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National Geothermal Energy Summit 2023

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Policy Updates

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**An Roinn Comhshaoil,
Aeráide agus Cumarsáide**
Department of the Environment,
Climate and Communications

District Heating for Ireland: A Policy Update

Breda Callan, DECC

Ag Obair **Le Chéile**





Serial no: 681517
Fax: 000080
Direction: Left

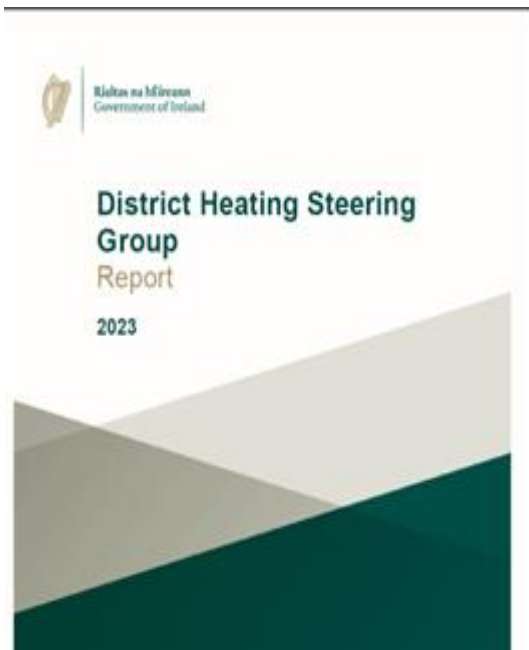
Renewable energy used for heating and cooling

(% of gross final energy consumption for heating and cooling, 2020)



Greece: provisional data









An Roinn Comhshaoil,
Aeráide agus Cumarsáide
Department of the Environment,
Climate and Communications

Policy Statement on Geothermal Energy For a Circular Economy

July 2023

National Geothermal Energy Summit 2023
Ian Devlin, Geoscience Policy Division
11 October 2023

Regulation of Shallow Geothermal Systems

Type of shallow geothermal system	Regulatory Approach
Small (below threshold), shallow, closed-loop geothermal systems.	Threshold will take account of the net energy yield by area of the system and how it is used • Registration of systems to avoid interference • Collection of data on installed capacity • Development of a GIS Planning Tool • Registration of installers
Small (below threshold), shallow, open-loop geothermal systems.	Additionally: • Permitting where there is potential for impact on ground and surface waters
Large (above threshold), shallow geothermal systems	Additionally: • Automatically permitted, subject to environmental protection, after the Geothermal Regulatory Authority validates design and specification • Other consents, as necessary • EIA and AA Screening required for activity applications • Collection of data on energy use and any obligations within a local network • Collection of data on water abstraction and re-injection

Regulation of Deep (+500m) Geothermal Systems

Stage 1	Regulatory Approach
Geothermal Energy Exploration Lease (GEEL)	• Geothermal Regulatory Authority (GSRO) approved Work Programme, including public consultation and AA Screening. EIA screening for drilling. Groundwater assessments. • Fixed area (km²). • Exclusive exploration rights (Variable from standard period of 6 years, with at least one review at mid-point. Can apply for GEUL at any point.) • Possible competitive process for awarding GEELs. • Objective is to determine if the geothermal resource can provide enough energy to make the <u>proposed geothermal energy project</u> viable. • Declined if impacts an existing use of geothermal resource or not in public interest • Further consultation on the data to be reported. Confidentiality period c. 3 to 6 years. • End-use, design or specification of proposed project can change.

Regulation of Deep (+500m) Geothermal Systems

Stage 2	Regulatory Approach
Geothermal Energy Utilisation Lease (GEUL)	• Further consultation on who can apply for a GEUL and possible competitive process for awarding GEULs. • Minimum AA and EIA Screenings. • Duration equal to project lifespan, (Indicative 30 years,) covered by a Geothermal Plan of Development. • GEUL will determine access to a geothermal resource and not a fixed area (km²). • Declined if impacts an existing use of geothermal resource or not in public interest • GRA's assessment will reflect risk profile and informed by public engagement. • Further consultation on the data to be reported. Confidentiality period c. 3 to 6 years. • Lease performance criteria to include energy supplied and its price to the end user(s) as well as performance against the criteria that determined the award of the lease and protection of the environment.

Ambition: Publish Draft Scheme of Bill by End-2024

Upon Government approval, drafting a General Scheme of Bill will require prior legal advice, research, testing and consultation on:

- Potential cumulative environmental impacts of small shallow systems
- Contract and environmental law governing interdependencies in integrated geothermal networks
- Interface with planning law
- Ownership of and access to resources below 500m (outside surface ownership)
- Spatial overlap with mineral prospecting licences and incidental extraction
- Regulation of traded prices for heat/cooling to avoid monopoly and monopsony
- Testing regulatory thresholds and licencing processes
- Consultation on data to be provided by permit, licence and lease holders



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Geothermal Strategy

1. Metrics, targets and KPIs for geothermal energy
2. Data gathering and research
3. Financial incentives
4. Knowledge, skills and capacity
5. Planning and engagement with Local Authorities
6. Information and engagement with the public
7. Deployment in publicly funded buildings



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Next Steps

1. Engagement with Attorney General's Office throughout process
2. Consultation with Geothermal Energy Advisory Group on the detailed design of the regulatory framework
3. Cross Departmental and Agency Discussions
4. Integration with Policy and Regulatory Framework for District Heating
5. Map existing activities across the 7 elements of the Geothermal Strategy