



Media Information

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€22M in SEI funding for 4,000 energy efficient homes

Over 90 projects funded as demand from the construction industry rises

Sustainable Energy Ireland reported today, that it has approved €22 million in funding to private and social housing developers for over 4,000 energy efficient houses under its *House of Tomorrow* Programme, in the past five years. Over 90 projects, covering every county in Ireland, have been funded to date. These details were announced at an event to showcase the achievements of the programme at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, which was attended by the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Mr. Noel Dempsey TD as well as leading members of the construction industry.

The aim of the *House of Tomorrow* Programme is to accelerate improvements in the energy performance and quality of Irish homes. Launched in September 2001, the programme supports group housing developments by private sector and social housing providers, with funding at up to €8,000 per housing unit. This funding subsidises the adoption of innovative design and technology features that cut heating energy usage and associated CO₂ emissions by over 40% relative to what would apply under current Building Regulations. Participation from developers is growing rapidly with 35 projects approved in 2005 and around 10 new applications now being received monthly by SEI.

According to David Taylor, Chief Executive, SEI, "This demand is being driven by a combination of factors including a continued demand for new housing, rising energy prices, instability in oil producing regions affecting supply, and growing environmental concerns. In very practical terms, with the average annual household energy spend now at €1,700, consumers are becoming more conscious of the cost and comfort benefits of energy efficiency. Builders, estate agents and local authorities are now actively using the programme as a quality brand mark, particularly as householders seek to future proof their homes against rises in energy costs."

Mr. Taylor continued, "The success of the *House of Tomorrow* programme is living proof that it's practical to build homes of superior energy and environmental quality that are attractive,

affordable, comfortable and offer householders more security against future energy price rises. But it is only the beginning of a journey to sustainable living that we all must make. In this context, designing, building and managing our built environment in an energy efficient way is critical. The achievements of the Programme give confidence that the market can make the necessary changes to sustainably meet the serious economic and environmental challenges facing us in this regard”.

Among the innovative features supported under the programme are advanced wall, ceiling, floor insulation and window glazing systems, well sealed construction with healthy ventilation control to reduce energy needs. Efficient energy is supplied by condensing gas and oil boilers, solar heating systems, heat pumps and biomass boilers. In addition to the funding provided for housing developments, the programme is also supporting installer training, technology guides, feasibility studies, research into housing performance, and post graduate studentships, to help build awareness amongst practitioners in the specification and implementation of innovative energy technology features in Irish homes.

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About SEI

Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) is the statutory authority charged with promoting and assisting the development of sustainable energy. SEI is funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan 2000 – 2006 with programmes part-financed by the European Union.