



Part-funded by The EU-TEN-E Initiative

North-South 400kV Interconnection Development

Summary of Results of Activities Related to the Participation of the Public

Report Submitted by EirGrid to An Bord Pleanála in Accordance with Article 9(4) of EU Regulation No. 347/2013

PCI 0001

June 2015



A Trans-European Energy Infrastructure Project

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APPENDICES

- Appendix A Project of Common Interest – Public Information Leaflet (published on website –May 2015)
- Appendix B *Public Consultation Report (2008)*
- Appendix C Appendix A of the *Final Re-evaluation Report – Review of Issues Raised in Written Submissions to An Bord Pleanála and Presentations at the Oral Hearing in respect of the Previous Application for Approval (An Bord Pleanála Reference VA0006)*
- Appendix D Appendix B of the *Final Re-evaluation Report – Response to Submissions and Other Engagement arising during the Re-evaluation Report*
- Appendix E Chapter 2 of the *Preferred Project Solution Report*
- Appendix F Appendix C of the *Preferred Project Solution Report – The Final Re-evaluation Public Engagement Report*
- Appendix G Table 3.1, Table 3.2 and Table 3.3 of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* which show examples of how issues and modification requests related to potential modifications to the line route
- Appendix H Community Update Brochure – June 2015

1 PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF REPORT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This report is prepared in accordance with Article 9(4) of Regulation (EU) No. 347/2013 and summarises the results of activities related to the participation of the public prior to the submission of the application file for the proposed North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development.

EirGrid plc (EirGrid) and System Operator Northern Ireland Ltd (SONI) are jointly planning a major cross-border electricity transmission development between the existing high-voltage transmission networks of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The overall interconnection project (which is termed the 'proposed interconnector' for the purposes of this report), is a 400 kV overhead line circuit linking the existing 400 kV substation in Woodland, County Meath with a planned substation in Turleenan, County Tyrone. The North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development (the 'proposed development') comprises that portion of the proposed interconnector located within Ireland in counties Meath, Cavan and Monaghan.

1.2 DESIGNATION OF THE PROJECT AS A PCI AND REQUIREMENTS OF REGULATION 347/2013

Regulation (EU) No. 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (Guidelines for Trans-European Energy Infrastructure) was adopted on 21st March 2013 and entered into force on 1 June 2013. Under Article 3(4) of the Regulation, the European Commission was empowered to adopt delegated acts to establish the union list of projects of common interest (PCI's); this list forms an Annex to the Regulation. In this regard, Commission Delegated Regulation 1391/2013, issued on the 14th October 2013, identified the projects forming part of the first union list of PCI's. The Annex to the Delegated Regulation under the heading "2. Priority corridor North-South electricity interconnections in Western Europe ("NSI West Electricity")" lists at no. 2.13:

"2.13.1. Ireland – United Kingdom interconnection between Woodland (IE) and Turleenan (UK – Northern Ireland)"

This is the overall interconnection project (the proposed interconnector) and requires two separate applications; one application by EirGrid for the portion of the project in Ireland and a separate application for that portion of the project in Northern Ireland.

The planning of that portion of the proposed interconnector within Northern Ireland was originally undertaken by Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE). However, NIE was obligated by the European Commission to transfer its investment planning function (the 'Planning Function') to SONI. The SONI transmission system operator licence (the "Licence") was amended on 28th March 2014 to take account of the transfer of the Planning Function following a consultation process by the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (NIAUR). The Licence amendments took effect on 30th April

2014. Accordingly, responsibility for the planning application in respect of the proposed interconnector within Northern Ireland has been transferred from NIE to SONI.

The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), in its capacity as competent authority for PCI in the United Kingdom, has confirmed that the SONI application in Northern Ireland can avail of the transitional provisions of Article 19 of Regulation 347/2013 and therefore does not require to comply with Chapter III of the Regulation which includes the submission of a *Concept for Public Participation*.

An Bord Pleanála (the ‘Board’) has determined that the transitional provisions (Article 19) of the PCI Regulation (347/2013) do not apply to that portion of the overall interconnection project within Ireland, i.e. the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development. Therefore, the provisions of Chapter III of Regulation No. 347/2013 apply in respect of the development within Ireland, specifically Article 9 relating to Transparency and Public Participation and Annex VI “*Guidelines for Transparency and Public Participation*”.

1.2.1 PCI Notification and Acknowledgment

EirGrid submitted a notification under Article 10.1(a) of Regulation 347/2013 to the Board on 3rd June 2014 in respect of the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development.

An acknowledgement of the notification was received by EirGrid from the Board on 2nd July 2014 which confirmed that the Board considers the project as being “*mature enough to enter the permit granting process*”.

1.3 CONCEPT FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

On 31st July 2014 EirGrid submitted a ‘Concept for Public Participation’ for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development. This Concept was submitted to the Board in accordance with Article 9.3 of Regulation 347/2013 following the process outlined in the Board’s *Manual of Procedure for the Permit Granting Process* (May 2014)¹ and in accordance with Annex VI of Regulation 347/2013 which sets out the *Guidelines for Transparency and Public Participation in respect of projects designated as Projects of Common Interest*.

Annex VI of Regulation 347/2013 is entitled “*Guidelines for Transparency and Public Participation*” and Annex VI (4) stipulates that the concept for public participation shall at least include information about:

- (a) “*The stakeholders concerned and addressed –*
-

¹ This document was updated in September 2014 (*Projects of Common Interest - Manual of Permit Granting Process Procedure*).

- (b) The measures envisaged, including proposed general locations and dates of dedicated meetings*
- (c) The timeline*
- (d) The human resources allocated to the respective tasks.”*

The *Concept for Public Participation* includes all the above information. It describes the public consultation and public participation events which were undertaken in respect of the project since 2007 identifying terms of reference, participation methods, stakeholders concerned and addressed and measures adopted / envisaged for each consultation stage.

1.3.1 Modification and Publication of the Concept for Public Participation

The Concept for Public Participation as modified by the Board (comprising Concept for Public Participation Report and the Board’s correspondence of 10th September 2014) was published on the EirGrid Project website in accordance with the Board’s requirements as set out in its Manual (p. 19).

The modification of the Concept for Public Participation requested by the Board is set out below:

“An information leaflet of no more than 15 pages should be published by the project promoter containing, at a minimum, the following factual information:

- The history of the project to date;*
- Information regarding Regulation 347/2013;*
- The project status as a Project of Common Interest (PCI);*
- The main implications (benefits and obligations) arising from its status as a PCI;*
- Future project roadmap including an indicative date for lodgement of an application under Section 182A of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2014 and indicating the opportunities for public participation at this stage; and*
- An advertisement or advertisements should be placed in two national newspapers (The Irish Times and Irish Independent) notifying the public of the publication of this information leaflet and drawing attention to the scope of the project, the status of the project as a PCI and an indicative date for lodgement of an application under section 182A of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2014.”*

In arriving at this decision, the Board had regard to *inter alia* the planning history of the project and the extensive consultation and participation process undertaken by EirGrid before the start of the PCI permit granting process.

EirGrid subsequently published an Information Leaflet and advertisement on the 1st May 2015 which includes all the above information. This Information leaflet is included in **Appendix A**.

1.4 DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of clarity, the following terms and synonyms referred to within this report are defined within **Table 1.1**:

Table 1.1: List of Terms and Synonyms referred to within this Report

Term / Synonym	Meaning
Affected Party	Refers to the Contracting Party or Parties, in the context of the Espoo Convention, that are likely to be affected by the transboundary impact of a proposed activity (Convention, Art. 1(iii)) or a Party or Parties to this Protocol likely to be affected by the transboundary environmental, including health, effects of a plan or programme (Protocol, Art. 2.4).
Consultation²	The dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon a genuine exchange of views, with the clear objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action.
Consultee	The individual or organisation that responds to a consultation or participates in consultation exercises.
Community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People living in a defined geographical area, or who share similar interests and concerns. 2. A community is a specific group of people who all hold something in common. Community has tended to be associated with two key aspects: firstly people who share locality or geographical place; secondly people who share a common interest.
Engagement and Community Engagement	The process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the wellbeing of those people.

² Jones, Rhion and Gammell, Elizabeth (2009). *The Art of Consultation – Public Dialogues in a Noisy World*.

Term / Synonym	Meaning
Landowner	Owners of landholdings on, or over, which the proposal is located. Prior to the identification of the preferred route will also include the owners of landholdings which although not directly impacted by the current proposal have a property boundary located within 50 metres of the centreline of the indicative line route.
Landowner Agent	Is the person who primarily deals with engagement with landowners.
Participation	<p>Participation is the proactive facilitation of an environment that is conducive to consultation and refers to the involvement of stakeholders within the consultation and / or engagement processes.</p> <p>Public participation for the project was also formulated by EirGrid having regard to the UNECE <i>Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters</i>.³</p>
Public Concerned	The public concerned in the context of the Aarhus Convention are those persons or organisations affected or interested in environmental decision-making.
Stakeholder	An individual, group or party that either affects or is affected by an organisation, policy, programme or decision. In the case of this report, it refers to those individuals, groups or parties that are affected by the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development.
Statutory Consultation	Statutory consultation is run in accordance with legal requirements and by the relevant authorities in advance of them making decisions for the project to proceed.
Terms of Reference	This refers to the parameters within which the scope of consultation / engagement is defined. These are clearly set out at the start of any period of focused public engagement and consultation so that stakeholders clearly understand what input they can have and how they can participate within the process of consultation / engagement.
Transboundary Consultation	Refers to the process of consultation with cross border countries in the context of Member States with projects that are common to one or more countries. In the context of this project, transboundary consultation refers to consultation that has been undertaken / will be undertaken with Northern

³ Available at <http://www.unece.org>

Term / Synonym	Meaning
	Ireland, United Kingdom e.g. the Northern Ireland Department of the Environment (DOENI).
Transparency	<p>Ensuring that all aspects of a consultation, from the information given, to the reporting of the conclusions and their effects, are clearly accessible to all stakeholders.</p> <p>Transparency is assisted with the provision of clear, documented Terms of Reference for the consultation or engagement, as was the practice implemented by EirGrid on its consultation for the project to date.</p>

2 ARTICLE 9.4 OF REGULATION (EU) NO. 347/2013 AND LAYOUT OF THIS REPORT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Article 9.4 of Regulation (EU) No. 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2013 (Guidelines for Trans-European Energy Infrastructure) sets out:

“The project promoter shall prepare a report summarising the results of activities related to the participation of the public prior to the submission of the application file, including those activities that took place before the start of the permit granting process. The project promoter shall submit that report together with the application file to the competent authority. Due account shall be taken of these results in a comprehensive decision”.

This document is submitted to An Bord Pleanála (‘the Board’) in accordance with Article 9.4 of Regulation 347/2013. It specifically focuses on *“the results of activities related to the participation of the public”* in respect of the project since 2007 and as described in the *Concept for Public Participation Report*. For each of the key stages or strands of consultation the results (described in **Chapters 3 to 7**) are addressed in terms of:

- The level of participation i.e. the method of stakeholder feedback and number of submissions;
- The nature of feedback i.e. identification of key issues / themes arising during public consultation activities;
- Responses to issues raised during public participation i.e. how EirGrid responded to feedback through *inter alia* extending participation activities, written correspondence, publication of project material etc.; and
- How feedback influenced project development.

It should be noted that consultation activities in respect of this project occurred over an extended period i.e. 2007 to 2014. During this time issues raised by stakeholders will have been recorded and categorised differently having regard to *inter alia* the terms of reference for the particular consultation phase.

It should also be noted that consultation with prescribed authorities including the three local authorities has occurred prior to the submission of the previous application for planning approval and has also occurred in respect of the proposed application; however, it is not specifically detailed in this report.

The layout of this report is that it addresses the result of activities relating to the participation of the public in the following matters:

Chapter 3: Activities during the period 2007-2010;

Chapter 4: Activities during the Re-Evaluation Process (2010-2013);

Chapter 5: Activities relating to the Preferred Project Solution Process (2013);

Chapter 6: Landowner Participation Activities (2007 – 2014); and

Chapter 7: Consultation and engagement activities post the period of consultation on the preferred project solution (December 2013) and prior to the submittal of the planning application

3 RESULTS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN DURING THE PERIOD 2007 – 2010

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Section 4.2 of the *Concept for Public Participation Report* outlines the pre-application consultation and public engagement phases undertaken to inform the previous application made to An Bord Pleanála (the Board) in December 2009. These can generally be described as follows:

- Phase 1 - introduced the public to the proposed project, the proposed route corridor options and the basis for proposing these options and sought submissions from the public on such proposals (October 2007 – May 2008);
- Phase 2 – focused on the announcement of the ‘Preferred Route Corridors’ and ‘Indicative Line Routes⁴’ for the Cavan-Tyrone and Meath-Cavan projects and sought submissions from the public on same (March 2009 – July 2009); and
- Phase 3 and 4 – ran in tandem and involved on-going consultation in respect of the assessment of the ‘Indicative Line Routes’ and preparation of the planning application (August 2009 – lodgement of planning application in December 2009).

The purpose of the first phase of consultation was to introduce the public to the proposed project, the proposed route corridor options and the basis for the same (with reference to constraints). It sought to provide the public with information on the project and in seeking submissions from the public sought to identify concerns of the public and stakeholders. It also allowed stakeholders to provide feedback on the three identified 1km wide corridor options for consideration by the project team, as well as on the principle of overhead lines (OHL) versus underground cables (UGC) for consideration by the project team. This is captured in the 2009 indicative roadmap (Figure 3.2 in the *Concept for Public Participation Report*).

