

Further Interconnection with Britain is Economically Attractive

Dublin, November 10 - Further electricity interconnection between Ireland and Britain is economically attractive, according to a new report from EirGrid, Ireland's transmission system operator.

The "Interconnection Economic Feasibility Report" examines the possibility of further interconnection between the island of Ireland and Great Britain or France.

It also reinforces the strong economic case for the 500MW East-West Interconnector, linking Ireland and Wales. This is currently under development and is scheduled to go live in 2012.

At present, the Moyle Interconnector, connecting the electricity grids of Northern Ireland and Scotland, is the only link between the island of Ireland and Great Britain.

The report finds that a third 500MW interconnector to Britain would be economically attractive by 2020, and even more so in 2025. A fourth 500MW interconnector between Ireland and Britain would be economically feasible by 2025 in some situations, such as a high renewable energy scenario.

EirGrid is publishing the report in response to the Government White Paper "Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland".

In carrying out its assessment, EirGrid examined a broad range of scenarios, such as number of interconnectors, different fuel prices and different generation portfolios.

In general, the report finds that interconnection becomes more economically attractive further out in time, with a high renewable energy scenario improving the case for interconnection. Renewable generation, particularly wind, will provide a large proportion of Ireland's energy needs in years to come.

Dermot Byrne, chief executive of EirGrid, said: "Interconnection between the all-island power grid and other grids has the potential to deliver numerous benefits to the island. In particular, interconnection enhances security of supply, promotes competition in the electricity sector and facilitates the expansion of renewable energy generation."

Possible interconnection between Ireland and France was modelled based on 2015, 2020 and 2025 scenarios. According to the report's findings, there are some indicative benefits, however it concludes that the results need to be corroborated by more detailed modelling before any recommendations could be made.

Following on the publication of the report, EirGrid plans to produce a work programme to develop detailed costs and investigate the technical feasibility of different interconnector options and routes.

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Editor's note:

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The full report is available for download on www.eirgrid.com