

EirGrid Completes Transmission Grid Connection Offer Programme

Potential to treble amount of renewable generation

Dublin, June 17 - EirGrid has completed its work in offering transmission grid connections to wind farms as part of Gate 3 programme, it was announced today.

The Gate 3 grid connection offer programme is one which has the potential to result in a three-fold increase in the amount of renewable energy on the electricity network and EirGrid has been working with the Commission for Energy Regulation and ESB Networks on the programme.

The final offer of 94 offers to connect to the transmission grid was issued yesterday by EirGrid to Coillte for a 58 MW Windfarm in Sliabh Bawn, County Roscommon.

The 94 offers issued by EirGrid under the Gate 3 Programme represent a total of over 5,400 MW of electricity to renewable and conventional generators – this would be more than Ireland's peak demand load.

At over 4,000 MW, renewable energy generators make up nearly three quarters of all offers under the programme. There is currently approximately 1,500 MW of renewable energy connected to the system.

Completion of the programme represents a significant step towards meeting Ireland's renewable energy targets. The Government has mandated that 40% of all electricity consumption must be met from renewable sources by 2020, the highest such target in Europe.

Dermot Byrne, chief executive of EirGrid, said: "I am delighted that this process has been completed on time. The amount of renewable energy connected to the grid has increased steadily over the past decade. In 2003 it accounted for just 4.4% of electricity usage whereas there is enough renewable generation on the system today to supply 15% of customer demand. Ireland is making good progress towards its targets."

In relation to the offer of the final grid connection under the programme to Coillte, Mark Foley, Managing Director of Coillte Enterprise said, 'Coillte is pleased to receive a further offer from Eirgrid which brings the total capacity of grid connection offered to Coillte under Gate 3 to 400MW. This will enable Coillte to make a significant contribution towards achieving our national wind energy targets.'

The completion of Gate 3 programme occurs in the same week as Global Wind Day 2011, with events around the country taking place to highlight the contribution of wind to the energy sector.

Ends

For Further Information, contact Ethel Horan on 01 2370156/0863849038 or Michael Kelly 01 2370310/087 2509006.

Note for Editors

1. The Gate 3 Offer Programme is the third round of connection offers issued to generators under the Group Processing Approach, introduced by the Commission for Energy Regulation in 2004. It allows applications to be processed by the System Operators in groups or batches known as 'Gates'.
2. It was completed as per (and in some cases ahead of) the schedule agreed back in 2009.
3. The project started in 2008.
4. Included two major offshore projects of 330 and 360MW each.
5. 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, and operates the Single Electricity Market on the island of Ireland.