



EIRGRID TO INCREASE HIGH SPEED INTERNET CAPACITY FOR IRELAND USING GEO NETWORKS' FIBRE

Commercialisation of fibre optic cable in conjunction with €600m Interconnector project will provide Irish businesses with additional 7Tb/s capacity

13 May 2011 – EirGrid, the Irish electricity system operator and developer, has entered into a licence arrangement with Geo Networks (Geo), a leading provider of fibre optic networks for heavy data users, to increase Ireland's bandwidth capacity. The deal will see EirGrid and Geo commercialising fibre optic cable laid with the Ireland–UK electricity Interconnector, through an exclusive arrangement to significantly increase high-speed international bandwidth for Ireland.

EirGrid intends to licence capacity on the cable to Geo, allowing businesses, such as mobile operators and service providers, access to extensive UK and Irish fibre networks and an additional 7 Terabit (7000 Gigabits) data capacity.

EirGrid Chief Executive, Dermot Byrne, said "We have been working on this opportunity to leverage the East-West cable link for a number of years which will have the additional effect of introducing further competition in the market. EirGrid has selected Geo on the basis of the key strengths it offers. Its build and commercialisation of the FibreSpeed network, spanning north Wales, is testament to its ability to deliver large scale projects of this nature".

"Fast broadband has huge potential to strengthen economic activity in Ireland and increase job opportunities in Ireland's growing high tech and online sectors. The commercialisation of a portion of the Interconnector communications system will increase significantly existing telecommunications offerings in Ireland and enhance Ireland's connectivity into the global telecommunications network," said Dermot Byrne.

Geo is also developing a second fibre optic cable from Portmarnock in Dublin to Anglesey in Wales. The combination of two routes from a single supplier will provide a reliable, diverse route which exploits the newest fibre optic technology and a track record of the highest levels of service availability.

Chris Smedley, Chief Executive of Geo said, "As businesses start to build their way out of the economic downturn, it's vital they have all the tools they need to hand. Through this agreement with EirGrid to establish a dual route, the delivery of critical data-intensive traffic is guaranteed, which provides that support and enables business expansion. Customers on both sides of the Irish Sea will benefit from a single service provider offering a combination of two routes between the UK and Ireland; the diversity will provide unequalled resilience, unmatched in service availability".

The commercial fibre optic installation is being developed in conjunction with the €600 million East West Interconnector, a project which is being part financed by the European Union and is due for completion in September 2012.

Ends.

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About EirGrid

EirGrid plc is a leading Irish energy business, dedicated to the provision of transmission and market services for the benefit of electricity consumers. It is a state-owned commercial company. EirGrid holds licences as independent electricity Transmission System Operator (TSO) and Market Operator (MO) in the wholesale trading system in Ireland, and is the owner of the System Operator Northern Ireland (SONI Ltd), the licenced TSO and market operator in Northern Ireland. The Single Electricity Market Operator (SEMO) is part of the EirGrid Group.

The East West Interconnector will represent an investment of €600 million. It will create a two-way power transmission between the nations by end of 2012, supplying enough energy to power 300,000 homes.

The EirGrid East West Interconnector will improve the security of energy supplies, promote competition in the electricity sector, and encourage the growth of renewable energy.

ABB, the Swedish engineering firm was awarded the contract to design, manufacture and install the interconnector.

Approximately 200 jobs have been created in Ireland and Wales during the construction phase.

The interconnector is being developed by EirGrid, working closely with the Commission for Energy Regulation, and will be owned by EirGrid following its completion. EirGrid has obtained an interconnector licence to the UK's Gas and Electricity Markets Authority under Section 6 (1) (e) of the Electricity Act of 1989.

Visit www.eirgrid.com for more information.

About Geo

Geo is the only company in the UK solely focused on the designing and building of bespoke dedicated fibre network solutions.

Geo's revolutionary and flexible approach means that for the first time, organisations can own and control their networks, ensuring that security, high bandwidth and resilience are guaranteed. By allowing its customers to directly own and control the underlying optical fibre that is at the heart of their data network, Geo is the only truly open access network provider in the UK. It provides an extensive range of solutions including fully managed networks, dark fibre and co-location services.

Geo enables network solutions throughout the UK and in the London area. Customers include mobile operators, service providers, major banks and the public sector. Geo is listed as the 3rd fastest growing telecoms & networking company in the UK in the Deloitte Technology Fast 50 list for 2010. Visit www.geo-uk.net for more information.