



An Coimisiún
um Rialáil Fóntais
Commission for
Regulation of Utilities

Microgeneration

Questions and Answers

The Q&As below provide answers to the most frequent general questions about microgeneration posed by customers to CRU.

If you already have a microgeneration system installed and have a question which is not clarified below about payment for your exported electricity, your supplier may be best placed to answer specific questions relating to the products and service they provide to you, including:

- Details about your particular export tariff and contract with your selected supplier;
- How and when and how much you will get paid or credited for your export; and
- Whether you are eligible for payment and whether it is based on the metered amount from a smart meter or based on a “deemed export quantity” calculation, in the absence of a smart meter.

ESB Networks may be best placed to answer specific questions relating to requirements about safety considerations and capacity limitations of the generation equipment being hooked onto your electricity connection to the grid. Information on ESB Networks’ website includes their [‘Step-by-Step Guide’](#) on microgeneration and answers to Frequently Asked Questions.

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1. What is microgeneration and CRU's role?

What is microgeneration?

Microgeneration means the generation of electricity by equipment installed in homes or small businesses. Where this electricity originates from a renewable source, such as solar (i.e. photovoltaic “PV” panels), from small wind turbines, from hydro or from micro-renewable combined heat and power (CHP) then the electricity is regarded as renewable. Electricity generated from renewable sources which is then stored in a battery and used – or exported to the grid at a later time - is also renewable.

The term “microgeneration” is sometimes used to refer to generation capacity of up to 1,000 kW, though this broader range can include mini-scale and small-scale as well as micro-scale generation.

	Microgeneration	Mini-Scale Generation	Small-Scale Generation
Capacity range of installed system	Up to 6kW for single phase connection OR up to 11kW for 3-phase connection	> 6kW or 11kW and up to 50kW	>50kW and <1,000 kW or < 6MW for Energy Communities

For more details, refer also to the answer to Question 14: “Where can I find out information which is specific to me?”

What is CRU's role as regards microgeneration?

CRU develops policy, including regulatory arrangements, to ensure that suppliers and electricity system operators (including ESB Networks and SEMO) put systems in place so that customers are paid for their exported electricity.

In December 2021 CRU published the regulatory arrangements which apply for remunerating customers for the micro-generated electricity which exceeds their own use and is “exported” to the grid. The following are the regulatory arrangements in place:

- Remuneration of Renewables Self-consumers for exported electricity: [Interim Clean Export Guarantee](#)
- Guidance to Electricity Suppliers on implementation aspects of [Interim Clean Export Guarantee](#)

The above arrangements are implemented by ESB Networks and electricity suppliers. If a customer is unhappy with the level of service provided by their supplier or by ESB Networks, they can make a formal complaint to the company in question. The CRU provides a free

complaint resolution service for customers who have submitted a complaint to their supplier or network operator and are dissatisfied with the outcome.

2. What is “exported” electricity?

The excess electricity produced by your microgenerator - which you do not use instantaneously to meet your own electricity demand - is automatically spilled (“exported”) to the grid by your microgeneration system. This quantity is less than the amount generated by your microgeneration system as some of this is used in your home or premises.

Your electricity supplier will pay you for your exported electricity. If you have a query relating to your specific situation or need more information, you can check with your supplier who will tell you what you need to do to get paid.

3. Where can I find general information about microgeneration?

The vast majority of microgeneration in Ireland is photovoltaic (PV): [SEAI's “Homeowner Guide to Solar PV”](#) is a good starting out point for general information on Solar PV.

SEAI also publish a listing of [registered PV installers](#).

ESB Networks’ website includes a [‘Step-by-Step Guide’](#) and answers to Frequently Asked Questions about adding microgeneration to your electricity connection.

4. Are there technical and safety requirements to comply with?

Detailed information on requirements for connecting to the network is provided by ESB Networks on their website. This includes informing ESB Networks via the NC6 (or NC7) form of key elements of your installed system which are logged by ESB Networks.

In order to be eligible to receive a grant, which is administered by SEAI, your PV system must be [installed by a registered installer](#).

5. What is the NC6 / NC7 form? Do I have to complete it?

The details you (or your microgeneration installer) enter in the NC6 form (or NC7 as appropriate) informs ESB Networks about your installed microgeneration system. After ESB Networks have completed the processing of your form, they inform your supplier that you have installed microgeneration. Without this information, your supplier will not remunerate you for your exported electricity.

