

eastwest interconnector

news

EU Grant Approved for East West Interconnector

The Interconnector will be supported by a €110 million grant from the European Commission, following a successful application by the Irish Government. The grant was confirmed by Günther Oettinger, the Commissioner responsible for Energy on the 4th of March.

This funding for the Interconnector is part of a suite of energy projects being targeted for investment by the European Commission as part of their €4 billion economic stimulus package “Investing today for tomorrow’s Europe.”

EirGrid Chief Executive, Dermot Byrne said: “As an Island country, interconnection with other countries offers us great opportunities as confirmed in our recent report on economic feasibility of further interconnection.

“Clear advantages identified are enhancement of security of supply, increased competition in the market and an ability to integrate greater quantities of renewable generation which in turn reduces our dependency on fossil fuel imports.”

Commenting on the news, Energy Minister Eamon Ryan said, “I am very pleased that our efforts have led to this European investment in Ireland. The East-West interconnector is vital infrastructure for our country and will bring many benefits.

“This project will help the development of the green economy, bringing investment and jobs to Ireland in the growing renewable power industry. This investment from Europe is a significant boost to the Irish economy.”



Dermot Byrne Chief Executive EirGrid
and Energy Minister Eamon Ryan

EirGrid proceeds to construction phase

Subsequent to successful attainment of planning approval in Ireland and planning permission in Britain and other key consents, EirGrid instructed ABB to proceed to the construction phase of the Interconnector on the 4th of March.

The Interconnector is now entering its detailed engineering design, manufacturing and construction phases. Design work will continue throughout 2010 and will cover all aspects of the technical design, including civil, mechanical and electrical components. The design work will be primarily undertaken by ABB in Ludvika Sweden.

The design phase will include extensive liaison with the system operators, EirGrid and UK National Grid, to ensure the required technical performance standards are achieved. The Interconnector project team will be heavily involved in the review and acceptance of the designs during this important phase of the project, and will facilitate the necessary interactions with the high voltage grid operators.

Manufacture of the land and sea cables has also commenced in Karlskrona Sweden, with ABB High Voltage Cables (HVC) producing test specimens on the manufacturing lines in Q1 2010.

ABB are carrying out a number of important tests on the cable that will be used for the Interconnector.

The comprehensive test programme consists of three parts; mechanical tests, electrical and non electrical tests.

The mechanical tests for the Interconnector 200 kV HVDC Light Submarine Cable (including coiling and tension tests) have been completed at the ABB Cable Factory in Karlskrona.

The mechanical tests are done to verify that the Interconnector cable can withstand the mechanical stresses that might be experienced during the manufacturing, loading and installation operations.

The purpose of these tests is to ensure that the design and the manufacture of the cable system meets the appropriate standards for the East West Interconnector.



Coiling test on the East West Interconnector Submarine Cable in ABB plant, Karlskrona, Sweden.



A cable installation vessel observed at a visit to the ABB facility in Karlskrona, Sweden by the EWIC Team.

Following the stringent quality assurance testing and verification, ABB will commence full scale manufacture of the 530 km of HVDC cable required to complete the Interconnector. Manufacture of the cables will continue throughout 2010 and 2011.

During January 2010, the Interconnector project team visited the ABB HVC factory in Karlskrona, Sweden. Whilst there the team conducted design review meetings and inspections with ABB including:

- Woodland and Shotton converter sites lay-out designs,
- Converter station design update.
- Cable manufacturing and mechanical testing procedures, and
- Inspection of a typical ocean cable laying vessel.

Whilst in Karlskrona the Interconnector project team visited the Sweden Poland interconnector 600MW converter station.

They also had the opportunity to talk with maintenance staff and inspect the converter station main and auxiliary system plant including the spare cable storage facility.

East meets West in Wales

In March, EirGrid participated in the North Wales Irish Society Evening in Beaches Hotel, Prestatyn, at the invite of Chris Ruane, MP of Clwyd, to celebrate St. Patricks and St. Davids Day. Over 150 Welsh and Irish people from the community attended the event. Guest of honour at the function was Deputy Irish Ambassador Barbara Jones who spoke of the links between the two countries and was very supportive of the project. It was a great opportunity for the EirGrid team to meet with the local community and talk about project developments.

In the trenches in Wales

Earlier this year preparatory work got underway in Wales to prepare and clear the site where the Converter Station will be located. This has now been completed and the site is ready for the construction of the station, due to commence in Autumn 2010.

Construction work took place during March in Flint, Wales to install trenches for the Interconnector. The installation of ducts will minimise the overall disruption associated with the Interconnector as the cables can be pulled through the ducts at a later stage.



Left to right: Sean Meagher EirGrid, Margaret McCarroll, Barbara Jones Deputy Irish Ambassador, Gerry Frobisher Mayor of Prestatyn, Alan McHugh EirGrid and Chris Ruane MP.



Construction work in Wales

VolkerInfra, a company that has significant expertise in the installation of cables in the UK was the subcontractor for this work and they utilised the services of a local company, Welsh Civils to undertake the ducting work in Flint.

New 3D Animation to show how the Interconnector works

An animation has been developed to illustrate how the Interconnector will be installed and how energy will be transferred between Ireland and Britain.

This animation can be viewed at:
www.eirgrid.com/aboutus/eirgridtv/

The animation has been used at conferences and in schools to date and has received great feedback in terms of visualising how the Interconnector will work once installed.



Marine update:

- In January, the Environment Agency in the UK granted EirGrid permission to install the Interconnector in proximity to the sea defences at Barkby Beach, North Wales.
- Options are now being reviewed regarding the future storage of the spare marine power & fibre optic cables. Much investigation took place to determine these feasible options, and a decision on a location is expected to be made in the coming months.
- A number of crossing agreements were signed with other companies to allow the interconnector marine cable to cross existing subsea cables.

As the project moves into the construction phase regular updates will be made to the website.
We will work with the local authorities to keep traffic disruptions to a minimum.

Keep up to date on the project's progress at



www.interconnector.ie

If you would like any further information on the East West Interconnector or to speak to a member of the project team please feel free to call us on 1890 36 46 56 or email us at eastwestinterconnector@eirgrid.com

