



Reviewing and improving our public consultation process

Appendix 1



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Appendix 1

EirGrid's Current
Approach to Consultation
in Project Development

EirGrid’s Current Approach to Consultation in Project Development

EirGrid’s Project Development and Consultation Roadmap (or “The Roadmap”) provides a strategic framework for the development and progression of its major electricity transmission infrastructure projects up to (and beyond) the application and consents stage. This Roadmap is intended to have a threefold purpose:-

To demonstrate a consistency of approach by EirGrid and its consultants in the planning and development of all large projects which require statutory consent –whether linear (e.g. lines) or site-based (e.g. substations);

To provide clarity to the public, stakeholders, and the consenting authority (An Bord Pleanála or the Planning Authority as relevant) about where a process or deliverable occurs at any stage, relative to overall project development;

To co-ordinate project deliverables and project progress with adequate and appropriate opportunity for public and stakeholder input at all stages of the process of shaping the development proposal;

The Roadmap constitutes a strategic framework for project development, with key stage objectives, milestones and opportunities for public and other engagement.

It is not intended that the Roadmap is used as an unduly inflexible process tool, such as must be rigidly adhered to; there will never be a “one size fits all” process for all types and scale of transmission infrastructure development across the country.

The Roadmap applies to the development of EirGrid’s major projects, including ongoing landowner engagement during wayleaving.

The Roadmap has five stages from receipt of Capital Approval through consenting of a proposal, to wayleaving and construction.

- Stage One: Information Gathering
- Stage Two: Evaluate Options
- Stage Three: Confirm Design
- Stage Four: Prepare Application
- Stage Five: Wayleaving and Construction

These are summarised on the following pages:-

Stage One: Information Gathering

Stage One is where the detail of the project scope begins to be defined, including in spatial terms. The focus is on presenting the project to the public, and consulting with the public in order to gather environmental and other information to inform and shape the project; dependent upon the scale of the project, this may be the longest stage of the Project Development and Consultation Roadmap.

No binding decisions are made in this Stage with regard to the final design of the project; however, EirGrid will have carried out internal technical studies, for example in particular regarding the technical nature of the development, or its general nature such as a connection between two existing nodes. The results of any such studies are clearly presented in the Stage One documents.

This Stage presents for public review and feedback what the Consultants consider, at that early point in time, to comprise feasible options in respect of meeting the requirements of the project, and having regard to environmental and other constraints within an identified study area. This may include the identification of what our Consultants consider as being the least constrained of these identified options, primarily from a technical and environmental perspective, to meet the strategic need for the project.

Objectives

- To identify and map a study area for the project;
- To identify and map environmental and other constraints within the study area;
- To identify potential route corridors/site location options;
- To prepare a Stage One Report which captures information gathered in this Stage, and may identify what the Consultants consider to be a least constrained option;
- To present key messages regarding the project to the public and stakeholders;
- To facilitate and obtain public/stakeholder input regarding the project.

Key Messages of Stage One

- a. This is an early stage of Information Gathering;
- b. no final decisions regarding the detailed siting of the project proposal have been made; the Consultant's identification of a least constrained option is one more piece of information to be considered by EirGrid in its subsequent evaluation process;
- c. public, stakeholder, and other input (including EirGrid's ongoing technical and environmental analysis) is invaluable and will inform the evaluation of options.

STAGE 1

Information Gathering

Identify Project
Study Area

Identify
environmental &
other constraints

Identify feasible
options
(corridor/sites)

Publication of
Stage 1 Report

Pre-application
consultation with
An Bord Pleanála

Public

Public and stakeholder
consultation on study
area and constraints

Public and stakeholder
consultation on
findings of
Stage 1 Report

Stage Two: Evaluate Options

Stage Two is where decisions regarding the detailed siting of the project begin to be made and endorsed by EirGrid. The focus is on evaluating options, including any modifications to a project arising, for example, from feedback from public and other consultation. There remains scope for ongoing public, stakeholder and other input to influence key decisions regarding design and siting of the proposal; however, it is the case that more binding decisions will be made as the project progresses through this stage, and it may become difficult to alter such decisions at later stages, which deal primarily with more detailed matters of siting and design.

Objectives

- To consider feedback arising from Stage One consultation;
- Where feasible and appropriate, to modify identified corridors/sites, for example in response to feedback, including documenting of rationale for such modification;
- To identify an emerging preferred indicative corridor/site;
- To identify a potentially feasible indicative line route within the identified preferred corridor, or site boundary within the preferred site area;
- Identification of, and initial engagement with landowners on the indicative route/site;
- To prepare a Stage Two report;
- To continue to present key messages regarding the project to public/stakeholders;
- To obtain ongoing public, stakeholder and landowner input regarding the project.

