

Firm Access Quantity and Associated Transmission Reinforcement Review

Briefing Note

14 November 2016



Background

The process for connecting generators to the Irish transmission and distribution network involves the calculation of Associated Transmission Reinforcements (ATR) and the Firm Access Quantity (FAQ) for each generator.

There have been a number of decisions by Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) governing the connection process. The CER decision CER/08/260 'Criteria for Gate 3 Renewable Generator offers and Related matters, 2008' still pertains. This decision sets out that EirGrid processes connection requests in date order and uses a computer program, called the ITC (Incremental Transfer Capability) Program, to calculate Firm Access Quantities. CER decision CER/11/102 provided that the ITC programme also be used to determine FAQ for pre Gate 3 generator connections

The ITC study identifies ATRs for each generator. These are driven by constraints on the network and include scheduled reinforcements such as line and busbar upratings, new stations and new lines. The lists of ATRs, which are specific to each generator, contain those transmission reinforcements that must be completed in order for firm access to be allocated to the relevant generator.

Ongoing Review

EirGrid reviews ATRs in keeping with the CER direction CER/09/191. These include:

- 1) reviews of the need for reinforcements themselves which are routinely assessed; and
- 2) a review of the associations between reinforcements and generators which was last performed using the ITC program in 2013¹.

The outcome of an association review will either confirm associations between generators and reinforcements or will identify reinforcements to disassociate from particular generators.

¹ The results from 2013 can be found on the EirGrid website <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/customer-and-industry/general-customer-information/operational-constraints/>.

Association Review 2016

EirGrid has now performed an additional review of ATRs and FAQs. The approach reviews the associations of transmission reinforcements with generators, examining the frequency and impact of constraints over the coming years. The refinement in the approach is to take into account relevant generation profiles, demand profiles and generation technical and commercial parameters. The latest information about generator take-up and network developments is used.

Where the study finds that a generator is not contributing to a constraint, associated with an ATR then the corresponding reinforcements(s) may be removed from that generator's ATR list.

This background and approach to this review was communicated with external stakeholders on 06 September 2016 at the Generator Liaison Group meeting.

Conclusion

The review finds that all the reinforcements are required and that the majority of associations remain valid and fundamentally sound. It recognises that to make over 5,000 MW of generation firm, significant additional network reinforcement will be required.

Nevertheless, due to the refined approach some generators are now found not to contribute to some constraints and so can have their associations to corresponding reinforcement(s) removed. In these cases, the generators may obtain their full or partial FAQ earlier than previously forecasted. Approximately 10% of generators (by number) with ATRs experience a reduction in their ATRs in such a way.

Individual generators affected by the review will be informed over the coming weeks by letter of their revised ATR list. It is recognised that in some instances changes to a generator's ATRs may result in changes to when FAQ may be released, which in turn may have financial implications. As such, of the individual generators affected, those with the largest FAQ change will be prioritised in terms of the issuing of formal letters.