

ELECTRICITY GENERATION OUTLOOK FOR ISLAND OF IRELAND PUBLISHED

Dublin & Belfast, January 20th, 2013 - A positive outlook for power generation is forecast over the next decade on the island of Ireland in a new report published by the operators of the electricity grid in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

However, network limitations are restricting the amount of generation on the island that can be effectively utilised in Northern Ireland, leading to tight supply margins, according to the report from EirGrid and System Operator for Northern Ireland (SONI).

EirGrid and SONI have today published the *All-Island Generation Capacity Statement 2013-2022*, which reports on the likely balance of supply and demand for electricity over the next ten years.

The report forecasts that there will be a considerable electricity generation surplus on the island in the next decade, providing assurance to businesses and consumers.

However, the gap between power supply and demand in Northern Ireland will be tight in the second part of the ten year period, according to the statement.

The option of transferring power from Ireland to alleviate potential shortfalls in Northern Ireland is limited due to the fact that there is only one major power line linking the two networks.

Fintan Slye, chief executive of EirGrid Group, said: "The project to build a second North-South tie line is needed to ensure that both jurisdictions have a generation supply sufficient to meet demand reliably."

Other key findings of the Generation Capacity Statement:

- There is currently over 2,000 megawatts (MW) of wind power installed on the island. This needs to more than double to help meet both governments' 2020 target of 40% of electricity coming from renewable sources – hydro, biomass and other green energy sources will also contribute to these targets.
- While overall demand for electricity has remained subdued due to the economic climate, a welcome development is the fact that data centres have emerged as a significant new category of demand. Data centres need significant amounts of high quality power, as well as strong communications links and can have a positive effect on the operation of the power system and in economic development. There is currently over 175 MW of data centre demand on the power system and this is expected to at least double over the rest of this decade.

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The Generation Capacity Statement outlines the expected electricity demand and the level of generation capacity available over the next 10 years, together with an analysis of generation adequacy for a number of realistic scenarios

The statement has been prepared by EirGrid Group, which comprises the operator of the electricity transmission grid in Ireland, as well as the System Operator for Northern Ireland, and the Single Electricity Market Operator.

It is available at www.eirgrid.com or www.soni.ltd.uk