If your microgeneration system is less than 6kW (for single phase electricity) or less than 11 kW for 3-phase, then you should use the NC6 form to inform ESB Networks of details of your installed system.

If your generation system is greater than 6kW for single phase electricity (or 11 kW for 3-phase) but not more than 50kW, then you should use the NC7 form.

More Information about microgeneration and mini-generation and the NC6/NC7 forms is provided below in the answer to Question 14: “Where can I find out specific information?”

6. Does my supplier know that I have microgeneration installed?

If your latest electricity bill shows that you are already being paid – or credited - for exported electricity, then your supplier knows that you have microgeneration installed.

If you are unsure, and you have any type of renewable microgenerator installed (whether sourced from wind, solar, hydro or biomass CHP), you should contact your existing electricity supplier with your MPRN number, as shown on your electricity bill. Your supplier can then confirm to you whether or not your microgeneration installation is already recorded with them, and can explain to you what arrangements they have to pay you for the excess electricity which you export to the grid. If your installed microgeneration system is not already recorded with them, your supplier will advise you what to do.

7. Do I need a smart meter to get paid for my exported surplus electricity?

From 15th February 2022, if you have a smart meter, and if your NC6/NC7 form has been processed by ESB Networks, (see answer to Question 5) then your electricity supply company will know that you have a microgenerator and will pay you for every metered unit of electricity (kWh) you export to the grid over the duration of the billing interval. Meter data is automatically generated - for both exported and imported electricity - every half hour interval and is recorded by your smart meter. The payment you can expect for your export is:

Metered export quantity (kWh) X Your supplier's export-tariff (€/kWh)

If you are currently eligible for upgrade to a smart meter you will not get paid for your exported electricity while you wait for your smart meter to be installed. Payment will commence from the date that your smart meter is installed and ESB Networks have processed your NC6/NC7 form (see answer to Question 5).

If you are currently not yet eligible for upgrade to a smart meter, you will be paid by your electricity supplier for your exported electricity commencing from the date after 15th February 2022 when ESB Networks have completed processing your NC6/NC7 form (see answer to Question 5). As you don't have a smart meter, your exported electricity is not measured:

hence, the quantity of electricity that you export to the grid is calculated using a formula. You will get paid by your supplier for every **calculated** unit of electricity you are deemed to export to the grid (called the “deemed export quantity”). This is calculated by ESB Networks using a formula decided by CRU. The payment you can expect for your export is:

Deemed export quantity (kWh) X Your supplier’s export-tariff (€/kWh)

Details of the calculation are available in Section 3.2 of CRU’s policy document for the [Interim Clean Export Guarantee](#).

As the National Smart Meter Programme (NSMP) continues to roll out smart meters across the country, you – depending on what type of conventional meter you have - may become eligible for an upgrade to a smart meter. As long as you are not yet eligible for a smart meter upgrade, you will continue to get paid by your supplier for every calculated unit of electricity you are deemed to export while you wait for your smart meter to be installed. Once your smart meter is installed, your export payment will change from deemed to metered.

If you have any doubt, you should check with your supplier as to whether their retail market system has been updated to indicate that you have a microgenerator installed.

8. How can I view the data on how much electricity I have exported?

The quantity of electricity you have exported - and the monetary amount you are paid/credited for it by your supplier - may be disclosed on the same bill as for the electricity supplied to you, or it may be in a separate statement from your supplier.

The regular bill from your electricity supplier will generally have details of the amount paid/credited to you to cover the stated billing period. This will also include the number of exported electricity units exported (i.e. in units of kWhs) for which you are being paid. ESB Networks collects meter data and shares your data with your chosen electricity supplier. If you are on a smart tariff and wish to view half-hour “interval” data (for both your demand and your export) you can sign up to ESB Networks’ customer portal where you can view a graphical representation of your demand and export, or you can download in the form of HDF (spreadsheet) data for you to analyse or use. This information is available by creating a smart meter account with ESB Networks via the webpage: [Sign Up Today To View Your Smart Meter Data](#).

9. Am I eligible to get a smart meter?

ESB Networks is upgrading 2.4 million electricity meters in Ireland to next generation smart meters. If you still have a conventional meter, you can find information on when you can expect to have your meter upgraded to a smart meter on [ESB Networks’ website](#).

Where customers are eligible to have a smart meter installed, ESB Networks endeavours to install a smart meter within four months of a valid NC6 form being processed by ESB

Networks. If you wish to, you can apply to ESB Networks or your electricity supplier for a prioritised installation of a smart meter.