Key Messages of Stage Two:

- a. EirGrid has endorsed a preferred option;
- b. Public, stakeholder, and other input has informed the identification of the emerging preferred option;
- c. EirGrid is progressing to more detailed assessment of the emerging preferred option, in continuing dialogue with the general public and with identified landowners.

STAGE 2

Evaluate Options

Consideration of all feedback from
Stage 1

Identification of EirGrid's emerging preferred option (route corridor/site)

Identification of indicative line within corridor or site boundary

Identify and meet landowners of indicative line/site; initial survey

Publication of
Stage 2 Report

Pre-application consultation with An Bord Pleanála

Public

Public and stakeholder consultation on findings of
Stage 2 Report

Stage Three: Confirm Design

Stage Three generally occurs in parallel with Stage Four (see below). In this Stage, final decisions begin to be made by EirGrid with regard to the specific siting of the project. The focus is on land and site-specific technical and environmental survey and assessment, in pro-active dialogue with landowners to the greatest extent possible, practicable and appropriate.

Objectives

- To consider all feedback emerging from Stage Two consultation;
- To confirm a specific route/site which is intended to constitute the proposal;
- To continue to engage with landowners on the proposed route/site;
- To conduct environmental survey and assessment of the area of the proposal;
- To continue to present key messages regarding project to public/stakeholders;
- To move consultation process from information gathering to information giving.

Key Messages of Stage Three:

- a. EirGrid is progressing towards confirming a proposal and is concentrating its efforts to achieve this;
- b. There will be a greater focus on site-specific activity (such as technical design and environmental assessment), and associated landowner engagement;
- c. however, ongoing engagement with the public will always be facilitated

STAGE 3

Confirm Design

Consideration of all feedback from Stage 2

Conduct environmental studies and surveys

Confirmation of design of line/site proposal including construction methodology

Ongoing engagement with landowners on preferred line route or site

Pre-application consultation with An Bord Pleanála

Public

Ongoing public information

Stage Four: Prepare Application

As noted above, Stage Four generally occurs in parallel with Stage Three. In this Stage, the final proposal is shaped into an application for statutory consent in consultation with the determining authority (An Bord Pleanála in respect of Strategic Infrastructure Development, and the relevant Planning Authority in other cases – as directed by ABP). The focus is on finalising details of the proposal, and the application, including the environmental assessment.

Once the application has been submitted, a presumption is made that ABP will hold an Oral Hearing in respect of the proposed development (until and unless advised otherwise); this requires the formation of a strategy for the Oral Hearing, for example who should provide expert witness testimony, who should attend etc.

Objectives

- To prepare and submit a robust planning application for the proposed development;
- To undertake and prepare an adequate environmental assessment;
- To prepare for any Oral Hearing that might be held in respect of the application;
- To continue to present key messages regarding project to public/stakeholders:

STAGE 4

Prepare Planning Application

Complete reports and prepare planning application

Preparation of Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Report as required

Conclusion of Pre-application consultation with An Bord Pleanála

Submit application to An Bord Pleanála

Public

Ongoing public information

Once application submitted, public can make submissions to An Bord Pleanála including at an oral hearing, if held

Stage Five: Wayleaving & Construction

Stage Five involves the construction of a consented development.

This stage involves the preparation construction plans, environmental management plans, and detailed designs for the permitted development – essentially the details for what is to be constructed, where it is to be constructed, and the way it is to be constructed.

The construction of a electricity project is the responsibility of ESB Networks. However, EirGrid serves a formal wayleave on affected landowners. Prior to this formal process however, EirGrid will continue to engage informally with landowners, to agree matters such as access for construction, compensation etc.

Public information regarding the progress of construction of the project is also undertaken.

Finally, EirGrid undertakes an internal “lessons learned” to ensure that future projects benefit from the experience gained in developing a project.

Objectives

- To prepare and agree construction and other plans;
- To serve a formal Wayleave notice to affected landowners, generally following informal agreement of details;
- To ensure the timely construction, and eventual energisation of the project;
- To continue to present key messages regarding project to public/stakeholders;

STAGE 5

Wayleaving and Construction

Preparation of
construction plans

Serve wayleave notice
to landowners and
agree access for
construction

Commence
construction

Public

Ongoing public
information

Evaluation of Public
Consultation process



Notes

Notes

