

## Tyrone to Cavan Interconnector

This is a joint project between ESB National Grid and Northern Ireland Electricity plc. (NIE) and will<sup>1</sup>:

- Facilitate open and transparent competition in energy markets throughout the island of Ireland
- Result in financial savings as generator operating reserves can be exchanged between the two systems and used in the event of a major fault
- Increase security of supply for customers on both sides of the border

Further details are shown on the NIE Press Release appended.

NIE plc. stated:

*"The interconnector will be an important addition to Northern Ireland's infrastructure, which will deliver benefits for consumers through both Northern Ireland and the Republic," the company said. Without interconnection it is demonstrably the case that there would be less competition, higher electricity prices, less generation from renewable sources, and more blackouts across the island of Ireland."*

It said the proposed interconnector project was the culmination of very careful and detailed studies<sup>2</sup>.

At a cost of £120m, the new interconnector will more than double the current cross-border electricity trading capacity by the time it is completed in 2012.

Planning Policy Public Services and Utilities (PSU8) New Infrastructure covers **the need for new infrastructure including extensions to existing facilities will be balanced against the objective to conserve the environment and protect amenity<sup>3</sup>.**

Developments including those associated with electricity generation can have a significant effect on the environment and the amenity of local communities. An **Environmental Statement will normally be required.**

"In dealing with specific proposals, the Department will wish to be satisfied that there is an overriding regional or local requirement for the development and that a thorough exploration of alternative sites has been carried out. Normally the Department will wish to see the development sited so as to minimise the environmental effect".

The Department considers the following criteria in making a decision:

- **Necessity** – the need for the facility
- **Environmental Impact** – in particular the visual and ecological impacts
- **Community Impact** – impact on existing communities
- **Natural/man-made heritage impacts**
- **Existence of alternative routes**

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<sup>1</sup> News Release DETI 30<sup>th</sup> May 2006: Ministers welcome announcement by the transmission system operators on the construction of a second north-south electricity interconnector

<sup>2</sup> BBC NI: Concern over cable plans raised. Available at:  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern\\_ireland/6729207.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/6729207.stm)

<sup>3</sup> Available at:  
[http://www.planningni.gov.uk/AreaPlans\\_Policy/Strategies/PlanStratforRuralNI/Part3\\_Policies/PSU/PSU8.htm](http://www.planningni.gov.uk/AreaPlans_Policy/Strategies/PlanStratforRuralNI/Part3_Policies/PSU/PSU8.htm)

- **Provision to mitigate adverse effects**

NIE says there is no health risk, but people living in the area of the proposed route are concerned<sup>4</sup>. Biologist Roger Coghill<sup>5</sup> said there was a lot of evidence on the adverse health effects of living near electric fields. "The idea that there are no health risks from living near electric fields was dispelled decades ago," Mr Coghill said. "We have substantial evidence in every part of science that there are adverse health effects from exposures. Anyone who denies that simply hasn't read the scientific literature."

NIE said it had not yet finalised its plans for the interconnector, but would be consulting with individuals and communities in the proximity of the proposed route in late June and early July.

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<sup>4</sup> BBC NI: Concern over cable plans raised. Available at: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern\\_ireland/6729207.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/6729207.stm)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.cogreslab.co.uk/rogerbio.asp>