

Cork firm is first to install wind turbines

LOUISE ROSEINGRAVE

A CORK company has become the first in Ireland to install wind turbines to generate power directly for company use as part of a €6 million investment.

Munster Joinery, a manufacturer of energy-efficient doors and windows, has installed two wind turbines capable of powering 2,260 homes annually, at its premises in Ballydesmond on the Cork-Kerry border.

The 2 megawatt (MW) turbines will reduce the company's carbon emissions, dramatically reduce the cost of electricity at the plant and act as a safeguard against potential energy cost inflation.

Installed by Limerick-based company Wind Energy Direct Ltd, the turbines will deliver power directly to the Munster Joinery plant. The move will save the company an estimated €1 million in energy costs over the next five years, while displacing more than 9,000 tonnes of carbon per annum.

The Munster Joinery project represents the first large-scale wind energy producer on a commercial premises in Ireland and will be seen as a technology demonstrator for all Irish industries.

Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) contributed €1 million in grant support to the project, working on behalf of the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources Eamon Ryan said the project was exemplary of the green economy in action. "Wind autoproduction, on which my department is currently working, allows industry to access one of our best renewable energy resources, benefit directly from cheaper electricity and reduced greenhouse gas emissions in the long term. With support from SEI, this project is a great example of how companies can create jobs and save money. It is the green economy in action," he said.

The project is billed as a win-win situation for progressive companies, who stand to benefit by controlling their own energy supply.

"This amounts to a significant breakthrough for industry in its efforts to enhance competitiveness in Ireland by helping to reduce energy costs from the start and hedging against future energy price increases," said Dominic Costello, Wind Energy Direct Ltd's managing director.

"In addition, enabling industries to significantly reduce carbon emissions makes it a win-win situation for them."