

News story: New electricity connection to France gets go-ahead

The new ElecLink electricity connection between Britain and France will provide greater access to the continental electricity market, and help to reduce consumer bills as electricity can be flexibly imported and exported to take advantage of cheaper prices.

The project will run through the Channel Tunnel between Sellindge in the UK and Les Mandarins in France. It will have the capacity to power up to 2 million homes and provide further resilience for Britain's electricity supply.

A combination of domestic electricity generation including new nuclear power, gas and renewables, as well as increased access for importing and exporting electricity supplies from Europe, means homes and businesses will have reliable power at the lowest possible price all year round.

Thanks to the Government's supportive regulatory framework, including allowing interconnectors to participate in the Capacity Market, and innovative solutions from the developer, this major new piece of infrastructure will be financed on a purely commercial basis, with no risk to British tax and bill payers.

UK Energy Minister Jesse Norman said:

As a government we are strongly supportive of greater electricity trading with our European partners in order to lower household bills and deliver energy security as part of our modern industrial strategy.

We've created the right environment for cooperative projects like ElecLink to attract investment and compete in the market without needing financial support from our tax and bill payers.

The ElecLink interconnector is one of the most advanced new interconnection projects across Europe and the first of its kind between Britain and France since 1986, when the existing IFA (Interconnexion France-Angleterre) interconnector was commissioned.

ElecLink has said that the new interconnector will:

- Provide a gigawatt (1000MW) of electricity connection between the UK and France, enough capacity to power up to 2 million homes
- Reduce carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 6 million tonnes over the period 2020-2030, by enabling electricity demand in Britain and France to be met by the most efficient generating plants
- Create approximately 300 new jobs during the construction phase

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Groupe Eurotunnel Jacques Gounon said:

ElecLink further underlines how important the Channel Tunnel is to Britain and France. Not only is it a vital transport link, it is set to play an instrumental part in the supply of electricity to the UK, France and continental Europe.

With the debate over the future of energy security brought into focus recently, ElecLink delivers a smart, low-cost and environmentally friendly way to secure the electricity supply. We are proud to be inaugurating ElecLink and delighted to mark the official start of this great project which will significantly benefit the economies and consumers in both France and the United Kingdom.