



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Private Wires

Guiding Principles for Policy Formulation

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Prepared by the Department of the
Environment, Climate and Communications
[gov.ie](https://www.gov.ie)

Private Wires – Guiding Principles for Policy Formulation

Background

Climate Action Plan 2024 includes a commitment to develop a Private Wires Policy Framework by the end of 2024. An extensive public consultation took place in late 2023 and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications is now publishing the results of that exercise. At the same time the Department is publishing these guiding principles for the formulation of the Private Wires Policy Framework.

On a basic level Private Wires refers to private individuals or undertakings running their own electricity cables in order to transfer electricity from one site to another.

Objectives

The current legal position in Ireland is that only the ESB can own an electricity distribution or transmission system, and as such the supply of electricity from generation site to demand user takes place on the ESB owned, National Electricity Grid. The only exceptions to this rule are where a developer, with the permission of the CRU, builds their own connection from a new generator to the national grid on a “contestable basis”, or where the CRU permits the construction of a ‘direct line’ between a generator and customers where either an applicant has been refused a connection to the national grid due to a lack of capacity, or the CRU has otherwise determined a connection dispute.

The Private Wires Policy will aim to unlock private sector resources to build new electricity infrastructure by expanding the right of private undertakings to connect supply directly with demand. The intention is that by allowing “Private Wires”, we will see an accelerated investment in new electricity infrastructure to include renewable generation and storage, which will ultimately benefit the whole electricity system.

Policy Considerations

Any expansion of the right of private developers to build Private Wires will be guided by the following policy considerations:

- The objective of any change is to accelerate decarbonisation, and promote the deployment of electricity infrastructure, renewable generation and storage.
- The National Electricity Grid is a crucial piece of national infrastructure and will remain in public ownership.
- Any change must complement other policy objectives including security of supply, the offshore wind strategy, the hydrogen strategy, industrial policy, and the national climate objective.
- The National Electricity Grid will remain the primary way to connect generators and consumers of electricity. Where Grid-based solutions are available these will be preferred to Private Wires.
- Private Wires cannot undermine the financing of the National Electricity Grid. Those with a Private Wire must pay the full cost of the service they have sought from, or is provided to them, by the National Electricity Grid.
- Private Wires will be built to the same technical and safety standards as the National Electricity Grid and will be capable of being taken in charge by the System Operators.
- Private Wires will not be permitted to undermine the efficient development of the National Electricity Grid.
- Private Wires will have to be developed within appropriate planning and environmental assessment requirements, and the consent of landowners. Private Wire developers will not have wayleave or other powers to use land.