



EIRGRID WELCOMES GOVERNMENT BOOST FOR IRELAND WALES POWER SYSTEM

Thursday, 20 December 2007: EirGrid, the operator the national grid, today warmly welcomed the Government's decision to amend the Electricity Regulation Bill to support the construction of the East West Electricity Interconnector.

The new Ireland Wales undersea electricity link being developed by EirGrid will capable of carrying power to supply the equivalent of approximately 350,000 homes.

In addition to the positive Government decision, other key actions boosting the project:

- The commencement of marine survey work for the project by a specialist vessel.
- An Invitation To Negotiate (ITN) which is expected to issue this week as part of the process of procuring contractors to build the interconnector.

The interconnector being developed by Ireland's transmission system operator EirGrid will connect the Irish power system to the electricity grid in Britain though undersea cables. The Government in its Energy Policy has mandated EirGrid to build an Interconnector between Ireland and Great Britain, scheduled for completion in 2012.

"We welcome the Government's decision to amend the bill which authorises EirGrid to construct, own, operate and maintain the interconnector. It is another key milestone for the project and means we are on track for ensuring its completion by 2012", said EirGrid.

With the demand for energy estimated to grow at an average yearly rate of between 2.7 and 3.6% over the next 7 years, the planned East West Interconnector will contribute to securing energy supply in Ireland. The East West Interconnector will be a great benefit to Ireland and will also provide potential for growth of renewable energy through access to the greater British energy market for both imports and exports of energy.

This EirGrid East West Interconnector will comprise undersea cables across the Irish Sea connecting the transmission system in the Republic of Ireland to that in Great Britain. Grid connection points have been secured in both countries. EirGrid and its advisors are completing the 'Invitation to Negotiate' (ITN) tender documents for procurement of the interconnector, with Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) oversight. The ITN will be issued later this week and the successful tenderer(s) appointed in 2008.

ENDS. For more information contact press office Valerie Hedin 01 881 5353.