



Energy for
generations

Overview of contestability in Ireland

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Agenda

Set out the landscape

Try to provide details on the quantitative and qualitative benefits of contestability given ESB's experience

Try to provide insight into the process

Context for contestability in Ireland

The Republic of Ireland's contestability model has been successfully employed since 2000

Contestability in ROI is underpinned by Section 34 of the Electricity Regulation Act 1999, as amended by Statutory Instrument (S.I) No. 445 of 2000 and Statutory Instrument (S.I.) No. 226 of 2009.

Developers in ROI can construct connection works, while the TSO (EirGrid) and TAO (ESB Networks) retain control over connection method, system-routing, and transfer rules.

Contestability is supported by detailed technical standards and commissioning specifications (bibliography of key documents is listed in the last slide)

Contestability also has well-understood roles and responsibilities, most specifically identifiable with land consents and wayleaves.

- ESBN and EirGrid will adopt lines
- they set out clear minimum criteria for completion of contestable works
- CRU has power to allow for the transfer of ESBN powers for land access for developers to complete contestable works

Questions which drove our analysis

1. Can we quantify or qualify the impact of contestability in Ireland to support CMP414 for GB?
2. Can we demonstrate speed and cost savings?
3. Can we provide details on the policy and framework in Ireland that governs contestability?

Quantitative case study

Considering the BAFO prices from ESB's recent experience, contestability can provide cost and savings:

Cost

- 20% in cost savings for a developer for a standard 110 kV loop-in connection compared to current EirGrid cost methodology (Cost and rebating methodology under ECP-GSS)

Time

Considering the timelines of two of our existing projects , we were able to provide some learnings in terms of speed of connections with contestability included

- The Irish Regulator CER/CRU set out the standard transmission timeline for EirGrid's connection offers in 2009 in the CER09077 decision. At the time, the standard lead time for a 110kV loop was considered to be 35 months.
- Considering this against recent projects ESB has completed we estimate a saving of between 5 and 11 months compared to the CRU standard timelines (depending on planning complexities)
- For planned future projects, contestability could reduce delivery timelines by up to 11 months (we assume a 24-month lead time)

Qualitative Benefits and challenges

Benefits

- a) Greater Flexibility and Control:
Contestability has enabled developers to manage design and construction, enabling tailored solutions.
- b) Cost Efficiency and Faster Delivery:
Competitive procurement and parallel processes has reduced costs and accelerated timelines for developers seeking to connect.
- c) Innovation and Market Development:
Contestability fosters competition among contractors, encouraging technical innovation.
- d) Alignment with Policy Goals: When well-integrated, contestability can support renewable targets and system expansion objectives.

Challenges

- Coordination amongst multiple parties can be fragmented
- Grid reinforcement lead times
- Asset transfer can be delayed
- Charging and rebating rules can be challenging (currently not fully resolved in Ireland under connection policy framework)

Bibliography of links (frameworks for ensuring standard of work and high adoption rate)

[contestability paper oct 2007 16-10-07.doc](#) --details of contestability--EirGrid

[Connection Asset Costs: Guiding Principles](#) —principles around charging

[Microsoft Word - Contestable builds and financing of SO Preferred Connection Method - For Consultation .docx](#) CRU initial principles

[Microsoft Word - Contestability for Distribution Decision paper cer-10-056 15-04-10.docx](#) CRU decision on contestability

[Contestability-and-Connection-Assets.pdf](#) initial 2002 principles for contestability—when contestability was first established in ROI.

[Distribution Department](#) ESNB contestability guide 2010

[Contestability-Guidelines-Version-2-2016-05-30__](#) SONI contestability guide

<https://cms.eirgrid.ie/sites/default/files/publications/Onshore-Getting-Connected-Documents-V1-September-2025.pdf> connection guide EirGrid

[Microsoft Word - Joint DSO-TSO GPA Pricing Paper Final 27-02-07 2 .doc](#) pricing framework

Questions?



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