

HUNDREDS OF WIND FARMS ALREADY OFFERED CONNECTION AS IRELAND ON TRACK TO MEET TARGETS

Dublin, August 25 2011 - Ireland is on target to meet its electricity renewable targets, following the issue of grid connection offers for thousands of megawatts of wind energy, and the country is providing for levels of wind connection ahead of any similar country.

The process of connecting wind farms is one which was put in place by the electricity regulator, following extensive consultation with the wind industry. It is known as the “Gate” process and it ensures that connections are grouped and connected as quickly and efficiently as possible, in a transparent and fair manner.

The latest “Gate”, saw 3,900 megawatts (MW) of capacity being offered to over 168 wind farms. The criteria for inclusion in this Gate, as set out by the electricity regulator, provided for capacity to be allocated in date order to those who formally applied for a grid connection.

The amount of wind energy that is being given connection offers in Ireland is far in excess of that accommodated on any other power system – size for size – anywhere in the world.

There remains a large amount of connection applications to be dealt with in future connection processes – over 12,000 MW – which will be subject to the criteria of any further “Gate”. For context, peak winter electricity demand in Ireland is 5,000MW.

All applications for connection to the electricity grid are published on the EirGrid website (www.eirgrid.com).

A key factor in connecting wind farms quickly and efficiently is the building of high-voltage transmission lines to move the power from where it is generated to population centres and to where it could be exported. A €3.2 billion programme of construction and development is already underway, with transmission lines being built or in the planning process. This is EirGrid’s Grid25 programme. Until that programme involving approximately 1,000km of new power lines and approximately 2,000km of upgraded power lines is complete, the required transmission backbone will not be in place.

Ireland is increasingly recognised as a world leader in renewable energy with EirGrid providing levels of access to wind which are beyond that undertaken anywhere else. To continue this success EirGrid requires the support of industry, the public, public representatives and stakeholders to build the transmission lines that will facilitate offers to windfarm developers.

Transmission capacity is a finite resource and in any system there will be people who are successful in gaining quicker connections than others, but the system is being operated efficiently and is delivering Ireland’s targets and is a fair and transparent one. Connection policy is the responsibility of the

regulator. It would of course be unfair on other organisations/developers that submitted earlier applications, to fast-track all later applicants.

Ends

For more information contact EirGrid Press Office on 01 2370310 or 087 0555393.