The second phase of consultation focused on the announcement of the preferred route corridors and indicative line routes to the public. It also advised that EirGrid would be contacting landowners along the indicative line routes.

The third and fourth phases of consultation ran in tandem and involved on-going consultation in respect of the assessment of the indicative line routes and preparation of the planning application.

⁴ The history of the project included two inter related constituent elements (i.e, the Cavan – Tyrone 400 kV Interconnector Project and the Cavan – Meath 400 kV Transmission Circuit Project) hence reference to ‘indicative line routes’.

Also of relevance to public participation during this stage of the project is the formal statutory consultation which occurred as part of the Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) application for approval process which occurred between December 2009 and June 2010.

3.2 PHASE 1: STRATEGIC CONSTRAINTS SCOPING (OCT 2007 – MAY 2008)

3.2.1 Level of Participation

The EirGrid project team engaged with the public through the phone line, letters, feedback forms, emails, open days, and meetings. The level and breakdown of submissions received is detailed in **Table 3.1**

Table 3.1: Level of Public Participation on the Strategic Constraints Scoping Phase*

Method of Stakeholder Feedback	Number of Submissions
Telephone Line	1,200
Feedback Forms	4,410
E-mails	939
Written Submissions	1,009
Individual Petition Signatories	2,596
Open Days**	800+
Small Group Meetings	220 people invited
Total	11,174+

* Excludes engagement with landowners by landowner agents which is addressed separately in **Chapter 6** of this report.

** First series: 11th, 16th and 17th October – over 500 stakeholders in attendance and Second series: 27th and 28th November 2007 – over 300 stakeholders in attendance

This level of participation should be seen in the context of the combined 2006 population for Monaghan, Cavan and Meath of 282,650.⁵

3.2.2 Nature of Feedback

From the engagement with the public during this period the EirGrid project team was able to build up a picture of the recurrent issues for stakeholders in respect of this project.

⁵ Based on the combined 2006 population for Monaghan, Cavan and Meath (source: CSO).

Table 3.2 categorises the issues raised by stakeholders during this period and provides an overview of key locations and areas of interest and concern. This is taken from *Public Consultation Report* (2008) included in **Appendix B**.

Table 3.2: Issues Rose during the Route Corridor Options Phase

Issues	Summary
Schools and Crèches	The main concern was proximity of the proposal to such facilities.
Ecology and Nature	<p>The main concern was for the wildlife and areas of natural beauty within the route corridors. Recognised areas of protection, including wildlife sanctuaries, were identified. Although many species were identified as species of concern - those highlighted were bats and Whooper Swans. Specific lakes utilised by Whooper Swan were also identified as places that could be impacted by the proposed development.</p> <p>Other concerns included the impact of the proposal on the visual amenity of the area, including woodlands, the drumlin landscape and bog lands. Local angling clubs also raised the impact of the proposal on the amenity of rivers.</p>
Heritage and Listed Buildings	<p>Many people raised concerns about the proximity of the proposal to heritage and listed buildings including parochial houses, castles, abbeys, graveyards, and historic hills. Further concern was raised in respect of thatched cottages.</p> <p>General concerns were raised from stakeholders in the project area about historic sites including special sites of archaeological interest, such as ring forts and heritage woodlands.</p>
Culture and Sport	<p>Cultural and sports organisations, such as GAA clubs and golf clubs, raised concerns regarding the impact of the proposed development on their organised recreational activities including future expansion plans. Members of the Gaeltacht community groups also actively opposed the proposal on the grounds of disruption to the natural and cultural heritage in the area.</p> <p>A very significant number of contacts were received from people voicing their concern over the possibility of the power lines being built near healing centres in the area.</p> <p>Members of the public also drew attention to cultural activities in their localities such as harvest festivals and street fairs.</p>
Tourism and Development	<p>Property developers highlighted their concerns in respect of the negative visual impact of the proposal on their land and specifically on current and future development proposals.</p> <p>Tourist facilities also highlighted the negative visual impact of the proposed power lines and potential to reduce the number of tourists visiting the area.</p>

Issues	Summary
Livestock and Racehorses	<p>Concerns relating to potential impacts on racecourses and cattle, the welfare of poultry and other animals (such as greyhounds) were also mentioned.</p> <p>Some parts of the route were identified as being close to popular areas for the breeding of racehorses. Breeders were very concerned about the health of their animals citing potential miscarriages as a huge loss of income.</p> <p>Cattle and dairy farmers also voiced concerns with regard to the health of their herds. Specific concerns regarding potential to affect beef research were also raised with reference to health implications for the study herd.</p>
Mining and Airfields	<p>A small number of stakeholders raised the issue of mining operations in the area and the potential impact blasting could have on the power lines.</p> <p>Airfields and flying clubs also raised concerns about the proposal interrupting flight paths.</p>

3.2.3 Responses to Issues Raised during Public Participation

Written submissions (by letter and e-mail) were responded to with an answer that addressed queries and concerns brought up. Relevant information materials including the 'Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)' and 'EirGrid Update' brochures, the 'Information on EMF' booklet, and general project information leaflets were included in letter responses, where necessary. Most queries were responded to promptly, but as the consultation process progressed, a number of in-depth, intricate queries requiring detailed and studied responses were required.

Furthermore, through the phone line (i.e. the EirGrid reception and customer relations lines) and Open Days, EirGrid and the EirGrid project team engaged with a wide public audience and sought to provide responses to all queries raised – directly or in subsequent follow up contact.

Discovering the key issues from the phone line, letters, feedback forms, emails, and open days, and meetings enabled the EirGrid project team to produce appropriate public information leaflets to deal with particular themes. A selection of relevant publications is provided in **Table 3.3**.

Table 3.3: Publications influenced by Feedback from the Strategic Constraints Scoping Phase

Publication Name	Date Issued	Purpose
EMF Booklet	November 2007	<p>In response to public participation and queries raised in respect of potential health impacts, EirGrid produced a booklet addressing the topics of EMF (electric and magnetic fields) and health. The booklet identified technical details of EMF and in particular the various field strengths that occur on different OHL and UGCs. It identified and discussed the findings of recent studies on EMF and concluded with EirGrid's commitment to safeguard public health.</p> <p>These booklets were distributed to members of the public at meetings and open day events and also were made available on EirGrid's website.</p>
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	January 2008	<p>In response to public participation and queries raised EirGrid produced an FAQ document which aimed to respond to common queries raised by members of the public and to clarify some aspects of the project which had raised concerns with the public.</p> <p>The FAQ document was posted to members of the public in February 2008 and also made available on EirGrid's website.</p>
PB Power Preliminary Briefing Note	February 2008	<p>EirGrid commissioned a <i>Preliminary Briefing Note Overhead and Underground Energy Transmission Options</i> prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff. This summarised in general terms the technical and cost issues associated with each option. It preceded a comprehensive project specific and route specific comparative analysis of the options that was also carried out by Parsons Brinckerhoff and which was published in February 2009.</p> <p>The briefing note was available on the EirGrid website and posted on request to stakeholders.</p>

3.2.4 How Feedback Influenced Project Development

A number of reports and studies commissioned by EirGrid during this phase (i.e., the Strategic Scoping Stage (October 2007 to May 2008)) were informed as a result of feedback from stakeholders. An example of this includes the publication of the EMF brochure in November 2007. The reports are identified in **Table 3.3**.

Feedback from stakeholders also informed the project communications strategy for the project. In this regard, EirGrid responded to stakeholder feedback to expand its consultation activities in the project study area. As a result of the positive reception to the first round of open days and interest in more information on the project, a second round of events was planned and took place. These took the same format as the first series of open days with information materials available and the project team on hand to answer people's questions (refer to Section 4.2 of the *Concept for Public Participation Report*). Another important development was the opening of the Project Information Offices in Navan and Carrickmacross in August 2008, which gave local people the opportunity to discuss plans for the proposed development with members of the EirGrid project team (refer to **Section 3.3**).

3.3 MAY 2008 – DECEMBER 2009 (INCLUDING PHASES 2, 3 AND 4)

These phases occurred after the announcement of the preferred route corridor and indicative line route to the public in April 2009. However, prior to this (between May 2008 and March 2009) the EirGrid project team continued to engage with the public through the phone line, letters, feedback forms, emails and meetings. EirGrid also released a number of technical reports in order to provide stakeholders with project information as it evolved.

Furthermore, as noted above, in order to facilitate further engagement with the public and strategic stakeholders during this period, EirGrid opened two Project Information Offices in the project area – one in Carrickmacross, County Monaghan and one in Navan, County Meath. In April 2009 EirGrid published a community update brochure entitled *EirGrid Progresses 400kV Power Line Projects to Next Phase*. This document announced the preferred route corridors (Route Corridor 3B for the Meath-Cavan Project and Route Corridor A for the Cavan-Tyrone Project) and an indicative line route. EirGrid provided details on how the preferred route was identified, including the technical criteria that were used, and how the consultation process informed EirGrid's conclusions. Through use of the Indicative Project Roadmap (refer to Section 3.3.4 of the *Concept for Public Participation Report*), EirGrid clarified for stakeholders where the project was set to go next and it invited stakeholders to engage in the consultation process. EirGrid also commenced consultation with landowners at this time on the indicative line route (refer to **Chapter 6** for further details).

In July 2009, EirGrid published a further *Community Update Brochure* entitled *EirGrid is moving Towards the Final Preparation of the Planning Application*. It invited public participation so that the opinion of the public concerned could be considered and taken into account, prior to the preparation and submission of the planning application.

3.3.1 Level of Participation

During the period between May 2008 and April 2009 the EirGrid project team continued to engage with the public through the phone line, letters, feedback forms, emails and meetings. Throughout the spring of 2009, stakeholders also sent in a large volume of correspondence that included six series of standard questions, plus detailed questions on a range of other issues. EirGrid continued to engage with the public after the publication of the preferred route corridors and indicative line routes (i.e. April 2009) when focused landowner engagement commenced (refer to **Chapter 6**). Such engagement continued up to submission of the application for approval in December 2009.

3.3.2 Nature of Feedback

From the engagement with the public during this period a wide range of technical and environmental issues were raised. The key issues continued to relate to undergrounding, property devaluation and health, however, other more intricate queries requiring detailed and studied responses included those relating to heritage, bloodstock, and angling.

The publication of an indicative line route in April 2009 also provided the public and landowners with additional detail in relation to the nature and location of the proposed development which resulted in *inter alia* specific queries on environmental aspects of the proposed development.

3.3.3 Responses to Issues Raised during Public Participation

Every effort was made to address and respond to queries raised by stakeholders through various consultation methods, including brochures, meetings, press releases, further investigation with technical specialists, research, and reporting, and open days, for instance.

Of particular note, throughout this period, the EirGrid project team released a number of technical reports in order to provide stakeholders with information on the project as it evolved. The reports *inter alia* were commissioned in response to requests for further study by stakeholders. The aim of each of these reports was to show stakeholders how their considerations were taken on board and to provide them with feedback on any queries raised. In addition, EirGrid also provided reports that helped to explain the consultation process further and where this project fits in to the overall grid development strategy. These reports and other project information materials were made available to stakeholders in the Project Information Offices, on the EirGrid website and posted on request.

The first series of technical reports was published in May 2008 and included:

- EirGrid (April 2008). *Cavan – Tyrone 400 kV Transmission Line and Meath – Cavan 400 kV Transmission Line - Policy on the Use of Overhead Line and / or Underground Cable for these Projects*;
- Socoin and TOBIN Consulting Engineers (July 2007 and September 2007). *Meath-Cavan Constraints Report - Kingscourt to Woodland Constraints Report Volume 1 and Constraints Report 1 - Addendum Report*;
- ESBI and AOS Planning (July 2007 and September 2007). *Cavan-Tyrone Constraints Report - Route Constraints Report and Route Constraints Report Addendum Report*;
- Cigré (May 2008). *Cigré Survey of 380 kV to 500 kV Overhead Transmission Lines*;
- Strategic Roadmap;
- RPS Planning and Environment (2008). *Strategic Planning Context*;
- RPS Group and Mary Murphy Associates (2008). *Public Consultation Report*;

Additional technical reports were published in December 2008, February 2009 and throughout 2009 and included:

- Tobin Consulting Engineers and ESBI (2008). *Response to Submissions and Reports Received since May 2008*;
- Tobin Consulting Engineers (2008). *Whooper Swans Reports (Meath-Cavan and Cavan-Tyrone)*;
- RPS Planning and Environment (2008). *Strategic Issues Review*;
- EirGrid (2008). *Grid25 – A Strategy for the Development of Ireland’s Electricity Grid for a Sustainable and Competitive Future*;
- Parsons Brinckerhoff (February 2009). *Parsons Brinckerhoff Comparison of High Voltage Transmission Options Report. Cavan – Tyrone and Meath – Cavan 400 kV Transmission Circuits. Comparison of High Voltage Transmission Options: Alternating Current Overhead and Underground and Direct Current Underground*;
- EirGrid (2009). *Progression towards Phases 3 and 4 Report*; and
- RPS Planning and Environment (2009). *Tyrone-Cavan Interconnector & Meath Cavan Transmission Circuit – Corridor Evaluation Document*.

