIS) for the major city in the region.

Changes have also been made to the assessment of shading and the resolution of panel orientation and tilt angle.

Viridian Solar has analysed the predicted energy yield for a south-facing PV array tilted at 30 degrees to the horizontal and without shading. The map below compares the energy yield in each of the 22 regions (for which irradiation data has been made available) with the previous method.



Clearly there will be winners and losers among solar installation companies operating in different regions, but with more accurate estimates, customers should definitely be better off.

## Viridian Solar

Atlas Building, 68 Stirling Way,  
Papworth, Cambridge UK  
CB23 3GY

Tel +44 (0)1480 831501  
info@viridiansolar.co.uk  
www.viridiansolar.co.uk