Section 2 – [Meters Eligible for Exchange](#) of ESB Networks' webpage has more detailed information about when – in future - other types of conventional meter will become eligible to be exchanged for a smart meter.

If you are unsure as to whether your conventional meter has already been exchanged for a smart meter, you should contact your electricity supplier who will be able to tell you.

10. Will I get paid for my export if I refuse a smart meter?

If you are eligible for upgrade to a smart meter and refuse - or have previously refused - a smart meter installation, as offered by ESB Networks, you are ineligible for payment for your exported electricity.

11. What export tariff rates are offered by suppliers?

The retail market - and the tariffs suppliers offer for both consumed electricity and for exported electricity - is open to competition. Each supplier sets their own rates. The export tariff (in cents/kWh) offered by each supplier can be found on their websites. When you are considering switching, you should contact your supplier and take into account the export tariff offered and the general terms of the contract.

See also the answer to Question 12: *“What happens to my export payments if I switch supplier?”*

12. What happens to my export payments if I switch supplier?

The payment for each unit of electricity which you export is made by your supplier. You can only have a single supplier for both the electricity you use and to pay you for the surplus electricity you export. When you switch to a new supplier, you must pay the old supplier for the electricity you consumed up to that point and you must pay your new supplier for the electricity you consume from the date the switch was completed. The same applies for the electricity which you export. Therefore:

- your new supplier must remunerate you for the electricity you exported from the date of switching; and
- your previous supplier will pay you for the electricity you exported up to the date of switching.

You can expect that you will be provided with the same switching experience as applies for regular customers who do not have microgeneration. [CRU's guidance on switching supplier.](#)

13. How – and when – will I get paid for my exported electricity?

The payments for exported electricity do not always align with the supplier's billing cycle for electricity consumed. The frequency of payments is up to supplier. You may have to wait until your supplier's set-date for payment, as per the terms and conditions of your contract.

If you are switching supplier, you should take into account the best tariffs (for consumed and exported electricity) being offered and consider other criteria such as the frequency at which the supplier makes payments for export.

Your payment for your exported electricity may be paid or credited by your supplier in a number of ways:

- It may be via a monetary credit which offsets the amount owing on your regular bill for the electricity you imported/used from the grid. The amount of the payment or credit for exported electricity will be shown.
- It may be via a separate payment: in this case you may receive a separate statement with details of the payment amount and the quantity of exported electricity you are being paid for.

If you switch supplier, the payment interval of your new supplier to pay/credit you for your exported electricity may be different to your previous one. You should check this before switching supplier.

14. Where can I find out information which is specific to me?

CRU's Q&A information is not specific to you: it relates more broadly to CRU's policy and regulatory arrangements which provide for the payment to you for your exported electricity. Your electricity supplier is the first point of contact for more detailed and specific information relating to your particular circumstances and the service they provide to you.

ESB Networks deals with customers who wish to add microgeneration to their premises and to inform those customers of any requirements relating to installed microgeneration system equipment, metering or limitations regarding the connection. They process the NC6 (or NC7) form which must be sent by you (or your installer) to ESB Networks. They also manage the installation of smart meters and the collection and sharing of your import and export data. Information on ESB Networks' website includes their 'Step-by-Step Guide' to microgeneration and their answers to [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about adding microgeneration to your electricity connection.

The following are sources of more specific and detailed information on microgeneration are:

Body or Authority	Responsible for:	Links to Information
CRU	policy around payment for export	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This webpage and associated Q&As. CRU's policy: <i>Interim Clean Export Guarantee (CRU21131)</i>
SEAI	capital grants and listing of approved installers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solar (PV) capital grants Registered Solar PV installers
ESB Networks	grid connection and access to data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Microgeneration Frequently asked questions Connect to the grid & Step-by-Step guide NC6 Application Form NC7 Application Form ESB Networks' Smart Meter Upgrade FAQs Access to your export data and electricity usage data
DECC	support schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of support schemes – including grants - for microgeneration. Support tariffs (e.g. CEP) for new microgeneration at non-domestic premises.
Your Electricity Supplier	your specific contract details and the export tariff your supplier offers	<p>Refer to your supplier's website. Information available from your supplier includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Export Tariff which you are on. Terms of your contract for exported electricity. For each bill/statement period: how much you export and what you are paid for it. Information about how and when you will be paid or credited for your exported electricity.