

Sector briefing

Power Sector Opportunities in Ireland

Why Ireland?

The Irish energy market is currently estimated at 24GW hrs. It is a partially deregulated market and is moving toward an “all island” (of Ireland) market.

There is a supplementary North/South (and South/North) inter-connector in operation. There are also advanced plans for an East/West (Wales/Ireland) inter-connector, which will link Ireland with the UK and European electrical supply grids. It is estimated that Ireland’s current and future needs for electricity are in excess of the (internationally accepted) 95% of available spinning load.

Find general information on Irish market conditions on [UKTI’s website](#). The [Doing Business Guide for Ireland](#) gives an overview of Ireland’s economy, business culture, potential opportunities and an introduction to other relevant issues.



Interconnectors: Ireland & UK

North – South	One interconnector plus two smaller standbys and a second interconnector has been agreed and planning permission was applied for in December 2009.
Ireland – UK	NI link to Scotland
Ireland – Wales	under construction

In the case of the North-South and Ireland Wales interconnectors EU funding is in place.

Opportunities

In the power sector, there are eight companies currently supplying electricity to end users, and a further 20-30 licensed firms who are either dormant, or generating power for their own industrial use. There is an increasing focus in Ireland on the importance of renewables for energy security and climate change reasons. For much of its power Ireland is at the end of a very long pipeline of imported energy, despite having abundant renewable resources, particularly wind and tidal. Both these sectors are expected to grow, and Irish firms like Airtricity (wind) and OpenHydro (tidal) are expanding overseas. According to Sustainable Energy Ireland about 6% of Ireland's electricity production is from hydropower.

Wind and Wave

Wind generation is common, with a number of very large schemes (and many smaller ones) mainly in the West of Ireland. With over 1,000 MW of wind power already connected on the island of Ireland, the wind energy industry has invested over €1bn in generation capacity. The wind industry is planning the private investment of between €4bn and €6bn in wind power over the next ten years. This will require a total annual investment of over €500m, creating an additional 3000 jobs. Bord Gáis announced that it has purchased a 30MW windfarm development in the west of Ireland. The total investment in the windfarm will be about €50m and it is expected to be operational in 2011. For details on current developments in wave energy see www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2008/1120/breaking38.htm

Gas

The All-Island Energy Market Development Framework www.allislandproject.org continues to build on the existing high level of cross-border co-operation in the gas area. The South-North gas pipeline from Gormanstown to Belfast, which was completed in 2006, will support the development of the gas network on an all-island basis. The UK and Ireland are also looking at the scope for a common approach to gas storage on the island and Liquefied Natural Gas facilities. With the volatility in international gas markets and the co-dependence on imports via the UK, which itself is increasingly reliant on imports, the development of storage facilities on the island is a strategic issue.

Renewable Energy

There are currently 940MW of renewable energy capacity connected to the national grid. Ireland is rich in existing and potential renewable energies and there is continuing co-operation to develop an all-island approach to sustainable energy. This will include the development of a long-term "2020 Vision" for all-island sustainability in energy supplies, with a particular focus on renewable electricity. The focus is on accommodating a significant growth in renewable electricity generation into the grid systems. As part of the joint strategy the All-Island Grid will provide the long-term development of the grid systems on the island to enhance sustainability and support renewable electricity generation.

Energy Forecasts to 2020

The nature of the economic climate that Ireland will experience in the next 13 years has a key influence on energy demand trends in the short to medium term. The Economic and Social Research Institute's (ESRI) www.esri.ie developed a new macro-economic scenario to improve the energy forecasts that follows a high growth trajectory for the period to 2010 and shifts to the low growth path to 2020. This implies annual average growth of 4.9% to 2010 and 2.5% for the following decade. This forecast pre-dates the current rapid downturn in economic activity.

Eirgrid

Eirgrid is the independent electricity Transmission System Operator (TSO) in Ireland and the Market Operator in the wholesale electricity trading system. EirGrid develops, maintains and operates a safe, secure, reliable, economical and efficient transmission system. EirGrid is playing a key role in establishment of the new All-Island Market for Electricity, as well as developing an East-West Interconnector and a North-South Interconnector.

Commission for Energy Regulation

The Regulator promotes competition in the electricity and natural gas sectors so those customers can ultimately benefit from competitive pressures on prices and services. The Commission works to ensure that the supply of natural gas and electricity to customers is safe, secure and reliable.

If you have any questions on the opportunities above, contact the UKTI contacts named in this report. Business opportunities aimed specifically at UK companies are added daily to

UKTI's website. These leads are sourced by our staff overseas in British Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates, across all sectors and in over 100 markets.

You can be alerted to business opportunities on a regular basis by registering on the UKTI website. [Find out more on UKTI's business opportunities service on the UKTI website.](#)

Major events and activities

As a major focus of the Irish government there are a huge range of Renewable and Sustainable events being hosted regularly throughout Ireland, organised by a variety of bodies and organisations. For details on specific events please contact the British Embassy in Dublin.

Find full details of all events in this country and sector on the UKTI website.

New export events are added daily to the site and [you can register to be alerted to them](#) on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

UKTI's Tradeshow Access Programme (TAP) provides grant support for eligible Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SME's) to attend trade shows overseas. Find out more about [UKTI support](#) for attendance at overseas events.

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Next steps - How UKTI can help

British companies wishing to develop their business in the Irish market are advised to undertake as much market research and planning as possible in the UK. UKTI's team in Ireland, with its wide local knowledge and experience, can provide a range of services to British-based companies wishing to grow their business in global markets.

This can include:

- Provision of market information
- Validated lists of agents/distributors
- Key market players or potential customers in the Irish market
- Establishment of interest of such contacts in working with you
- Arranging appointments
- Organise seminars or other events for you to meet contacts and promote your company in the Irish market

This work is available via our [Overseas Market Introduction Service \(OMIS\)](#) a chargeable service which assists British-based companies wishing to enter or expand their business in overseas markets.

To find out more about commissioning this work, or accessing other UKTI services and specialist advice, please visit the UKTI website to find [contact details for your local UKTI office.](#)

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