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- Socoin and TOBIN Consulting Engineers (2008). *Response to An Bord Pleanála Route Comparison Report*;
 - Socoin and TOBIN Consulting Engineers (2008). *Kingscourt to Woodland 400 kV Power Line Response to Failte Ireland*; and
 - Tepco (2009). *Assessment of the Technical Issues relating to Significant Amounts of EHV Underground Cable in the All-island Electricity System*.

Furthermore, during 2009, EirGrid produced a *Questions and Answers* document (July 2009) which aimed to answer additional queries that stakeholders had asked in a comprehensive manner in particular in respect of heritage, bloodstock, and angling. Other reports published at this time on foot of stakeholder feedback included *Locating 400 kV in or Adjacent to Rail Beds (Railbed Report)*, July 2009).

EirGrid, while providing feedback in writing if requested, also encouraged stakeholders to avail of a face-to-face meeting with the project team. EirGrid reiterated to stakeholders that the project team was available to meet with them and answer their queries at their convenience.

3.3.4 How Feedback Influenced Project Development

Feedback of relevance to the line route and environmental aspects of the proposal was reviewed and considered by the project team in the preparation of the final line design and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). In this regard, the primary means of responding to any relevant / new issues raised during this period of consultation (and those relevant from previous consultation activities) was through the content of the planning application for approval and EIS which was submitted to An Bord Pleanála in December 2009.

A summary review of key issues raised during consultation activities between 2007 and 2009 in respect of the project, and where EirGrid responded to issues arising, including the 2009 EIS, is set out in **Table 3.4**. This table was included as Table 3.5 in Volume 1 of the *Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development Environmental Impact Statement* (2009).

Table 3.4: Review of Issues raised between 2007 and 2009 and where they were dealt with in Project Related Documents

ISSUE	CONCERN RAISED	EIS CHAPTER OR RELEVANT EIRGRID DOCUMENT
TECHNICAL		
Undergrounding	OHL versus UGCs	Referenced in EirGrid documentation including Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB Power) <i>Cavan-Tyrone and Meath-Cavan 400kV Transmission Circuits Comparison of high-voltage transmission options: Alternating current overhead and underground and direct current underground</i> (Feb 2009) and Tokyo Electric Power Company of Japan (TEPCO) Technical Study on using EHV UGC as alternatives to OHL (Oct 2009).
Railroad Corridors, Motorways	Should be developed in conjunction with and on state-owned land, such as railway corridors and motorways, in order to group infrastructure.	Volume 1, Chapter 5 of the 2009 EIS;
		Referenced in EirGrid documentation including: <i>Locating 400kV cables in or Adjacent to Rail Beds Report</i> (Railroad Report), July 2009
Route location	Concerns that corridors should have looked farther west and towards the Irish Sea. Felt a more direct route could be found.	Volume 1, Chapter 5; Volume 2, Part A, Chapter 3, Part B, Chapter 3 of the 2009 EIS.
		Referenced in various EirGrid documentation (refer to Volume 1, Chapter 5 for all references) of the 2009 EIS.
Route decision	Concerns that route was pre-decided and that the preferred route corridors were already known.	Volume 1, Chapters 5 of the 2009 EIS.
		Referenced in EirGrid documentation (refer to Volume 1, Chapter 4 of the 2009 EIS for all references)
PERSONAL		
Health/EMF	Issues with health risks from EMFs that are emitted from power lines.	Volume 1, Chapter 3; Volume 2, Part A, Chapter 6, Part B, Chapter 6 of the 2009 EIS.
		Referenced in EirGrid documentation: Information on Electric and Magnetic Fields

ISSUE	CONCERN RAISED	EIS CHAPTER OR RELEVANT EIRGRID DOCUMENT
		Booklet; Dear Householder leaflet; FAQs January 2008.
Electromagnetic Interference	Concerns that power lines would interfere with television and mobile phone reception. Issues with pacemaker interference.	Volume 2, Part A, Section 2.6.3, Part B, Section 2.6.3 of the 2009 EIS.
Property Devaluation	Concerns that property prices would fall as a result of proximity to power lines.	Referenced in EirGrid documentation: Questions and Answers
Property Development	Concerns that future development of land will be inhibited by power lines.	Referenced in EirGrid documentation: FAQ Brochure, Questions and Answers
Livestock, racehorses, and farming	Health concerns for livestock, including racehorses; concerns about sterilisation of land.	Referenced in EirGrid documentation: EMF Booklet, FAQ Brochure, Community Update Brochure July 2009, Questions and Answers
Consultation Process	Concerns if consultation process was inclusive.	Volume 1, Chapter 3 of the 2009 EIS. Referenced in EirGrid documentation: Questions and Answers, July 2009, Community Update Brochure March 2009, FAQs, January 2008, Proposed Route Corridor Options Brochures (October 2007).
ENVIRONMENT		
Endangered Species/SACs	Whooper Swans, Smooth Newts, Bats, Atlantic Salmon, Brent Geese, Marsh Fritillary.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapter 7, Part B, Chapter 7 of the 2009 EIS. Referenced in EirGrid documentation: Questions and Answers, July 2009; Community Update Brochure, March 2009; FAQs, January 2008.
Visual Impact	Concerns that natural landscape would be impacted by power lines, issues that smaller, "more modern" designs could be used or line could go underground.	Volume 1, Chapter 4; Volume 2, Part A, Chapter 14, Part B, Chapter 14 of the 2009 EIS.

ISSUE	CONCERN RAISED	EIS CHAPTER OR RELEVANT EIRGRID DOCUMENT
		Referenced in EirGrid documentation including: Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development: Tower Outline Evaluation and Selection Report (Oct 2009)
Drumlins, bogs, loughs, and woodlands	Issues regarding the protection of areas of natural heritage, including SACs and SPAs.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapters 7, 8, 9, 12, and 14; Part B, Chapters 7, 8, 9, 12, and 14 of the 2009 EIS. Referenced in EirGrid documentation: Proposed Route Corridor Options Brochures (October 2007); FAQs January 2008; Community Update Brochure March 2009.
Noise pollution	Concerns that excessive noise would come from power lines.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapter 11, Part B, Chapter 11 of the 2009 EIS. Referenced in EirGrid documentation: Questions and Answers July 2009, FAQs January 2009.
Water, rivers	Issues regarding water crossing, effects on breeding animals in lakes and rivers.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapters 7 and 9, Part B, Chapters 7 and 9 of the 2009 EIS. Referenced in EirGrid documentation: Proposed Route corridor Options Brochures (October 2007), FAQs January 2008, Community Update Brochure March 2009
COMMUNITY		
Tourism	Concerns regarding potential negative impact to tourism in the area.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapters 5 and 14, Part B, Chapters 5 and 14 of the 2009 EIS. Referenced in EirGrid documentation including: "Kingscourt to Woodland 400 kV Power Line Response to Fáilte Ireland" (Nov 2008)
Proximity to dwellings	Issues regarding proximity to buildings, including schools, crèches, and homes.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapters 5, Part B, Chapter 5 Referenced in EirGrid documentation:

ISSUE	CONCERN RAISED	EIS CHAPTER OR RELEVANT EIRGRID DOCUMENT
		FAQs January 2008; Questions and Answers, July 2009; Community Update Brochure March 2009; Community Update July 2009.
Heritage and Listed Buildings	Issues regarding visual impact on protected buildings.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapter 14, Part B, Chapter 14 of the 2009 EIS. Referenced in EirGrid documentation: Proposed Route Corridor Options Brochures (October 2007), FAQs January 2008; Community Update Brochure March 2009.
Cultural and Sport	Concerns over negative impact to GAA clubs, golf courses, and healing centres in terms of health and proximity.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapter 5, Part B, Chapter 5 of the 2009 EIS.
Gaeltacht Communities	Concerns over negative impact to Gaeltacht communities, in terms of health, heritage, and proximity.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapter 14 of the 2009 EIS.
Mining and Airfields	Issues regarding low-flying airplanes and power lines, concern for mining disturbances to the power lines.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapters 5 and 8 of the 2009 EIS.

3.4 STATUTORY CONSULTATION PERIOD DECEMBER 2009 – JULY 2010

3.4.1 Level of Participation

As set out in Section 4.2.1 of the *Concept for Public Participation Report* approximately 940 written submissions or observations by members of the public and by prescribed authorities were received by the Board in respect of the application for planning approval for the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development (An Bord Pleanála Reference VA0006) which was lodged on 18th December 2009. A copy of each of these submissions was sent to EirGrid by the Board.

In May 2010, the Board commenced an oral hearing in respect of the previous application for planning approval. Both prescribed authorities and interested parties (to include new parties to the application) had the opportunity to make an oral submission to the hearing. In total, 155 oral submissions were made during the course of the oral hearing.

In June 2010, the EirGrid application was withdrawn. Therefore, the application for planning approval was not determined by the Board. A summary of the level of participation during the statutory consultation stage is provided in **Table 3.5**.

Table 3.5: Level of Public Participation during the Statutory Consultation

Method of Stakeholder Feedback	Number of Submissions
Written Submissions	940
Oral Submissions	155
Total	1,095

3.4.2 Nature of Feedback - Written Submissions

EirGrid carried out a comprehensive review of the 940 written submissions or observations to identify the issues raised and to appropriately categorise each of those issues under the key specialist topic areas, as shown in **Table 3.6**. These topics related to various aspects of the proposed development and the contents of the application documentation, including the topics assessed within the EIS. Grouping issues together under the specialist topics ensured that matters raised in public participation and from the prescribed authorities were reviewed and appropriately addressed by the relevant EirGrid project team member.

Each written submission was assigned an identification reference number and a matrix of all the written submissions and the category of topics raised in each was created. Details of the output of this process, accompanied by explanatory notes on the topics and the types of issues raised, are included within this report as **Appendix C**. These details were provided in Appendix A of the *Final Re-evaluation Report*, published in April 2013 (refer to **Chapter 4**, of this report).

Table 3.6: Issues Raised in Public Participation and by Prescribed Authorities in Submissions Made in respect of the Previous Application for Planning Approval

	Topic Heading	Type of Issues Raised
1	Air, Noise and Vibration	Potential impacts arising from noise associated with the proposed pylons, transmission line and substation.
2	Application Documentation	Various procedural aspects of the application documentation, including, costs of purchasing the documents, queries relating to mapping, photomontages etc.
3	Consideration of Alternatives	Issues relating to undergrounding as an alternative to OHL, route alternatives (including disused railbed and the M3), substation site alternatives, other technology options and tower design options.

	Topic Heading	Type of Issues Raised
4	Construction	Construction techniques and safety considerations.
5	Consultation and Public Participation	Issues included observations relating to consultation with the public, stakeholders, landowners and prescribed authorities.
6	Cultural Heritage	Potential impacts relating to archaeology, architectural heritage, demesnes etc.
7	Flora, Fauna and Fisheries	Potential impacts relating to wildlife, flora, fauna (including whooper swans), trees, fisheries, etc.
8	Health	Potential impacts relating to health generally and EMF in particular.
9	Landscape and Visual Impact	Potential impacts relating to the visual impact of the proposed pylons, transmission line and substations and observations in respect of particular landscape types (e.g. local bogs, forestry etc.).
10	Legal	Observations relating to access rights for construction, maintenance and survey work, compensation and owner's rights. Also included observations relating to Strategic Infrastructure and EIA and Appropriate Assessment legislation (including <i>inter alia</i> , consideration of alternatives, transboundary and micro-siting ⁶).
11	Material Assets	Potential impacts relating to the impact of the proposed development on farming practices, the community, tourism and livelihoods.
12	Project Need	Issues including demand and policy provisions relating to the proposed development.
13	Operational	Operational issues.
14	Planning Context	Observations relating to national, regional and local development plan policy.
15	Property	Issues relating to Chapters 1 (General Introduction) and 2 (The Strategic Need for the Project) of Volume 1 of the EIS and the Planning Context Report.
16	Traffic	Potential impacts relating to the impact of the proposed development on the road network, access points, etc.
17	Soils, Water and Geology	Potential impacts relating to the impact of the proposed development on geology, soils, rivers and lakes.

⁶ In the previous and withdrawn application for planning approval, permission was sought within the statutory consent for flexibility to move tower positions within specified limits during the construction phase. This was referred to as 'micro-siting'. Micro-siting is not being sought as part of this current application.

3.4.2.1 Response to Key Issues Raised in Written Submissions of the Public and Prescribed Authorities

As with the feedback obtained from the public and other stakeholders prior to the submission of the first application for planning approval, categorisation of submissions ensured that the appropriate member of the EirGrid project team reviewed the issues raised by the public and prescribed authorities' participation. On completion of this process, the appropriate EirGrid project team member prepared a statement of evidence to be delivered at the oral hearing.

The statements prepared took cognisance of the issues raised within the consultation process and, where a submission raised a specific issue or query which had previously not been addressed within the contents of the application, the issue was specifically responded to within the statement of evidence.

Accordingly, having considered the submissions made to the Board, the primary means by which EirGrid replied to the issues raised by the public and prescribed authorities was by providing responses in the statements of evidence presented by the EirGrid project team at the oral hearing.

3.4.3 Nature of Feedback and Response to Key Issues Raised - Oral Submissions

The issues raised during the oral hearing were also categorised by EirGrid in accordance with the topics outlined in Table 2.3 of Appendix A of the *Final Re-evaluation Report* (included as **Appendix C** of this report). The appropriate member of the EirGrid project team reviewed the issues to determine whether the matter should be considered further with reference to the questioning of evidence. Due to the withdrawal of the application for approval during the course of the oral hearing, there was no opportunity to respond to relevant or new issues raised during oral submissions. This feedback was however considered and reviewed by EirGrid when the project re-commenced during the re-evaluation process (described in **Chapter 4** of this report).

