

Large industry has vital role to play in helping Ireland become a lower carbon economy

In order to overcome the major environmental challenges facing the country, including the continued growth in emissions of harmful greenhouse gases such as Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), Ireland must become a lower carbon economy. And large industry has a vital role to play in this. That is according to David Taylor, Chief Executive, Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI), who was speaking in Dublin today at the launch of the Annual Report of the Large Industry Energy Network (LIEN) for 2002.

Mr. Taylor said that moving towards a lower carbon economy means reducing overall energy demand through a variety of energy efficiency measures while also meeting more of that demand from renewable, non-fossil fuel based resources. Established eight years ago by SEI, the LIEN is a voluntary networking initiative, aimed at reducing the energy usage and related emissions from large industry in Ireland.

As the current 80 LIEN members account for around 40% of the country's industrial energy spend and 9.4% of the national total primary energy requirement, their concerted efforts in sharing best practice in energy management remain vital to achieving national targets. A recent study carried out by SEI profiling the energy consumption and CO₂ emissions in industry, revealed that 18% of enterprises are responsible for 90% of industrial energy consumption. This highlights the benefits that can be obtained by focusing on improving the efficiency of large and intensive energy users. Overall, industry now accounts for 25% of all energy related CO₂ emissions in Ireland.

Commenting, David Taylor said, "This year has seen an acceleration in activity on forthcoming climate change abatement policies. The fact that carbon taxation and emissions trading are on the way has been well publicised, but events over recent months including the publication of the Department of Finance carbon tax consultation paper, the launch of the SEI pilot programme report on negotiated energy agreements and the assignment of the EPA to overseeing a National Allocation Plan for the EU emissions trading scheme, have increased interest levels across industry. It is imperative that we capitalise on this interest to maximise reductions in emissions from industry. However it

will also be important for companies to have recourse to a variety of approaches that allows them the flexibility to make a full contribution to reducing emissions, while at the same time minimising cost and competitiveness impacts".

Also speaking at the launch of the new LIEN report, Dermot Ahern T.D., Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, said, "My Department, in conjunction with the Department of Environment and Local Government, will play a key role in the years ahead in promoting sustainable development across Irish society at large and satisfying Kyoto's challenging obligations. The Government remains firmly committed to ensuring that we meet these obligations, through the long-term programme of actions described in the National Climate Change Strategy."

He concluded, "The energy savings achieved by LIEN members are worth at least €1.4 million annually and demonstrate clearly, the potential financial returns from information exchange and co-operation. The co-operation of LIEN and SEI is not to be underestimated. In a competitive climate, where information is often closely guarded, these industries have been willing and enthusiastic about sharing information that allows them to be more energy efficient and competitive."

SEI's Large Industry Energy Network has been operating for eight years and aims to reduce the energy usage and related emissions from the largest energy consuming sites in the country. Members are committed to reducing their energy intensity on an individual basis and recognise the benefits of collaborating with like-minded organisations on innovations and best practice in energy management.

In 2002, LIEN members had an energy bill of approximately €290 million. Total CO₂ emissions from LIEN sites in 2002 were 4,295,000 tonnes, however, emissions avoided due to energy efficiency measures were 23,650 tonnes, equivalent to 90 GWh of energy.

Sustainable Energy Ireland was established on May 1st 2002 as a statutory authority charged with promoting and assisting the development of sustainable energy in Ireland. Sustainable Energy Ireland is funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan 2000-2006 with programmes part financed by the European Union.

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