

**EIRGRID ELECTRICITY LINK TO BRITAIN BOOSTED
BY EUROPEAN FUNDING
Project on target for 2012 completion**

28th January 2009: €100 million in funding has been announced today by the European Commission for the EirGrid East West Interconnector, which will have major benefits for Irish electricity consumers.

The East West Interconnector Project which is being developed by Eirgrid is to be supported by the investment package in vital infrastructure throughout the European Union which has just been announced by the European Commission.

The East West Interconnector connecting the transmission systems in Britain and Ireland will bring major benefits.

It will improve the security of energy supplies, promote competition in the electricity sector, and encourage the growth of renewable energy – with the potential for Ireland to export power from its rich renewable energy resources.

The EirGrid East West Interconnector is at a highly advanced stage, and has passed a number of key milestones:

- Legislation passed last year gave EirGrid the right to develop, own and operate the interconnector
- It has secured connection points to the electricity grids in Britain and Ireland.
- It has completed marine survey work to establish a subsea route.
- It is in the final stages of procurement in relation to a Design and Build tender.
- An application is in progress with the Strategic Infrastructure Board of An Bord Pleanála.

The East West Interconnector will enable two-way transmission of power under the Irish Sea from 2012. EirGrid was formerly mandated to develop it by the Regulator and by Government in early 2007.

The Interconnector is likely to be approximately 260 km long and will carry 500 megawatts of electricity. This is the equivalent of approximately 10 per cent of peak daily electricity demand in winter.

EirGrid Chief Executive, Dermot Byrne said: “This announcement by the EU will facilitate the early delivery of the EirGrid East West Interconnector. This infrastructure will bring great benefits to Ireland and will provide potential for growth of renewable energy through access to the British energy market for both imports and exports of energy.

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