4 RESULTS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES AND THE RE-EVALUATION PROCESS (AUGUST 2010 – APRIL 2013)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Following the withdrawal of the previous application, the evolution and consultation for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development has comprised three structured periods of consultation and engagement as follows:-

- **The Preliminary Re-evaluation Phase** – 1st stage of a two stage re-evaluation approach. The formal consultation period was from 9th May 2011 to 1st July 2011.
- **The Final Re-evaluation Phase** – 2nd stage of a two stage re-evaluation approach. The formal consultation period was from 16th April 2013 to 27th May 2013.
- **The Preferred Project Solution Phase** – Consultation on the preferred project solution. This consultation period was from 16th July 2013 to 9th September 2013.

Section 4.4 of the *Concept for Public Participation Report* outlines the consultation undertaken in respect of the preliminary re-evaluation of the project. This had the objective of ascertaining whether the scope, content, conclusions, and proposal of the previous application for approval of the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development remained relevant for the purposes of informing and shaping a new application for approval. The process included a re-evaluation of *inter alia* need, study area, technical, environmental, routing and cost-effectiveness of the proposals. Preliminary draft development proposals were generated and the draft proposals and review process were published in a *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report*.

All submissions, both verbal and written, received from the public and landowners and other key stakeholders on foot of the preliminary re-evaluation phase were considered by the project team. Further environmental and technical assessments were also undertaken in consultation with key stakeholders and these informed modifications to the design proposal. This all occurred between July 2011 and April 2013. A further period of public participation which sought feedback on the findings of the *Final Re-evaluation Report* took place from April 2013 to May 2013. Section 4.5 of the *Concept for Public Participation Report* outlines the engagement activities undertaken in respect of the final re-evaluation of the project.

On publication of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* another focused period of consultation took place.

To address the specific concerns of landowners, a separate and tailored parallel consultation process for landowners was provided by EirGrid. Refer to **Chapter 6** of this report.

4.2 PRELIMINARY RE-EVALUATION PHASE (2011 – 2013)

4.2.1 Level of Participation

A total of 18 No. written submissions were received from stakeholders during the consultation and public participation period held in respect of the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report*. These submissions primarily comprised of private individuals (a number of whom were also landowners) within the area of the Indicative Line Route, as identified in the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report*. Submissions were also received from prescribed authorities and other organisations. A summary of the written submissions received is provided in **Table 4.1** which replicates Table 1 of Appendix B of the *Final Re-evaluation Report* (entitled *Review of Issues Raised in Written Submissions to An Bord Pleanála and Presentations at the Oral Hearing in respect of the Previous Application for Approval (An Bord Pleanála Reference VA0006)*). All submissions were allocated a specific reference number (e.g. FS-1, FS-2 etc.). The statutory bodies and other organisations that made submissions were specifically acknowledged. However, in the context of legal obligations in respect of data protection, information which might reveal the identity of private individuals/landowners was not detailed.

Table 4.1: Written Submissions Received during the Public Consultation Process in respect of the Preliminary Re-evaluation Report

Submission No.	Submission Body	Statutory Body / Organisation Detail
FS-1	Private Individual	
FS-2	Landowner	
FS-3	Landowner	
FS-4	Landowner	
FS-5	Statutory Body	NRA
FS-6	Landowner	
FS-7	Landowner	
FS-8	Statutory Body	Monaghan County Council
FS-9	Organisation	NEPP
FS-10	Organisation	Sinn Fein
FS-11	Organisation	Monaghan Anti-Pylon Committee
FS-12	Organisation	AMP/SAFE
FS-13	Private Individual	
FS-14	Private Individual	
FS-15	Private Individual	

Submission No.	Submission Body	Statutory Body / Organisation Detail
FS-16	Organisation	Doohamlet District Community Development Association
FS-17	Private Individual	
FS-18	Private Individual	

4.2.2 Nature of Feedback

The nature of the feedback received was documented by EirGrid within Appendix B of the *Final Re-evaluation Report*. The key issues raised within the 18 No. written submissions included the following:

- Over-grounding versus undergrounding transmission infrastructure;
- Evidence of superior technical advances and alternatives;
- Identification of the study area;
- Potential health related impacts of overhead pylons and EMF;
- Potential impact on landscape and visual impact;
- Potential impact on property values;
- Potential impact on tourism and sporting activities and businesses reliant on income from such activities;
- Potential impact on ecology;
- Methodology of the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* and for corridor evaluation used during the re-evaluation process;
- Modifications made to the route alignment;
- M3 motorway near Grange, Co. Meath;
- Line design;
- Choice of transmission technology;
- EirGrid's authority to transmit electricity over private property;

- Proximity of the project to homes, schools and places of work;
- The relationship between the proposed Interconnection Development, and the Government's strategic transmission infrastructure plans and wind development proposals and how they connect to the grid;
- Issues relating to Aarhus Convention; and
- Calls for a halt to further wind development pending an investigation by a variety of technical specialists.

4.2.3 Responses to Issues Raised during Public Participation

In Appendix B of the *Final Re-evaluation Report*, the EirGrid project team sought to provide a comprehensive response to specific and detailed issues raised in the 18 No. written submissions on the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report*. These are set out in Section 2 of Appendix B of the *Final Re-evaluation Report*, and referenced by submission number. Where issues were referred to in general terms in the submissions, Section 4 of the report sets out the manner in which EirGrid and the project team has addressed such submissions as a result of consideration of the same. This included issues of relevance for the detailed design and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) stages in the project development process e.g. the likely ecology, landscape and agronomy impacts associated with the development. Appendix B of the *Final Re-evaluation Report* is included as **Appendix D** to this report.

EirGrid addressed the feedback submitted by NEPP and the Monaghan Anti-Pylon Committee (referenced as submissions FS-9 and FS-11 in Appendix B of the *Final Re-evaluation Report*) and in doing so also provided a written response to each of the key points raised in their submissions.

4.2.4 How Feedback Influenced Project Development

Further to feedback from stakeholders, EirGrid informed all stakeholders that the initial consultation period, lasting six weeks and due to expire on 17th June 2011, had been extended by a further two weeks to 1 July 2011. EirGrid considered that this additional period of time would permit on-going engagement to continue, where necessary, and to allow meetings to occur in the instances where engagement had yet to take place.

EirGrid had regard to the submissions and feedback on the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report*. While taking into account the feedback, EirGrid and its consultants considered that the identified Route Corridor Options A and 3B remained the least constrained (and thereby preferred options) from a technical, environmental and community perspective. Furthermore, no issues were identified that would significantly alter the general alignment of the indicative line route within Route Corridor Options A and 3B as identified in the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report*. However, a number of local

modifications to the indicative alignment, arising from *inter alia* the process of landowner engagement in respect of the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* were identified.

In addition, a number of issues were raised in submissions on the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* which it was considered should be better clarified in the *Final Re-evaluation Report* by means of additional or revised explanatory text. These are set out in the individual responses included within Appendix B of the *Final Re-evaluation Report* included as **Appendix D** to this report.

Other feedback related to the amount of information being presented to stakeholders. Arising from specific feedback from County Monaghan Anti-Pylon Committee (CMAPC), EirGrid agreed to separate the *Final Re-evaluation Report* and the dissemination and consultation on the indicative line route. This was achieved through the publication of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* and the separate consultation phase associated with it.

4.3 FINAL RE-EVALUATION (2011 – 2013)

EirGrid held a six-week period of public participation (between 16th April 2013 and 27th May 2013) following the publication of the *Final Re-evaluation Report* in April 2013. During this period, EirGrid sought feedback from the public and landowners on the report's content and key findings. EirGrid welcomed any feedback received and advised the public that responses received would be considered in the preparation of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* which would be published for consultation in due course. As noted above, this additional period of consultation was in response to representations from the County Monaghan Anti-Pylon Committee. This resulted in EirGrid's decision to separate the publication and engagement on the *Final Re-evaluation Report* and the consultation on the *Preferred Project Solution Report*. This also enabled EirGrid to gather feedback on the *Final Re-evaluation Report* and this feedback was reviewed and considered by the project team prior to the publication of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* in July 2013.

The terms of reference for engagement on the *Final Re-evaluation Report* are detailed in Section 4.5.1 of the *Concept for Public Participation Report*. During the final re-evaluation stage, EirGrid also consulted with the public and landowners in respect of community gain issues following the publication of the Government's *Policy Statement on the Strategic Importance of Transmission and Other Energy Infrastructure* in July 2012. In particular, EirGrid sought feedback on how best to adopt community gain within transmission project development and the Grid25 programme in general.

4.3.1 Level of Participation

Details of the submissions received as part of consultation on the *Final Re-evaluation Report* are provided in **Table 4.2**.

Table 4.2: Public participation during the *Final Re-evaluation Report*

Method of Stakeholder Feedback	Number of Submissions
Project Briefing/Meeting	18
Information Centres & Telephone Line	22
Written submissions (including email)	58
Open Days (First Series)	70
Open Evening Events (Monaghan) (Second Series*)	500
Total	668

*This additional period of consultation was in response to representations from the County Monaghan Anti-Pylon Committee for additional consultation on the findings of the re-evaluation process.

4.3.2 Nature of Feedback

Chapter 2 of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* (published by EirGrid in July 2013) provided a high level summary of the main issues raised in public submissions on the *Final Re-evaluation Report*; it also included EirGrid's response to these issues. A more detailed summary of the issues raised was published in Appendix C of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* (entitled *The Final Re-evaluation Public Engagement Report*). Both Chapter 2 of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* and Appendix C of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* are included as **Appendix E** and **Appendix F** to this report respectively. An overview of the issues is provided in **Table 4.3**.

It should be noted that submissions received from public authorities on the *Final Re-evaluation Report* were collated from written submissions and meetings and were summarised together with an EirGrid response in Table 2.4 of the *Preferred Project Solution Report*.

Table 4.3: Nature of Feedback on the *Final Re-evaluation Report*

Category of Submission	Details
Submissions received from prescribed authorities on the <i>Final Re-evaluation Report</i>	Refer to Chapter 2, Table 2.4 of the <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i> for details (i.e. Appendix E of this report)
Submissions received from other stakeholders on the <i>Final Re-evaluation</i>	<p>A number of submissions raised issues that were of relevance to, or in response to, the <i>Final Re-evaluation Report</i>. These related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Need / Scope • Alternatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Environmental and Cost Comparisons of UGC versus overhead lines OHL; ○ Routing suggestions for UGC; ○ Reference to international examples and advance in technology; and ○ Other options to meet the need of the project • Study Area, Corridor Identification and Corridor Evaluation
Submissions relevant to the <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i> (i.e. the proposed line design)	<p>A number of submissions raised specific concerns or enquiries in respect of the alignment of the planned circuit, including potential localised modifications to, or siting of, the alignment as well as in relation to access during construction.</p> <p>Other relevant issues included structure design and locations, proximity to dwellings and other receptors, and operation of the line.</p>
Submissions relevant to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process	<p>As part of the re-evaluation consultation, issues of relevance to EIA were raised. Details of specific observations, constraints and considerations raised by stakeholders and of potential relevance for the EIA stage broadly fell under the following headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agronomy; • Community and Socio-Economic Impact; • Cumulative Impact; • Cultural Heritage & Archaeology; • Ecology; • Health; • Landscape and Visual Impact; and • Noise.

Category of Submission	Details
Submissions on community gain	As set out in the terms of reference for public engagement on the <i>Final Re-evaluation Report</i> , EirGrid sought feedback on how best to adopt community gain within transmission project development and the Grid25 programme in general. A number of stakeholders provided feedback on this issue.
Submissions on other issues	A number of submissions also raised general issues relating to the project. These were grouped under the following headings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public engagement; • Planning; • Compensation; and • Property.

4.3.3 Responses to Issues Raised during Public Participation

Written submissions received (via post, open day, email) were acknowledged in writing by EirGrid, thanking the stakeholder for taking the time to submit their feedback. Details of all oral submissions, received via the project information centres, open day events, during discussions with stakeholders/landowners were recorded in as much detail as possible. The details of the discussions were collated under themes for the project team to subsequently review.

The chosen response reflected the initial engagement contact method and the available contact details for the stakeholder in question. Using one method of engagement did not preclude the use of another; instead, all methods of engagement were used, but their use was determined based on the most appropriate response, the needs of the stakeholder, and the issue at hand.

Chapter 2 of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* entitled '*Public and Stakeholder Engagement*' provides a summary of the engagement activities and feedback following the publication of the *Final Re-evaluation Report*. Further details are provided in the *Final Re-evaluation Public Consultation Report*, included as Appendix C to the *Final Re-evaluation Report*. This is included as **Appendix F** to this report.

4.3.4 How Feedback Influenced Project Development

All the feedback from the public was considered and taken into account and the *Final Re-evaluation Report* concluded that, on the basis of the re-evaluation of updated environmental constraints and other information, a viable and environmentally acceptable indicative line route for a 400 kV overhead

line (OHL) exists. It also concluded that there are no significant implications which would warrant the use of underground cable (UGC) along any part of the indicative line route.

The process by which landowner modification requests received were managed and dealt with is provided in **Chapter 6** of this report which also addresses landowner engagement. Similarly, any feedback from stakeholders (non-landowners) which had implications on the line design of the project was documented and considered by the project team.

