

Research RES LEGAL – Access to the grid

Country: Ireland

1. Overview of access to the grid

Overview of access to the grid	In Ireland, access of electricity from renewable sources to the grid is subject to the general provisions of energy law. Renewable energy is not given priority. However, renewable energy systems are connected in a special procedure ("group processing"), which aims to increase the reliability of the connection procedure for the system operators.
Statutory provisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CER/05/049• ERA• S.I. No. 445/2000
Connection to the grid	Every system operator is contractually entitled against the grid operator to the connection of a renewable energy system to the grid. The connection of renewable energy systems is promoted through a special connection procedure (group processing).
Usage of the grid	Every system operator is entitled to the transmission of the electricity he offers under a contract. Electricity from renewable sources is not given priority.
Expansion of the grid	In general, the grid operator is obliged to expand his grids up to the grid connection point requested, if the connection of a system requires the grid to be expanded. Electricity from renewable sources is not given priority.

2. Basic information on legal sources

Name of legal source (original language)	Electricity Regulation Act 1999 Electricity Regulation Act 1999	Group Processing Approach for Renewable Generator Connection Applications (CER/05/049)Group Processing Approach for Renewable Generator Connection Applications (CER/05/049)	S.I. No. 445/2000 — European Communities (Internal Market in Electricity) Regulations, 2000.
Name of legal source (full name)		Group Processing Approach for Renewable Generator Connection Applications. Connection and Pricing Rules. Direction to System Operators. CER/05/049	
Name of legal source (English)			
Abbreviated form	ERA	CER/05/049	S.I. No. 445/2000
Type of law	Act of parliament	Decision	Regulation
Document structure	Section, subsection, paragraph		
Entering into force	11/07/1999	06/04/2005	20/12/2000
Latest amendment	18/07/2008		
Future amendments			
Purpose	This act establishes general provisions to regulate the energy market.	This decision regulates group processing, which serves to connect plants generating renewable energy to the power grid	This regulation includes provisions to regulate the energy market.
Relation to renewable energy	Section 39 ERA constitutes the legal basis for the support schemes for renewable energy.	This decision applies to renewable energies only.	It also applies to the usage of the grid by electricity from renewable sources.
Link to full text of legal source (original)	http://www.dcmnr.gov.ie/NR/rdonlyres/2DACF4BD-B640-43C6-85AB-	http://www.cer.ie/GetAttachment.aspx?id=2c308364-7459-4bdd-943a-6e5de23a749f	http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2000/en/si/0445.html#parti

language)	CA90CDD19BBB/25792/ElectricityRegulationAct1999.pdf		
Link to full text of legal source (English)			

Further information

Institution (name)	Website	Name of contact person (optional)	Telephone number (head office)	E-mail (optional)
Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) – energy agency	SEI website http://www.sei.ie		+353-23-8842193	http://www.sei.ie/Contact_Us/
EirGrid – transmission system operator	EirGrid website http://www.eirgrid.com		+353 167 717 00	info@eirgrid.com
ESB Networks – distribution system operator	ESB website http://www.esb.ie/esbnetworks/home/index.jsp		+353 21 4947260	esbnetworks@esb.ie
Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR)	DCENR website http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/	Patrick Dowling	+353 167 82 000	
Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) – regulatory authority for energy	CER website http://www.cer.ie/en/renewables-overview.aspx		+353 140 008 00	info@cer.ie

