Mainstream and AWEC to build 400MW portfolio in Alberta

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Ireland's Mainstream Renewable Power signed a joint-venture deal with Canadian wind farm developer Alberta Wind Energy Corporation (AWEC) to build a 400-megawatt (MW) portfolio of wind farms in Alberta by 2013.

Under the terms of the agreement, Mainstream will hold an 80% share of the joint venture, with AWEC holding the remainder. The joint company intends to have 46MW in operation by 2010, with another 62MW in place by 2012.

The 46MW Old Man River project, located in the Pincher Creek area of the province, is in the final stages of development and will be ready for construction in late 2009.

The 62MW Windy Point Wind Farm is expected to be fully operational by 2012.

"Our entry into the Canadian market is another significant achievement," says Mainstream chief executive Eddie O'Connor.

"As with our deal in Chile, once again we've partnered with a great local team, who are developing top-quality projects and who possess the local knowledge necessary to take them forward to completion."

AWEC chief executive Stewart Duncan says the news comes at a great time for Alberta, with electricity demands growing, and fossil-fuel-fired power plants coming to the end of their lives.

"A recent forecast by Alberta Electric System Operator indicated that Alberta will need an additional 5,000MW of generation by 2017," Duncan says.

"Furthermore, Southern Alberta has some of the best wind sites for power generation anywhere in North America."

Since February last year, Mainstream has raised a grand total of €98m ($125.6m) in equity and mezzanine finance, including a €20m equity investment from Barclays Capital and €26m in loan notes.