Examples of modification requests received are presented in Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 of the *Preferred Project Solution Report*. These tables are included as **Appendix G** to this report. These tables show where and why particular modification requests resulted in changes to the preferred project solution and ultimately the final line design.

More specific queries on environmental aspects were also raised. This feedback was also reviewed and considered by the project team in the preparation of the EIS.

5 RESULTS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES AND THE PREFERRED PROJECT SOLUTION PROCESS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The *Preferred Project Solution Report* (PPSR) was published in July 2013 and sought to:

- Consult with members of the public and other stakeholders on matters to be considered in the EIS;
- Consult with members of the public and other stakeholders on the preferred project solution;
- Provide members of the public, landowners and other stakeholders with information on the project, line design and the progression towards a planning application; and
- Ensure that all relevant stakeholders had appropriate access to information and the project decision making process well in advance of the application being submitted to An Bord Pleanála (the 'Board').

Following the publication of the *Preferred Project Solution Report*, EirGrid held an eight-week period of formal public consultation (between Tuesday 16th July 2013 and Monday 9th September 2013). The terms of reference for this stage of public and landowner engagement are set out in Section 4.6.1 of the *Concept for Public Participation Report*.

A wide range of communications activities were organised during this period to facilitate as wide an engagement as possible and were directed towards members of the public, stakeholders and landowners. Details of these activities are also set out in the *Concept for Public Participation Report* (Section 4.6.2). An updated *Community Update Brochure* (July 2013) to reflect the current status of the project and details of how stakeholders could engage with EirGrid was published in July 2013.

During this stage, EirGrid engaged with landowners on the preferred line route, proposed tower locations and indicative construction access routes. A process was put in place to evaluate and manage landowner modification requests received. Engagement with landowners is described separately in **Chapter 6** of this report.

5.1.1 Level of Public Participation

The number and method of receipt of submissions during the formal public consultation stage following publication of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* is detailed in **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1: Level of Public Participation on the *Preferred Project Solution Report**

Method of Stakeholder Feedback	Number of Submissions
Information Centres and Telephone Line	35
Written Submissions (including email)	27
Open Days ⁷	62
Total	124

* Excludes engagement with landowners by landowner agents which is addressed separately in **Chapter 6** of this report.

5.1.2 Nature of Public Feedback

For the purposes of review and assessment by the project team the issues raised by stakeholders in submissions were categorised as follows having regard to the terms of reference for the consultation.

- Submissions relevant to the *Preferred Project Solution Report*;
- Submissions relevant to the EIS (including community and socio-impact, proximity to dwellings and other receptors, property, compensation, cumulative impact, and cultural heritage);
- Submissions relevant to the planning application;
- Submissions relevant to construction and access routes methodology;
- Submissions relevant to community gain;
- Submissions relevant to line design;
- Submissions relevant to the public consultation process; and
- Any other feedback or comments or other issues relating to the project.

Feedback on site-specific issues raised by landowners during the process of landowner engagement was addressed by EirGrid's project team on a case-by-case basis as part of the consideration of change requests submitted by landowners (described in **Chapter 6** of this report). During the course of this engagement, landowners also raised other feedback and / or issues of concern which were relevant to the wider consultation. The issues raised by landowners were broadly consistent with

those raised by members of the general public and stakeholders. However, details of other feedback / issues received from landowners that relate specifically to them are provided in **Chapter 6** of this report.

A number of submissions were received from prescribed authorities (prescribed as formal consultees to the application process in the *Planning and Development Act, 2000*, (as amended)) during consultation on the *Preferred Project Solution Report*. The EirGrid project team proactively engaged with prescribed authorities during this stage. The issues raised by prescribed authorities have been captured as part of the identification of matters to be considered in the EIS, consultation exercises undertaken by EirGrid and the scoping of the EIS carried out by the Board and are set out in Chapter 3 (Scoping the EIS) of Volume 3B of the EIS which accompanies the application for planning approval.

A summary of the issues raised in submissions is provided in **Table 5.2**.

⁷ This number is based on the number of attendees who registered their presence at the events.

Table 5.2: Nature of Public Feedback Received on the Preferred Project Solution Report

Nature of Issue	Summary Details of Issues Raised
Submissions relevant to the <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some submissions welcomed the fact that EirGrid would not be seeking permission for ‘micro-siting’ of towers in its application to the Board. • Concerns were raised that landscape and environmental design considerations and constraints are prioritised at the higher preferred route corridor level, while at line design stage, technical and landowner considerations have been prioritised. • It was suggested that the project should not go ahead in its proposed format and greater consideration should be given to undergrounding the line. Others considered that the project will have to be constructed overhead as in their opinion the underground issues are unknown. • Some stakeholders considered that their previous submissions had not been appropriately addressed in the responses provided by EirGrid in the <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i>. Others questioned where the feedback reported in Appendix C of the <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i> had been answered by EirGrid. • Queries were received in relation to the grounds upon which the route proposed in the <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i> was chosen.
Submissions relevant to the EIS: Matters stakeholders felt should be included in the EIS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of the issues related to the potential impact of the proposed development on the environment. • In relation to matters which stakeholders felt should be included as part of the EIS, the following submissions were received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Potential impact of the project on flight paths of hot air balloons and aviation should be considered as part of the EIS, given feedback that County Meath is the ballooning capital of Ireland with many private pilots also based in the county; ○ Potential impacts on human and animal health; and ○ Some submissions received considered that the EIS should assess property devaluation.

Nature of Issue	Summary Details of Issues Raised
EMF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public concerns about the potential health impacts of the proposal continued to be an on-going issue raised during this consultation. Stakeholders queried what the levels of EMF would be if the line was undergrounded. Particular concerns were raised in respect of the potential adverse health impact on school children attending schools in proximity to the line. A distance of 285 metres from a school was considered too close. • Stakeholders suggested that EirGrid could avoid health impacts on local communities by putting the project underground. • Specific queries and concerns raised included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feedback from stakeholders living near existing overhead transmission power lines which they considered to be a risk factor for childhood acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, risk of damage to DNA, cancer, neurodegenerative disease and miscarriage; and ○ Request for data or references for peer reviewed publications for epidemiological work carried out, or supported by EirGrid or its predecessor, on the impact of 400 kV lines in Ireland.
Flora and Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns continued to be raised about the welfare of animals and wildlife in proximity to the line. Stakeholders were concerned about the potential impact of the proposal in particular on birds. Specific ecological sites and features that stakeholders felt should be considered by the project team included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The impact on hedgerows and trees; and ○ The impact on birds.
Cumulative Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some submissions were received in relation to the potential cumulative impacts of the proposal when considered with other proposed developments. Specific examples included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cumulative impacts of the proposal with proposed new residential development in proximity to their location; ○ Stakeholders stated that they had engaged in discussions with developers of wind turbines and were interested in discussing the potential impact that the line may have on wind turbine proposals; and

Nature of Issue	Summary Details of Issues Raised
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some stakeholders expressed their concern regarding the cumulative impact of the proposal along with proposed development of wind turbines and felt that this proposal is only being built to accommodate the construction of wind turbines in Ireland.
Cultural Heritage and Archaeology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Concerns were raised regarding the project’s potential impact on cultural heritage and archaeological sites in proximity to the preferred line route and tower locations. Specific sites that stakeholders felt should be considered by the project team included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ring forts in proximity to the preferred line route; ○ Neolithic site at Montag lake with details of archaeological surveys of Neolithic sites requested; ○ Crannog within Whitewood Lake; ○ The Boyne Valley; ○ Trim Castle; ○ Heritage sites in Cruicetown / Nobber, Whitewood and Brittas House; ○ Bective area; ○ Archaeology in Teltown; and ○ Local heritage features located on landowner lands including forts.
Community / Socio Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Concerns were raised about the effect that the project is having on the people of the local communities in proximity of the line. Many stakeholders identified distress and worry which they considered the project has caused, while others said they felt that their lives have had to be put on hold since 2007. ● Many stakeholders advised that they object to the project due to the impact of overhead power lines on residential amenity. ● A number of stakeholders raised concerns about being seen to engage with EirGrid, with many landowners advising

Nature of Issue	Summary Details of Issues Raised
	<p>that they did not want to agree to provide access for surveys as they did not want to go against the community. While some acknowledged and appreciated the need for the project, they expressed concern in respect of public pressure and unrest within the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders expressed concern in respect of the proximity of the proposed line and tower locations to community facilities, including children’s recreational areas and schools. Schools cited included those at Muff, Corlea and Scoil Naomi Mire Neoga. Concerns included potential loss of attendees and staff members on the basis of potential health issues and the perceived adverse impact of EMF on human health. • Submissions were received in respect of the local road network and whether money would be invested in this network following construction of the project. • It was considered by some stakeholders who operate businesses within the area that the project will adversely impact upon their business, particularly those who rely on income generated by visitors who travel and stay within the area to visit heritage sites. Examples of such locations included the Boyne Valley, Teltown and Trim Castle. Examples of businesses included a hot air ballooning company, bed and breakfast tourist accommodation and a helipad operations business.
Landscape and Visual Impact	<p>General concerns regarding potential visual impact, how the project would impact upon the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views of the countryside from their land and / or dwelling; • The landscape and visual quality of areas, in particular potential adverse impacts on the drumlin landscape; and • Impact arising from tree cutting as a result of the project. <p>Specific concerns and enquiries relating to landscape and visual impact received included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed development would negatively impact upon the residents and members of the community and that its landscape and environs are being sacrificed for the protection and prioritisation of other areas; • Enquiries regarding the height of the structures;

Nature of Issue	Summary Details of Issues Raised
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many stakeholders considered that the proposed tower design and ‘IVI Tower’ looks worse than existing pylons; • Numerous stakeholders expressed concern regarding the potential proximity of structures to their dwelling houses and some advised how the project will be visible to them from all viewpoints within their dwelling house and / or farm; • Concern was raised from some stakeholders that structures would be positioned on the highest viewpoints within their area and questioned why tower structures were proposed in drumlin areas; and • Stakeholders expressed frustration in respect of planning applications submitted for development of residential dwellings in the area which were refused, yet EirGrid could propose power lines and tower structures in elevated areas.
Noise	<p>Stakeholders expressed concerns regarding the potential noise impacts they considered the project would introduce to areas in proximity to the preferred line route and tower structures.</p> <p>Specific feedback relating to the issue of noise included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns in respect of the noise which will come from the power lines. Submissions were received which stated that adverse noise impacts were currently experienced in close proximity to power lines, particularly during wet weather conditions; • Specific concerns raised in relation to potential noise impacts on sensitive noise receptors, including people with an autism diagnosis; • A number of stakeholders expressed their concerns relating to potential adverse noise impacts on their family, particularly when combined with the noise they already experience from existing infrastructure in their location, including power lines and the M3 motorway; and • Submissions in relation to the potential noise of the proposed structures and line with some submissions asking for details of the noise that may result from specific distances from the line, including the aural sound intrusion in decibels at distances of up to 300 metres from the line.

Nature of Issue	Summary Details of Issues Raised
<p>Submissions relevant to the planning application</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of stakeholders enquired about the process of the preparation of the planning application and questioned when EirGrid will be submitting the application. Stakeholders asked how the planning process would be undertaken and who would ultimately decide whether the project would go ahead or not. • A number of stakeholders who had made submissions in relation to the previous application sought an explanation of what had happened with the previous application, including why the oral hearing had stopped. Others stated they felt the previous EIS was a weakness of the application. • Enquiries were also made about the planning process in Northern Ireland and submissions questioned the current status of that application. • Many stakeholders who attended the open day events came to register their objection to the project and considered that it should not go ahead as it goes against the wishes of the community. Conversely, other submissions advised that they are in favour of the project and have no objection to it going ahead and advised that they are in favour of progress. Submissions were received which questioned how objections could be made and whether they should be made to the local authorities or to An Bord Pleanála. • Some stakeholders stated that, whether EirGrid gets planning permission or not, they will not permit pylons on their land. • Some stakeholders who had inherited their farms and who intend to pass their farms onto the next generation in turn stated that they do not want this inheritance compromised by what they perceive to be carcinogenic pylons.
<p>Submissions relevant to construction and access routes methodology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The construction process and land access were raised in a number of submissions and, during the project information Open Day events, a number of stakeholders discussed site-specific access issues in relation to their landholding and / or location. Some examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Submissions containing and / or referencing areas where access may be a problem, for example fields with steep and / or narrow access; ○ Submissions enquiring whether any disturbed land will be returned to its original state;

Nature of Issue	Summary Details of Issues Raised
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some stakeholders questioned how EirGrid proposes to gain access to lands where people are objecting to the proposal and, given the media coverage in the Anglo Celt, which reported that the proposal goes against the interests of farmers; ○ Submissions which asked if EirGrid is proposing to drive heavy machinery through lands; ○ Submissions were received in respect of ESB and its construction of lines in the past where it was suggested land had been destroyed by construction activities; ○ Some stakeholders advised that they were satisfied with the proposed access tracks; and ○ Some stakeholders discussed their experience of construction of similar proposals in Scotland.
<p>Submissions relevant to community gain</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A number of stakeholders provided feedback relating to community gain during the consultation on the preferred project solution. This feedback predominantly related to enquiries on the principle of community gain, suggestions and feedback in respect of who should receive community gain and who should manage the fund. Specific feedback included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That the principle of community gain is a good one and would be very positive for the local community. Stakeholders questioned what EirGrid could do for the community; ○ Community gain funding should be made available to local, community services in proximity to the line route, including scouting and sporting organisations. Specific examples of proposed and on-going developments by these organisations were submitted which included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A new scout den for Kingscourt Scout Club; - A purpose built community centre at Magheraclone which the submission described as a large and diverse parish currently lacking in modern leisure and social facilities; - Magheraclone Gaelic Football Club’s Development Plan which includes plans for developing a new playing pitch; and

Nature of Issue	Summary Details of Issues Raised
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed District Councils could be used to oversee the delivery of community gain
Submissions relevant to line design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many submissions expressed concerns relating to the proximity of the line route to dwelling houses or other receptors. A large number of the attendees at the project open days requested measurement of the exact distance from their dwelling house or other receptor to the preferred line route and / or tower structures. In relation to the line design and the proposed siting of tower structures, submissions related to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Many stakeholders stated their opposition to plans for the project in its proposed format and advised that they did not agree with the preferred line design; ○ Some felt that the proposed positioning of tower structures on their land is disproportionately closer to their property as opposed to other landowners; ○ Many stakeholders were unhappy to find out that the preferred project solution had resulted in additional pylons proposed on their land compared with the 2009 proposal and considered that they had been allocated an unfair amount of structures; ○ Some stakeholders asked if the line route and tower locations displayed at the open days and in reports were final and whether changes to the design were possible; ○ Some stakeholders questioned why tower structures were proposed in the middle of fields and requested an explanation for why towers were removed from hedgerows, compared with the 2009 proposal; ○ Enquiries regarding the heights of the tower structures proposed and the distances between the towers; ○ Submissions received to relocate tower structures as its proposed location would obstruct access to the remainder of their landholding; ○ Enquiries in respect of how low the wires can drop between masts, i.e. clearance distances; and ○ Submissions which asked why the line route was proposed in proximity to their dwelling instead of positioning it near farmhouses where nobody is living.

