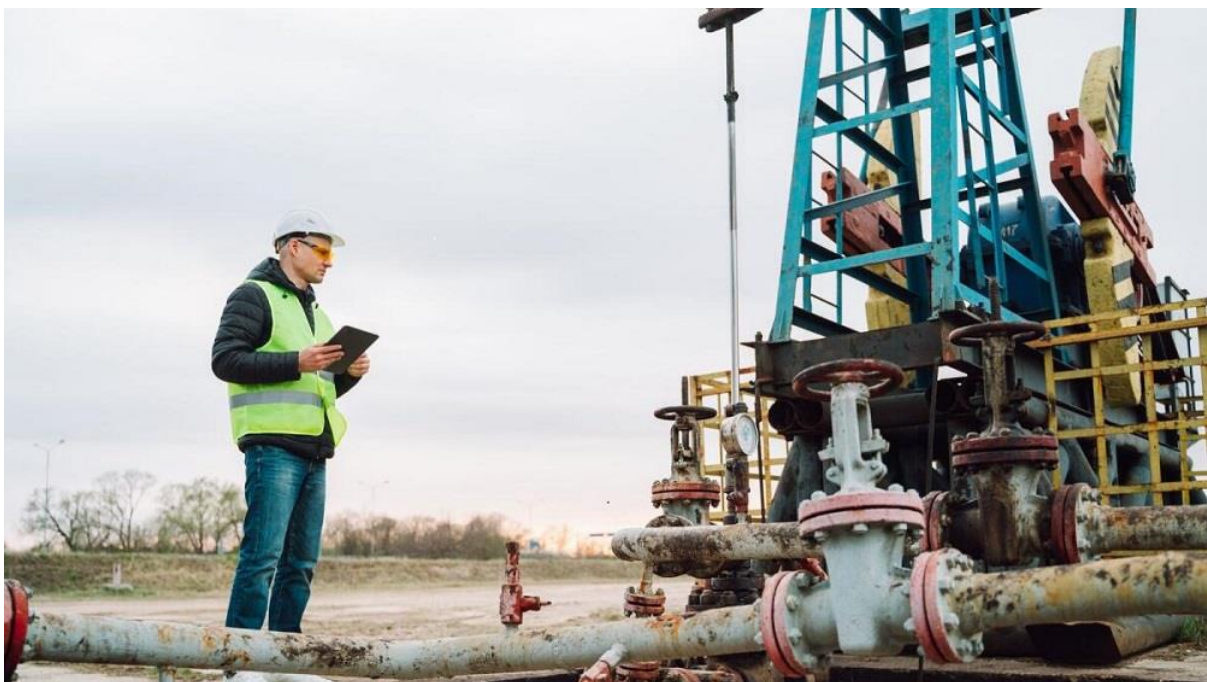


‘Unsuitable, flawed, simplistic’ – Government’s energy security plans harshly criticised

The Irish Academy of Engineering said state plans to protect the energy network are not realistic

- [LORCAN ALLEN](#)
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A field inspector at a gas drilling site. Picture: Getty

The government’s recently published energy security review has been labelled as “seriously flawed” and containing “major technical shortcomings and inadequacies”, in a new analysis by energy engineering experts.

The Irish Academy of Engineering (IAE), which represents Irish engineers and technologists, warned that the government’s energy security review “should not be used to underpin future energy policy development” as it is technically flawed and unrealistic.

“An initial reading of the report exposes many major technical shortcomings and inadequacies in the proposals for future actions. In the opinion of the academy these thoroughly invalidate its use in underpinning government policy going

forward,” the IAE said in a scathing report on the government’s energy security review, which was published last month.

“The report excludes a critically important option, namely the importation of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) via an Irish import terminal. The reasoning underpinning this decision is seriously flawed. The lack of such a facility in the medium and long term poses a high risk to the reliability of the Irish power system. Far from being excluded, this option should have been considered as a potential major contributor to the long-term security of Ireland’s energy supply,” the expert body added.

The IAE said the measures proposed by the government to address the current energy capacity crisis would not be enough to meet the state’s power needs by 2030. The expert body added that it remained “extremely concerned” at the medium to long-term threat to Ireland’s power system as the country will be solely reliant on a single interconnector pipeline with Scotland for all its gas needs by the end of this decade.

The IAE warned that Ireland has no gas storage facilities and that any interruption to the gas supply from Scotland could shut down the country’s gas network in just 20 minutes. It also dismissed suggestions from the government that hydrogen produced from offshore wind could be a realistic solution to the state’s energy security needs.

“Green hydrogen technology will hopefully play a role in decarbonising energy consumption both in Ireland and worldwide. Despite the optimism in the report, this technology is not remotely close to commercial development and is highly unlikely to be available at large commercial scale before 2035,” the IAE report stated.

“Large scale storage of hydrogen is only possible today in geological salt deposits. No geological formations suitable for the storage of hydrogen exists within Irish jurisdiction. This is not addressed in the report.”

Instead, the engineering body said the most important and immediate action the government needed to take was to encourage the development of an LNG import facility here as a short-term solution to the energy crisis.

“While the report’s statistical analyses estimating the risk to the Irish power system are adequate, the measures proposed to provide an acceptable reliability standard in 2030 are simplistic in the extreme, are technologically flawed, ignore financing and permitting timescales and, overall, render the report entirely unsuitable as a basis for further energy planning,” Don Moore, chair of the energy committee at the IAE and a former managing director of ESB International, said.

“The single import point for Irish gas supplies at Moffat, Scotland, remains a serious strategic threat to the reliability of Irish gas supplies. It is essential for the security of Irish energy supplies that Ireland develops its own LNG import facility as soon as possible,” he added.