

CRU Seeks Further Representations on Data Centre Fault Ride Through Rules

Background

The Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) has issued a request for further representations on Grid Code Modification MPID 345, entitled “Fault Ride Through, Rate of Change of Frequency and Post Fault Active Power Recovery for Demand Facilities” and an associated Compliance and Derogation Framework, following a recommendation paper submitted by EirGrid on 1 April 2026.

The consultation arises from a pressing grid stability concern. EirGrid has identified a risk to grid stability arising from the collective response of most data centres to fault events on the transmission system. When a fault occurs, most data centres automatically and near-instantaneously reduce their consumption from the grid and switch to temporary back-up sources of supply and do not return to their pre-fault demand level for an extended period. The simultaneous disconnection of a large volume of demand creates sudden imbalances between supply and demand that EirGrid must manage in real time, representing a significant risk to the security of the system.

The Growing Risk

The consultation paper notes that a significant incident occurred on 6 June 2026, during which approximately 480 MW of data centre demand dropped off the grid in response to a single-phase fault at a 220 kV station in Dublin. This was the most severe of a series of recorded events dating back to 2022.

EirGrid maintains that at a data centre demand level of 1,000 MW, the system will have reached the maximum demand loss that can be securely accommodated on the all-island power system, and that if data centre levels exceed this without FRT capability, the electricity system would not be secure in the event of a fault, to the degree that power outages may occur throughout the system in a way that cannot be managed or controlled by the TSO. In late June 2026, aggregate data centre demand peaked at approximately 1,000 MW, reaching the 900 MW load rejection limit.



What MPID 345 Proposes

MPID 345 proposes to introduce three new technical requirements for all transmission connected demand facilities:

- (1) Fault Ride Through (FRT) which means that demand facilities must remain connected and operate stably during and after any fault, provided voltage deviations remain within a specified profile at the connection point;
- (2) Rate of Change of Frequency (RoCoF) Robustness which means extending the existing RoCoF standard of ± 1 Hz/s to demand facilities; and
- (3) Active Power Recovery which means that demand facilities must recover their active power to 90% of the pre-fault value within 500 milliseconds after fault clearance and voltage recovery to 0.9 per unit.

EirGrid assessed the viability of deploying alternative solutions to the proposed new technical standards. Specifically, the analysis considered a scenario in which transmission connected demand facilities do not provide the proposed FRT performance, and the resulting system imbalance is addressed through additional volumes of inertia, delivered through synchronous condensers, and fast-acting reserve, primarily delivered through Battery Energy Storage Systems. EirGrid concluded that while such measures may assist to a degree, system service or grid solutions alone do not offer credible alternatives to the implementation of FRT/APR/RoCoF capability at demand facilities.

The CRU's independent technical advisors, TNEI Ireland, have agreed with EirGrid that there is no feasible, practical, or deliverable technical alternative to the implementation of FRT requirements on demand facilities, and that urgent action is required. TNEI's overarching recommendation is approval of the MPID 345 modification as a matter of urgency.

The Compliance and Derogation Framework

EirGrid recognises that most, if not all, existing transmission connected demand facilities will not be able to comply with MPID 345 initially and has developed a Compliance and Derogation Framework to address these implementation challenges.

The Framework offers three pathways. There is a standard individual derogation process open to all demand facilities and two streamlined group derogation processes, one for data centres and one for non-data centre customers. Under the group data centre route, key conditions include a 24-month derogation period, compliance with a Demand Utilisation Threshold (DUT), submission of a compliance plan within 3 months of the effective date, and quarterly compliance status reports to the TSO.

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The DUT sets a fixed monthly average MVA limit on non-compliant demand at each data centre facility. It ceases to apply once a facility becomes fully compliant with MPID 345.

TNEI has reviewed the Framework and raised a number of recommendations, including a concern that the current structure may create an inadvertent incentive for demand facilities to avoid the group derogation process, which could extend the period of system risk, extending the timeline for submission of compliance plans to 6 months for data centre group applications and 12 months for non-data centre applications and extending the derogation length to 5 years for non-data centre group process applicants.

EirGrid has also proposed amending the DUT calculation methodology. The original framework used TSO SCADA data to set DUTs. EirGrid subsequently received feedback from customers that SCADA data is not visible to them and differs from billing meter data. EirGrid has now proposed three alternative DUT calculation options for the CRU's consideration.

Process and Deadline

The CRU has set a three week window for further representations and plans to issue a decision as a matter of urgency once it has assessed all responses. The request for further representations closes at 17:00 on 29 July 2026 and the CRU will not be able to facilitate any extensions or to consider responses submitted after the window has closed. Responses should be submitted through the CRU's dedicated portal.

The CRU is specifically seeking stakeholder views on EirGrid's assessment of alternative solutions to MPID 345, the business impact of the proposed modification and Framework, the impact of ongoing operational mitigation measures, TNEI's technical recommendations on both the modification and the Framework and EirGrid's proposed amendments to the DUT calculation methodology.

Please contact our Energy team with any queries.



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