Nature of Issue	Summary Details of Issues Raised
<p>Submissions relevant to the public consultation process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was felt by some stakeholders that the project is not in compliance with the Aarhus Convention. Some participants were of the view that the consultation was not meaningful and that it was simply a public relations exercise. A number of stakeholders expressed the opinion that EirGrid does not listen to the views and feedback of the people. County Monaghan Anti-Pylon Committee (CMAPC) considered that its facilitation of additional events in County Monaghan in May 2013, and which were attended by over 500 people including landowners, was an exercise it would not have undertaken had it been realised that the events were for the purposes of public engagement and not for public consultation. • CMAPC considered EirGrid had not taken on board the significant volume of concerns and feedback raised at the events. Having subsequently met with their members, it was stated that landowners had expressed disappointment regarding the events held in May 2013 and were unanimously of the opinion that any further consultation regarding pylon locations would be futile. • Many stakeholders who contacted the phone line and / or the open day events advised that EirGrid does not listen to the concern of the public citing that if EirGrid had done so, the project would be underground and would have been built by now. • Some stakeholders expressed concern about where NEPP obtain their information and felt that it was important to hear both sides of the argument. They explained that this was why they had attended the open day. • Some submissions requested information on what national consultation process has taken place to allow the proposal to be considered. • Some participants suggested that local parish bulletins should be used to advertise information on the open days while others commented that the <i>Community Update Brochure</i> did not provide information about the health issues of the project. • With reference to communication and engagement with landowners, many submissions were received which enquired as to how landowners were being contacted and whether they were providing access to EirGrid for surveys. Some stakeholders questioned why EirGrid had produced brochures for landowners but not for residents.

Nature of Issue	Summary Details of Issues Raised
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some stakeholders considered that the mapping displayed and/or provided for the project gave the perception that the line was further away. • Some members of the public attended the open days as they had heard about the project on the radio and wanted to find out more about the project and what EirGrid does. • Some submissions expressed the view that it is pointless to talk to EirGrid and that EirGrid does not listen to people who have said all along that they want the project to be located underground. • A submission was received which considered that all publications relating to the development should be made publicly available in the Irish language and requested that all information made available henceforth by EirGrid, be it information published online, publicly or on the internet, be made available in Irish. • Submissions were received in relation to the locations of the information centres with some submissions questioning why the information centres had closed in September.
Any other feedback or comments or other issues relating to the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders expressed concerns regarding the potential impact of the project on property values, loss of development potential and future development restrictions which may arise as a result of the project. Some participants requested letters from EirGrid to confirm that planning approval for a house on their lands would not be affected by the proposal. A number of stakeholders advised that they felt that their property (farm and/or house) would be devalued. Some felt that devaluation could be as much as 30% of the current value. Submissions received from the public living near existing power lines advised that property values have dropped to the point where they cannot give their houses away. Some participants asked for details of the arbitration process which EirGrid propose to use to assess compensation for residents whom they felt will have devalued properties as a result of the project. • Concerns were raised that land would become sterile as a result of the proposal and many landowners expressed concern in respect of potential loss of development on their lands and also in respect to future planting of trees. • Some stakeholders asked if development of new housing was possible near the proposed line route and tower structures and whether there would be an issue with obtaining planning permission for same.

Nature of Issue	Summary Details of Issues Raised
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants felt that EirGrid should provide compensation as a result of property devaluation and some stakeholders requested that EirGrid purchase their property as compensation for the project. Frustration in respect of the project was raised with stakeholders advising that had they known about the project that they would not have invested time and money into their property. Other participants stated that they had located to rural locations to escape the noise and infrastructure of the city. • Submissions were received from some stakeholders potentially interested in purchasing property in the area who wished to obtain details about the project, specifically the location of the line route and tower structures in proximity to their property of interest. • Submissions were received which advised how land was given to people by their parents and how they intended to pass it onto their children and future generations and that they did not wish the inheritance of their children to be compromised by the proposal. • A number of submissions questioned the nature and extent of the compensation package on offer for the siting of tower structures on land and for over-sail of OHLs. People questioned specifically how much money they would be paid and how these payments would be taxed. Some submissions indicated that the stakeholder would accept a number of tower structures. • Some stakeholders considered that adjoining landowners should also receive compensation for the project.

5.1.3 Responses to Issues Raised during Public Participation

Calls to the project information line were managed by the project team and stakeholders were provided with responses to their queries. In cases where a response was not readily available, or where the issue raised required consideration and review by the EirGrid project team, a record of the discussion was captured in respect of the concern / query, and these were in turn reviewed by the project team.

EirGrid acknowledged receipt of written submissions received (via post and email), and stated that the issues raised would be reviewed and considered by the project team.

Incoming queries were responded to directly by the project team and any queries which required technical responses or specific information were directed to the appropriate technical specialist for review and consideration. Requests for specific information by members of the public, for example a bespoke map illustrating the proposed location of the line route and / or tower structure in proximity to a dwelling house, were prepared and issued by the project team.

Table 5.3 provides information on the key issues and concerns of the public consultation on the *Preferred Project Solution Report* and an indication of where these are addressed in the EIS and / or supporting information submitted by EirGrid to the Board as part of the planning application.

Table 5.3: Key Concerns of the Public Consultation on the Preferred Project Solution Report and an Indication of Where These are Addressed in the EIS and / or Supporting Information Submitted by EirGrid to An Bord Pleanála as part of the Planning Application

Issue	Concern / Issue	EIS Chapter or Relevant EirGrid Document
Proximity to dwellings	Issues relating to proximity of the proposal to homes, schools, community facilities and businesses.	<i>Human Beings - Population and Economic</i> Chapter of the EIS.
Heritage sites	Concerns relating to potential adverse impacts on tourism amenity.	<i>Cultural Heritage and Human Beings – Tourism and Amenity</i> Chapter of the EIS.
Community and sport	Impact on local community amenities and sporting clubs.	<i>Human Beings – Tourism and Amenity</i> Chapter of the EIS.
Visual impact	Visual impact on landscape and visual amenity, drumlin landscape.	<i>Landscape</i> Chapter of the EIS.
Noise pollution	Noise impact from the power line.	<i>Air – Noise and Vibration</i> Chapter of the EIS.
Ecology	Impacts on birds, wildlife, fisheries, water quality.	<i>Flora and Fauna</i> Chapter of the EIS & Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

Issue	Concern / Issue	EIS Chapter or Relevant EirGrid Document
Health / EMF	EMF, Cancer, Miscarriage.	<i>Human Beings – EMF</i> Chapter of the EIS; 'EMF and You' Booklet and project FAQs.
Property Devaluation	Devaluation of property.	EirGrid FAQs and Planning Report, which accompanies the application for planning approval.
Property development	Concerns about the loss of ability to apply for planning permission in the future for development (e.g. new dwellings on family owned land).	Planning Report, which accompanies the new planning application.
Livestock and farming	Concerns issues of landowners outlined in chapter 6 of this report.	<i>Human Beings - Land Use</i> Chapter of the EIS.
Undergrounding	OHL Versus UGC.	<i>Transmission and Technology Alternatives</i> Chapter of the EIS.
Route location	Location of the preferred line route.	<i>Route Alternatives</i> Chapter of the EIS.

5.1.4 Impact of Public Participation

EirGrid reviewed and considered the submissions made by the public, landowners and other stakeholders during the course of the consultation on the Preferred Project Solution, and also feedback received during consultation on the *Final Re-evaluation Report*, where much of the feedback related to the detailed design and environmental impact of the proposal.

On foot of the submissions and feedback received, the EirGrid project team made a number of modifications to the design of the final project solution.

These modifications were made in line with feedback received from landowners who engaged with EirGrid as part of consultation on the design of the line route, the siting of tower structures and construction access routes. This is discussed in more detail in **Chapter 6** which describes the engagement undertaken with landowners and the outcome of the engagement, including the modifications made to the line route arising from change requests submitted by landowners.

The guidelines used by EirGrid for dealing with modification requests are set out below:

- All reasonable design change requests were technically and environmentally assessed along with assessment of landowner considerations;
- In order to be implementable, suggested design changes had to:
 - Meet the general line design requirements⁸ (this included the environmental and technical considerations identified in Section 3.3.2 of the *Preferred Project Solution Report (July 2013)*);
 - Must not have resulted in an undue greater impact for nearby or adjoining dwellings / sensitive receptors;
 - Should minimise the number of macro⁹ changes required to the overall line design; and
 - Should be confined, where possible, to the landowner's property.

A balanced judgement was made based on technical, environmental and other considerations.

5.1.5 Impact of Public Participation on the Matters Considered in the Environmental Impact Statement

The issues raised in certain submissions received, *inter alia*, during the consultation on the preferred project solution, have been considered by the EirGrid project team during the preparation of the current application for planning approval and in the preparation of the accompanying EIS and, where relevant, the NIS.

Chapter 3 (Volume 3B) of the EIS, which accompanies the planning application for approval, presents a summary of how the consultation process has informed the preparation of the new planning application and the EIS including consultation with prescribed authorities. Volume 2B of the planning application also presents a comprehensive summary of public and landowner consultation activities undertaken throughout the project.

⁸ Priority was given to modifications to ensure compliance with relevant legislation (Codified Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive 2011/92/EU) and Habitats Directive ((92/43/EEC)).

⁹ Representing a significant change over several hundred metres which has generally resulted in additional angle masts

6 RESULTS OF LANDOWNER PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Section 4.9 of the *Concept for Public Consultation* briefly outlines the separate and parallel consultation strategy EirGrid undertook since May 2011 which specifically focused on landowners.

Landowners were identified at an early stage as an important group of the public concerned with the proposed development. At all stages of the project, the EirGrid project team was open to discussing the project with landowners, in order to address concerns and issues that they may have. In this regard, EirGrid seeks to minimise disturbance to current land use and farm management practices and, as a result has always undertaken a proactive approach with its landowner engagement for the project.

However, it was feedback from landowners on the consultation activities and events during the initial stages of the project (i.e. during 2008 and 2009) that informed the proactive, tailored and parallel landowner engagement strategy pursued by EirGrid after the re-evaluation of the project commenced in 2010.

This chapter looks at the results of landowner participation activities in respect of the project from 2007 to the present day.

6.1.1 Statutory Context

Prior to the construction of an electricity line or fixture across or on any land, the provisions of the Electricity Supply Act, 1927 require that a notice in writing stating the intention to do so must be served on the owner and / or occupier. The notice shall also give a description of the nature of the line or fixture and of the position and manner in which it is intended to be placed or attached. This notice is a requirement prior to construction; however, consultation with landowners begins earlier in the route selection process and in this respect extensive consultation has taken place with landowners.

6.2 LANDOWNER ENGAGEMENT 2007 TO 2010

Focused landowner engagement commenced with the publication of the preferred route corridors and indicative line routes in April 2009. Landowners were identified after a property registry search along the length of the indicative line routes. EirGrid wrote to all landowners / occupiers inviting them to meet with the project team and discuss the proposal and any concerns they may have. The letters were accompanied by a map (or maps) illustrating the proposed location of the line on the lands. Each landowner / occupier was advised in this letter that where planned locations of masts would impinge on their farming practices or development plans that their concerns could be discussed with the EirGrid representative who would be calling to their house. Details of the project information centres and

opening times were also included with the letter. The letters were followed up by other efforts to visit landowners and to request access for environmental and / or technical surveys.

In July 2009, EirGrid announced that it would begin focusing on preparing a planning application and urged landowners to get in touch as soon as possible with any queries.

