Grid Connections for Electricity Interconnectors with PCI status
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In November 2015 the Commission for Energy Regulation (“CER”), now the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (“CRU”) published an information note (CER/15/269) “PCI Incentive Methodology in accordance with Article 13(6) of Regulation (EU) No. 347/2013”.

This notification was published in accordance with Article 13(6) of EU Regulation 347/2013 the Trans-European Energy Infrastructure Regulation (TEN-E Regulation). This regulation lays down guidelines for the timely development and interoperability of priority corridors and areas of trans-European energy infrastructure in particular. The regulation also addresses the identification of projects of common interest and facilitates the timely implementation of projects of common interest.

In December 2015, the CRU published a consultation paper (CER/15/284) on the development and implementation of an integrated and enduring connection policy for the electricity system in Ireland. In that paper, the CRU posed the question as to whether it was appropriate to consider the connection of interconnectors separately to the wider enduring connection policy that pertains to generation and demand.

In August 2016 the CRU published a paper “Policy for Electricity Interconnectors (CER/16/239) requesting submissions detailing what matters should be considered in on a policy for electricity interconnectors. In that paper the CRU considered that a separate consultation on policy for electricity interconnectors was merited as:

- European policy explicitly favours further interconnection between Member States, providing for increased market efficiency, enhanced trading, improved security of supply and reduced curtailment.
- the provisions of the Third Package and the EU Network Codes require preferential treatment for interconnectors
- interconnector projects are explicitly facilitated under the Projects of Common Interest (“PCI”) Regulations, and
- interconnection is treated differently from generation and demand connections
CRU is currently assessing responses and examining how best to move forward with a policy framework for new interconnectors.

The CRU considers it is appropriate at this juncture to progress to the next stage grid connections for any electricity interconnector applications that have received Projects of Common Interest (PCI) status.

Under section 34 of the Electricity Regulation Act 1999 (as amended), the CRU may give directions to the Transmission System Operator (TSO) and Distribution System Operator (DSO) for the terms and conditions of access to the distribution and transmission system.

In order to progress grid connection applications from interconnectors with PCI status, the CRU has directed EirGrid to commence processing any such applications it may have received, or receive, in respect of such projects.

A copy of this direction is published along with this note on the CRU website.