



Media Information

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€7 million in grant support committed to stimulate deployment of renewable energy technologies in Ireland

In a bid to stimulate the deployment of renewable energy technologies that are close to market, €7 million in grant funding has already been committed to renewable energy research, development and demonstration (RE RD&D) projects in Ireland. That is according to Mr. David Taylor, Chief Executive – Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI), who was speaking in Dublin at the launch of a report on renewable energy deployment in Ireland.

The new report highlights the progress made to date under a €12 million funding programme which is being managed by SEI. Launched in 2002 and due for completion in 2006, the RE RD&D Programme is primarily focused on stimulating uptake of renewable energy, and on assessing the development of technologies that have prospects for the future.

The focus of the Programme to date has been on wind and biomass, reflecting the considerable potential of these sectors. Seventy-two projects have been approved for funding by SEI including the development of a new manufacturing process for wind turbine blades, the demonstration of the first large scale commercial wood pellet fuelled boiler in Ireland and research into a wave power device called the WaveBob.

Commenting, Mr. Taylor said, "Ireland has the potential to supply energy from many renewable energy sources in addition to wind and hydro. These include biomass, ocean energy, solar and geothermal. However, each of these energy sources faces a variety of barriers such as lack of operating experience and/or poor commercial return. In addition, as the market for renewable energy products grows, Ireland will need access to the requisite expertise to support the development and deployment of these technologies. For this reason, the RE RD&D Programme is proving a valuable asset in helping to overcome potential barriers and drive the development of the renewable energy sector in Ireland".

Mr. Taylor stressed the critical role which research in the energy sector generally has to play in underpinning Ireland's sustained economic progress, within the context of the Government's recently published consultation paper on energy RD&D. "It is only through ongoing research, both at policy level and at a technology level, that we can identify opportunities such as the emerging competitiveness of our renewable energy resources, and subsequently prioritise investment as part of our effort to achieve compliance under the Kyoto Protocol", he said.

The Kyoto Protocol came into force in Ireland in February 2005. According to Mr. Taylor, Ireland still faces significant challenges in meeting its targets under the Protocol, though progress has been made. While energy-related CO₂ emissions were 39% above 1990 levels in 2003, they were down from a peak of 46% in 2001.

Also commenting, Minister for Communications, Marine and natural Resources, Noel Dempsey T.D. said, "In focussing the RD&D programme on priority technologies, SEI is assisting Ireland in maximising the potential of its most valuable renewable energy resources. This brochure provides information on the projects funded to date and on the strategic focus for SEI's RD&D programme going forward. I believe it will be a valuable tool to potential investors and policy makers alike and I congratulate SEI on making this resource available."

Sustainable Energy Ireland was established on May 1st, 2002, as a statutory authority charged with promoting and assisting the development of a sustainable national energy economy and 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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For further information please contact:

Diarmuid O'Neill

Edelman

01-6789333 / 087-6699933