6.2.1 Level of Landowner Participation

Subsequent to the publication of the preferred route corridors and indicative line routes, landowners availed of opportunities to provide feedback through the established mechanisms namely the phone line, letters, feedback forms and e-mails. Throughout the Spring of 2009 stakeholders sent in a large volume of correspondence that included six series of standard questions, plus detailed questions on a range of other issues relating to *inter alia* heritage, bloodstock and angling (refer to **Section 3.3.2**). It is relevant that a significant proportion of these particular stakeholders were landowners.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the EirGrid project team to contact landowners directly and / or visit them and gain access to survey lands, limited engagement was achieved (approximately 33%).

Following submission of the application for approval for the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development, in December 2009, landowners were active participants in the statutory consultation process.

It is also noted that landowners dropped into the project information offices after they opened in August 2008 either to source relevant project information or to discuss issues with members of the EirGrid project team. This was especially notable after submission of the planning application to the Board, as a copy of the application was available in the offices.

6.2.2 Nature of Feedback

The publication of indicative line routes in April 2009 provided landowners with detail in relation to the nature and location of the proposed development relative to their landholdings. EirGrid received a wide range of feedback relating to *inter alia*:

- EirGrid's rights to enter / access lands to undertake surveys;
- Compensation for effects such as crop damage;
- The safe working distance for conducting farming operations near towers and live wires;
- Whether EirGrid needs the agreement of all landowners prior to submitting plans to the Board;
and

- What safety precautions will be taken during the construction of the OHL.

Furthermore, landowners also provided feedback relating to the nature and manner in which landowner consultation was conducted during this phase of the project. Much of this feedback was articulated by landowners in written and / or oral submissions in respect of the application for approval for the Tyrone-Meath 400 kV Interconnection Development, after it was lodged with the Board in December 2009. This included:

- Concerns with the way landowners were made aware that the proposal would be located on their property. It was asserted that a preferred final design with final tower locations was published before engaging with landowners and that this gave the impression that the design was a *fait accompli* and would not be changed.
- It was asserted that clear terms of reference were not provided to landowners on how and when they could have an influence on the line design.
- Belief that landowners should be afforded the opportunity to engage earlier in the process so that they could have greater input into the development of the project.
- Concerns with the way EirGrid and its representatives sought to engage with landowners.
- It was asserted that there was a lack of information and transparency on how the line design was developed and how it would be constructed.
- It was asserted that a lack of importance was given to the potential of the proposal to impact agricultural practices.

6.2.3 Responding to Feedback

During this phase of the project, notwithstanding the attempts of EirGrid to engage directly with landowners, the primary means of responding to feedback was through the FAQ's published between January 2008 and July 2009. In this regard, EirGrid sought to respond to the key issues specifically raised and relevant to landowners (as summarised above).

Additional feedback was also provided through the publication of further FAQ's in January 2010. This document outlines the answers to questions sent to EirGrid by landowners and the local community in response to the July 2009 FAQ's. The new questions in this document in effect were 'follow-up' questions that sought clarification on some of the answers given in July 2009.

6.2.4 How Feedback Influenced Project Development

The primary means of responding to the general issues raised by landowners during this period of landowner consultation (and previous consultation activities) was through the final design and content of the planning application and EIS which was submitted to the Board in December 2009.

Feedback from landowners during this stage also informed the longer term project communications strategy for the project. The lessons learned influenced the tailored landowner engagement strategy pursued by EirGrid and the project team from 2011 onwards. In this regard, the indicative project roadmap was adjusted to highlight when landowners would have opportunities to engage with the project team at all stages of route development and project design. This strategy included terms of reference for consultation with landowners, liaison and opportunities for landowners to provide feedback and input into the line design, tower locations and indicative route. In addition a formal system was put in place to facilitate and process change requests.

In particular, EirGrid listened to the concerns of landowners who previously noted that they were often unaware of what stage the project was at. By providing terms of reference for the landowner engagement, EirGrid sought to address this issue by providing more guidance to the landowners about the project's status and by explaining the opportunities for landowners to participate in each phase of the project before it advanced to the next phase.

Additionally, the landowner terms of reference advised landowners what was open to consultation and amendment in the effort to ensure that the consultation was meaningful to both EirGrid and the landowners.

The landowner engagement process was supported by the wider range of consultation activities. In correspondence with landowners, EirGrid reminded landowners that meetings in their homes and on their land were not the only way to engage with the project team and that, should they wish, they could meet with the project team at the project information centres.

It is also noted that feedback from landowners during this phase (including submissions to the Board in respect of the previous application for approval) which related to detailed design matters fed into the detailed design considerations as presented in the *Preferred Project Solution Report*.

6.3 LANDOWNER ENGAGEMENT 2011 - 2013

Section 4.9 of the *Concept for Public Consultation* provides an overview of the landowner consultation approach for the project from 2011, which comprised three phases:

- **Phase 1 – Indicative Line Route:** This phase corresponded with the publication of the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* and *Final Re-evaluation Report* and the wider public consultation activities undertaken at this time (i.e., between May 2011 and April 2013). The objectives of this proactive and tailored phase of landowner engagement was to meet with each landowner to obtain their feedback, confirm ownership, discuss the line route and possible positioning of towers and gain access for environmental and / or technical surveys where applicable.
- **Phase 2 – Preferred Line Route:** This phase corresponded with the publication of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* (July 2013) and the wider public consultation activities undertaken at this time (i.e., between July and September 2013). The objectives of this phase of landowner engagement was to provide each landowner with updated maps of i) the preferred route and proposed tower locations and ii) indicative access routes. One of the key messages delivered to landowners during this stage was that changes to the final proposal, including the location of towers, would not be possible in the event that planning approval was granted for the final line route proposal, without seeking a further subsequent approval from the Board. Therefore, landowners were encouraged to proactively engage on detailed line design issues at this time. To assist in this process, EirGrid offered consultations and assessments of individual land holdings by an agricultural advisor.
- **Phase 3 – Final Line Route:** Following assessment of all the modification requests received, landowners were informed (in writing) of the final line route and tower locations that EirGrid was intending to submit to the Board for approval. These letters were issued on 12th December 2013.

6.3.1 Level of Landowner Participation

The level of landowner engagement from 2011 to 2013 (arising from Phase 1 and Phase 2 landowner engagement activities) is provided in **Table 6.1**.

There are two groups which represent landowners in the study area as follows:

1. North East Pylon Pressure Committee / North East Pylon Pressure Campaign Limited (NEPP); and
2. County Monaghan Anti-Pylon Landowners Group / Co. Monaghan Anti-Pylon Limited (CMAPLG).

Certain landowners issued forms of authority and instructions to EirGrid to communicate only through their appointed representatives. EirGrid and their agents were thereby precluded from having direct communications with landowners who were represented by these two landowner representative groups. As a consequence of this, EirGrid could only provide statutory or other formal notices relating to their

lands directly to these landowners and thus EirGrid was unable to proactively contact landowners represented by these groups during consultation.

Table 6.1: Level of Landowner Engagement from the Re-evaluation Period to Present Day

	Total
Total No. Landowners*	456
Did Not Engage**	148
Engaged	308
Landholdings surveyed	115

Notes:

* Total No. of Landowners affected by proposals throughout design phase (therefore greater number than that affected by the final proposed line which is 439)

** Includes landowners who could not be contacted and those who refused to engage

6.3.2 Nature of Feedback Received

6.3.2.1 Phase 1

During Phase 1 much of the landowner engagement focused on site-specific issues, including the project's potential impact on specific landholdings. These issues were dealt with on a landowner-by-landowner basis.

During the landowner consultation, a number of issues were raised. **Table 6.2** provides the key issues and their relevant sub-issues that were recorded by landowner engagement agents during Phase 1 of the consultation process.

Table 6.2: Key Landowner Issues Raised During Phase 1 of Landowner Engagement

Key Issue	Sub-Issue
Access	EirGrid's legal rights to enter lands.
Agronomy	Agriculture concerns, livestock (cattle and bulls), bloodstock, stud farms, bees, cell count in cows, infertility in livestock, potato drills, impact on Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPs), Agri-Environment Options Scheme (AEOS) or subsidies, silage, commonage, fruit tunnels, poultry.
Archaeology	Forts, monuments.
Aviation	Impact on low-flying aircraft.

Key Issue	Sub-Issue
Communications	Poor communications, duration of consultation / commentary period.
Compensation	Compensation for development, compensation for last oral hearing, insurance, donation to community groups.
Construction Impacts	Impact of farming practices during construction, size and type of construction vehicles, duration of construction works, depth of foundations, construction noise.
Devaluation	Planning permission, loss of development of site, loss of land sale, devaluation, loss of future development, impact on rental income, impacts on sheds, impact on existing wind farms, loss of development of future windfarms.
Environment	Forestry/trees, shelter belts, swans, bogs/swamps, hedgerows, lakes, flora and fauna, geology (quarries, sand holes, spring wells).
Health	EMF, pacemakers, autism, cancer, radiation.
Local Constraints	Movements, specific issues on land (trees, hedgerows, swamps).
Need and Planning	Need for project, transboundary impact.
Route Alternatives	Route selection, possibility to consider alternative routes, existing power lines.
Sub-stations	Reason for omission of Moyhill Substation.
Visual Impact	Impact on views, impact on local lakes, impact on residential amenity.
Undergrounding	Request for undergrounding, local job creation as a result of undergrounding.

6.3.2.2 Phase 2

During the Phase 2 landowner engagement, a number of general issues were raised, the majority of which were broadly consistent with those raised by other stakeholders as previously documented in **Table 6.2** and Chapters **3, 4** and **5** of this report.

Table 6.3 provides the key issues and their relevant sub-issues that were recorded by landowner agents during the Phase 2 consultation process on the preferred project solution.

Table 6.3: Landowner Issues Raised During Phase 2 of Landowner Engagement

Key Issue	Sub-Issue
Access	Landowners provided feedback on the proposed indicative construction access routes and provided information on potential access problems. Feedback included information on local topography and information on preferred access routes. Many landowners advised EirGrid that they will not provide access on the grounds of their concerns in respect of health and EMF and / or visual impact.

Key Issue	Sub-Issue
Construction	Queries were raised in relation to the proposed duration of construction on their lands and the methods by which this would be achieved. Landowners also asked if lands and access tracks would be re-instated following the construction phase.
Agronomy	Impacts on their landholding and farm management practices.
Compensation	Landowners raised queries in relation to the level of compensation payments for the tower structures, how these payments would be issued and the tax implications.
Devaluation and loss of development	Many landowners expressed their concern in respect to how the construction of the project would devalue their lands and property with many referencing how they had inherited the lands from previous generations and how they themselves planned to pass it on to the next generation. In this context, landowners raised specific concerns in relation to how the proposals would impact on future planning applications for their family.
Local constraints	Landowners raised concerns with regard to localised constraints which they identified, and provided information on. Examples included ringforts, quarries, wells etc.
Undergrounding	Many landowners advised that their preference was to underground the cables for the projects, while others advised of their complete opposition to the project, whether it be under or overground.

6.3.3 Responses to Issues Raised during Public Participation (Phases 1 and 2)

Each of the change requests submitted by landowners, either via the landowner change request form or during the visit with the landowner agent was considered by EirGrid's appointed line design technical and environmental specialists in accordance with technical, environmental and landowner considerations as described in Chapter 3 of the *Preferred Project Solution Report*.

Where the recommendation or request to modify the line design, as published in the *Preferred Project Solution Report*, was determined to be environmentally and technically feasible and in accordance with landowner considerations guiding the design, modifications to the line design have been undertaken. Each landowner was issued with a letter which informed them whether their change request had either been accommodated, or not, within the line design and set out the reasons for same. The contact information of their designated landowner agent was included within the letter and further information or discussion of the reasons was facilitated by EirGrid.

6.3.4 Impact of Landowner Engagement (Phases 1 and 2)

The approximate level of landowner engagement from 2011 to 2013 (arising from Phase 1 and Phase 2 landowner engagement activities) is provided in **Table 6.4**. In response to Phase 2 – Preferred Line Route (including relevant modification requests by landowners during Phase 1) EirGrid’s proactive engagement with landowners resulted in approximately 60 change requests in relation to line design and access routes being submitted by individual landowners. Over 50% of these have been incorporated into the final design.

Table 6.4: Outcome of Landowner Engagement from the Re-evaluation Period to Submittal of Application

	Total
Total No. Landowners*	456
Landholdings surveyed	115
No. of Change Requests Received ***	57
No. of Change Requests Accommodated***	30

Notes:

* Total No. of Landowners affected by proposals throughout design phase (therefore greater number than that affected by the final proposed line which is 439)

*** After publication of *Preferred Project Solution*

Feedback from landowners included requests to place towers on field boundaries, in a corner of a field, at a distance from existing farm buildings or closer to the existing roadways within the landholding etc. Landowner feedback has therefore influenced the final project solution.

As noted in **Section 6.3.1** landowners issued forms of authority and instructions to EirGrid to communicate only through their appointed representatives, EirGrid and their agents were thereby precluded from proactive communications with landowners who were represented by the two landowner representative groups. As a consequence of this, EirGrid could only provide statutory or other formal notices relating to their lands directly to these landowners and thus EirGrid was unable to proactively contact landowners represented by these groups during Phase 2 Landowner Consultation. However, a number of change requests were submitted on behalf of landowners in Monaghan via the legal representatives of CMAPLG.