3. Connection to the grid

Abbreviated form of legal source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electricity Regulation Act 1999 (ERA) CER/05/049 	
Legal basis for a claim/addressees	<input type="checkbox"/> statutory basis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> contractual basis	Under a contract, every operator of a power system is entitled against the grid operator to the connection of this system to the grid (Sec. 34 (1) ERA).
	Entitled party	The persons entitled to the connection of systems to the grid are the system operators (4 CER/05/049).
	Obligated party	The person obligated is the national grid operator (Sec. 34 (1) ERA).
Priority to renewable energy (qualitative criteria)	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority to renewable energy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-discriminatory connection. The grid operator is obliged to connect renewable energy systems without discriminating against any persons (Sec. 34 (8) ERA). The regulatory authority may decide that the connection of renewable energy systems shall be given priority (Sec. 9 (5) (e) ERA). So far, the regulatory authority has not taken such a decision. Group processing. However, renewable energy systems are connected under the system of group processing. Group processing aims to speed up the connection of renewable energy systems through the standardisation of the procedural steps and to increase connection security. This especially applies to wind energy systems (1 CER /05/049). Systems may not be subject to group processing if their capacity does not exceed 0.5 MW or if the system operator can demonstrate that processing his system more speedily than would be the case under the group processing rules would result in a benefit which is in the public interest (4.4 CER /05/049). According to distribution grid operator ESB, this rule is currently under consultation.
Capacity limits		
Limitations/deadlines	The grid connection offer shall specify a term for connection (4.2. CER/05/049). The length of the term depends on when the system checks required for the connection of the system in question can be carried out.	
Arising/enforcement of a claim	The claim for connection arises on the date on which the connection agreement is concluded.	
Funding		
	State	

	Consumers	
	Grid operator	
	System operator	The system operators are to bear the costs of the connection of their systems to the grid (Sec. 34 (2) (d) ERA in conjunction with 4.8 2) CER/05/049).
	Distribution mechanism	

4. Usage of the grid

Abbreviated form of legal source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electricity Regulation Act 1999 (ERA) CER/05/049 	
Legal basis for a claim/addressees	<input type="checkbox"/> statutory basis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> contractual basis	The claim for transmission of electricity generated from renewable energy sources arises from a contract (Sec. 34 (1) ERA).
	Entitled party	The persons entitled are the system operators (4 CER/05/049).
	Obligated party	The person obligated is the grid operator (Sec. 34 (1) ERA).
Priority to renewable energy (qualitative criteria)	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority to renewable energy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-discrimination	The grid operator must not discriminate against any person when transmitting electricity from renewable sources (Sec. 34 (8) ERA).
Capacity limits		
Limitations/deadlines	The grid operator is obliged to specify the validity of the grid connection agreement in the connection offer. The connection offer eventually becomes part of the grid connection agreement (4.2. CER/05/049).	
Arising/enforcement of a claim	The claim for transmission of electricity arises when the system is connected to the grid and the connection date set out in the grid connection agreement has arrived (Sec. 34 (1) ERA in conjunction with 4.2. CER/05/049).	
Funding		
	State	
	Consumers	
	Grid operator	
	System operator	The costs arising from the usage of the grid are borne by the system operators, who have to pay a grid usage fee (34 (4) ERA in conjunction with 4.8 (5) CER/05/049).
	Distribution mechanism	

5. Expansion of the grid

Abbreviated form of legal source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electricity Regulation Act 1999 (ERA) CER/05/049 S.I. Nr. 445/2000 	
Legal basis for a claim/addressees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> statutory basis <input type="checkbox"/> contractual basis	In general, the grid operator is obliged to expand his grids up to the grid connection point requested, if the connection of a system requires the grid to be expanded (8 par. S.I. No. 445/2000).
	Entitled party	
	Obligated party	The obligated party is grid operator Eirgrid (8 par. 1 S.I. No. 445/2000).
Priority to renewable energy (qualitative criteria)	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority to renewable energy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-discrimination	When expanding his grids for the purpose of connection of a system, the grid operator must not discriminate against certain persons (Sec. 34 (8) ERA).
Capacity limits		
Limitations/deadlines		
Arising/enforcement of a claim	The grid operator's general obligations directly derive from statutory law (8 art. 1 S.I. No. 445/2000).	
Funding		
	State	
	Consumers	
	Grid operator	The costs of an expansion of the grid are borne by the grid operator. However, he can pass on these costs to the operator of the systems whose connection required the grid to be expanded (4.8 (1) and (2) CER/05/049).
	System operator	The costs of an expansion of the grid that is to the benefit of only one system operator are to be borne by this system operator (4.8 (2) CER/05/049).
	Distribution mechanism	