7 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES POST CONSULTATION ON THE PREFERRED PROJECT SOLUTION AND PRIOR TO THE SUBMITTAL OF THE PLANNING APPLICATION

7.1 SEPTEMBER 2013 TO DECEMBER 2013

Since informing landowners (in writing) of the final line route that EirGrid was intending to submit to An Bord Pleanála (the 'Board') for approval (on 12th December 2013) the following consultation activity has taken place:

- The project information phone line, email and project website remain in place and are promoted as being operational. The website was updated with information on what activity had taken place.
- EirGrid prepared and issued a *Community Update Newsletter* in December 2013 (included as Appendix E of the *Concept for Public Participation Report*) which provided members of the public and landowners with information on project activity that had taken place since the close of the consultation on 9th September 2013 to December 2013. Media, public representatives and other stakeholders were updated about project progress and were provided with a copy of the *Community Update Newsletter*.
- Community groups in the three counties which had expressed an interest in further engagement during previous stages of the project were contacted. These included groups who expressed interest in participating in the consultation on community gain for the project and those who had requested additional meetings with the project team.
- Each of the local chambers of commerce in counties Cavan, Meath and Monaghan were offered a briefing on the project in December 2013. A briefing was provided to Navan Chamber on 4th December 2013.
- Landowners who submitted change requests were contacted by EirGrid's landowner agents (ESBI and TOBIN) via letter in December 2013 and advised whether their change request had been accommodated in the final line route. In cases where a change request could not be accommodated by EirGrid, the reasons for same were provided within the letter to the landowner. All landowners were issued with a letter and accompanying map which illustrated the proposed final line route that EirGrid intended to submit to the Board in due course.
- EirGrid delivered presentations to the local authorities in counties Cavan and Meath during October 2013.

- EirGrid attended a meeting with the Joint Oireachtas Committee on 4th December 2013, as requested, to address queries in respect of EirGrid projects, including the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development.

7.2 PROJECT PROPOSAL PHASE (DECEMBER 2013 - SUBMISSION)

As noted above, in December 2013 following review of feedback on the *Preferred Project Solution Report* consultation, EirGrid published on the project website, its final line route which was intended to form the basis for an application for planning approval to the Board. A *Community Update Newsletter* was also issued in December 2013 (included as Appendix E of the *Concept for Public Participation Report*) to publicise this and to advise stakeholders on how they could view and seek information on the details of the final line route.

7.2.1 Other Matters of Relevance that Occurred during the Period

7.2.1.1 Independent Expert Panel

In January 2014 the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources appointed an Independent Expert Panel (IEP) to oversee and facilitate a “*comparative analysis of underground and overhead alternatives for the Grid West and Grid Link projects*”. In addition, the IEP was tasked with providing an opinion to the Minister on “*the compatibility of the methodologies to be employed on the GL and GW projects with what has already been done on the North South Transmission Line project*”.

In July 2014 the Panel, which is made up of Mrs Justice Catherine McGuinness, Chairperson, Professor Keith Bell, Professor John Fitzgerald, Dr. Karen Foley and Mr. Colm McCarthy provided its opinion on the matter and this has been published by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR). The IEP is of the opinion that the work completed to date on the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development is compatible with the terms of reference that they have specified for the Grid West and Grid Link projects. This opinion was published by the Department of Communications, Energy, and Natural Resources (DCENR).

With the agreement of the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR) EirGrid has published the report which it submitted to the IEP in relation to the proposed North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development. The report entitled *Report to the Independent Expert Panel: 29/05/2014 & Addendum Date: 19/06/2014* is available on the EirGrid Project Website www.eirgridprojects.ie.

7.2.1.2 EirGrid's Grid25 Initiatives

In December 2014 EirGrid published a document *Reviewing and Improving our Public Consultation Process*. This review examined EirGrid's approach to consultation and compared it with international best practice for consultation on strategic infrastructure projects. It also summarised feedback received from the public, elected representatives and the media in respect of consultation undertaken primarily on the larger EirGrid projects. The review identified three main themes, set out below:

- Theme 1: Develop a Participative Approach – *“we will move to a more community focused approach when developing electricity projects – to enable a greater stakeholder participation from the outset”*;
- Theme 2: Change our Culture and Process – *“we will change the culture in our organisation – to develop stronger relationships with stakeholders and communities”*;
- Theme 3: Encourage Leadership and Advocacy – *“we will seek support from the political system and state bodies – to better explain energy issues and make the benefits of a stronger system clearer to all”*.

Each theme underpins a number of commitments, all with the intent of enhancing the collaborative nature of the project development process. This enhanced approach is envisaged to apply both to the project development phase, and on an ongoing basis. The review acknowledges that each commitment will require time to be specifically scoped and developed.

As part of these commitments, EirGrid engaged with the public, stakeholders and landowners, in advance of the submission of the planning application to the Board. EirGrid opened the project information centres in Navan, Carrickmacross and Kingscourt on 16th March 2015 (excluding bank holidays and public holidays). This engagement with the public and public concerned provided stakeholders with an update on the project, including recent developments and factors that had influenced the timeline for the planning process (including the IEP Review and the designation of the project as a Project of Common Interest (PCI)). This engagement informed the public and public concerned of the final line design that EirGrid intended to submit to the Board in due course.

As part of the commitments made by EirGrid in its updated approach to consultation in respect of its transmission projects, EirGrid placed advertisements for the recruitment of two community liaison officers (CLOs) and three agricultural liaison officers (ALOs). These roles will provide a liaison role to assist with the engagement of stakeholders throughout Ireland (including Meath, Cavan and Monaghan) for EirGrid's projects. The ALOs will liaise with key agricultural stakeholders and landowners in regard to transmission infrastructure development in all phases of the project lifecycle from initiation and through the planning and construction phases. The CLOs will liaise with individuals, representatives of local authorities and relevant stakeholder groups.

As part of its commitment to respond to the concerns of the agriculture, equine and tourism sectors in respect of its major projects EirGrid published three reports. These are available at www.eirgrid.com/aboutus/publications/gridinitiatives.

7.2.1.3 Community Update Brochure (July 2014)

EirGrid published a *Community Update Brochure* in July 2014 (refer to Appendix F of the *Concept for Public Participation Report*) to ensure continued awareness of the project prior to the submission of the application. It advised that EirGrid was preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in accordance with the scoping opinion that was provided by the Board and which was informed by the feedback received during public consultation and participation. It also provided an update on the opinion of the IEP that the work completed to date on the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development is compatible with the methodologies now being employed on the Grid West and Grid Link projects. The brochure set out EirGrid's updated Project Development and Consultation Roadmap and identified the stage which had been reached in terms of the roadmap. It also advised on the timelines associated with the PCI notification procedures being undertaken at that time by EirGrid and the lead up to an application submission. This brochure also contained an overview of the project and the national grid development strategy (Grid25) and provided the web addresses of the EU Commission's transparency platform and the Board's *Project of Common Interest Manual of Permit Granting Process Procedures*.

7.2.1.4 Your Grid, Your Views, Your Tomorrow. A Discussion Paper on Ireland's Grid Development Strategy (March 2015)

On March 27th 2015, EirGrid published *Your Grid, Your Views, Your Tomorrow. A Discussion Paper on Ireland's Grid Development Strategy*. The document, and associated appendices, was published on the EirGrid website. In Chapter 5 of the discussion document, EirGrid advised the following with regard to the North-South 400kV Interconnection Development that:

"Our review of Grid25 found there remained a compelling and clear need for the project. We expect to submit a planning application for the North South 400kV Interconnection Development in the coming weeks.

We remain committed to our new standards of consultation to ensure that all interested parties have an opportunity to voice their views. To that end, we have recently opened local offices in Carrickmacross, Navan and Kingscourt".

EirGrid attended, by invitation, a meeting of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on 21st April 2015, as requested, to address queries in respect of the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development.

7.2.1.5 Publication of Final Line Design

In March 2015, EirGrid published a final line design proposal for the project. The December 2013 line route had been reviewed and resulted in some of the proposed tower locations being re-positioned along the alignment. The alignment itself did not change. A total of 16 landowners were affected by the resulting changes. Prior to publication of the revised line design EirGrid wrote to these 16 landowners informing them that a review of the December 2013 line route had been undertaken and had resulted in a number of changes to the line design. The letter provided information about how the changes would impact on their landholding and enclosed a map to illustrate the change. It included the name and contact information of their designated landowner agent with whom they could discuss the change. Following receipt of the letter meetings were held with a number of the landowners.

To coincide with this publication, the project information centres, which were accessible by prior appointment since consultation on the preferred project solution ended in September 2013, opened in March 2015. The project information centres in Navan (Tuesdays and Fridays) and Carrickmacross (Mondays and Thursdays) opened for two days per week (between 12 noon and 6pm) and the centre in Kingscourt for one day per week (Wednesdays; 12 noon to 6pm). During this time, EirGrid staff were available to provide the latest information on the project. Due to the unavailability of the venue in the Dun na Ri House Hotel in Kingscourt for the project information centre, the venue closed on 1st April 2015 and a search for a replacement centre in County Cavan commenced. A new project information centre located in the Cavan Enterprise & Technology Centre in Cootehill opened on 3rd June 2015.

EirGrid placed advertisements in local newspapers to notify the public of the opening of the project information centres and to provide details of the opening hours and locations of each centre. The advertisement informed the public of the publishing of the proposed line design and invited the public and stakeholders to visit the project information centres to meet with the project team to discuss the proposed line design.

EirGrid staff were available in each of the project information centres to provide the latest information on the project and to address any queries the public may have on the proposal.

7.2.1.6 Project of Common Interest – Public Information Leaflet

On 1st May 2015, EirGrid published a *Project of Common Interest – Public Information Leaflet* on its website (refer to **Appendix A** of this report). The publication of the *PCI Public Information Leaflet* was advertised in The Irish Times and Irish Independent and was made available on the EirGrid project's website for viewing and / or download. In addition, the leaflet was available at each of the project information centres and on request via the project information service. The leaflet provided information on the following:

- The history of the project to date;

- The PCI Regulation (347/2013), PCI Projects in Europe and of the benefits and obligations placed on EirGrid as a result of the designation; and
- An updated project roadmap that included information about the lodgement date of the application (under Section 182A of the *Planning and Development Acts 2000*) and details on how the public could participate in the process.

7.2.1.7 Community Update Brochure – June 2015

A Community Update Brochure was issued to stakeholders in tandem with the publication of public notices of the application for approval under section 182A of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended). A copy of this brochure entitled *Community Update Brochure – June 2015* is included in **Appendix H**. This brochure provides information on:

- An overview of the project and of its history accompanied by a map of the proposal lodged to the Board for consideration;
- A summary of the planning process and details of the documents submitted by EirGrid to the Board;
- Details of where the application documentation (including the EIS and Natura Impact Statement (NIS)) could be viewed and / or downloaded;
- How submissions / observations can be made.

EirGrid also issued landowners with a map of the final proposal, as it affects their lands, prior to the submission of the planning application to the Board. This letter was accompanied by a copy of the PCI Public Information Leaflet and the Community Update Brochure – June 2015.

Following the submission of the planning application to An Bord Pleanála, EirGrid will issue a printed copy of the non-technical summary of the EIS along with a digital copy of the entire EIS and NIS on compact disc to landowners.

7.2.2 Communications Activities Undertaken from March 2015 up to Submission of the Planning Application

A summary of communications activities that were undertaken by EirGrid between March 2015 up to submission of the planning application is provided in **Table 7.1**.

Table 7.1: Summary of Communications Activities that were undertaken by EirGrid between March 2015 up to submission of the Planning Application

Method	Communications Activity
Project Information centres	<p>EirGrid opened the three project information centres in Navan, Carrickmacross and Kingscourt on 16th March 2015. Each office opened between 12 noon and 6pm on their advertised days (excluding bank holidays and public holidays).</p> <p>The Navan office opened for two days per week (Tuesdays and Fridays).</p> <p>The Carrickmacross office opened for two days per week (Mondays and Thursdays).</p> <p>The Kingscourt centre opened for one day per week (Wednesdays) and remained open on each Wednesday until 1st April 2015. Thereafter the venue was no longer available and a search for a replacement centre commenced. A replacement venue in County Cavan was obtained and opened in the Cavan Enterprise & Technology Centre in Cootehill, Co. Cavan on 3rd June 2015.</p>
Press Releases	<p>A press release was issued by EirGrid to local media to ensure that the public and landowners were aware of the opening of the project information centres in March 2015.</p> <p>A press release was issued by EirGrid to local and national media in advance of the publication of the PCI <i>Public Information Leaflet</i> in May 2015.</p> <p>A press release was issued by EirGrid to local and national media in advance of the submission of the planning application to the Board.</p>
Advertising	<p>Advertisements were placed in local media to inform the public and stakeholders of the opening of the project information centres in March 2015.</p> <p>Advertisements were placed in two national newspapers to inform the public of the publication of the PCI <i>Public Information Leaflet</i> in May 2015.</p> <p>Notices were placed in two national newspapers and three regional newspapers, during the week commencing 02nd June, to inform the public of the intention to shortly submit the application to the Board. A notice was also placed in the Irish Independent's "Seachtain" Irish language newspaper.</p>
Lo-Call Phone Line	<p>The project Lo-Call phone line service, that operates from 9am to 5pm Monday – Friday, continued to operate.</p>

Method	Communications Activity
Information Material	<p>EirGrid published a <i>PCI Public Information Leaflet</i> and notice of its publication was advertised in two national newspapers.</p> <p>A Community Update Brochure was issued to stakeholders in the week preceding the submission of the planning application to the Board. This brochure is a user's guide to the application, refer to Appendix H.</p>
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	<p>EirGrid will produce an updated FAQ on the project to coincide with the commencement of the statutory consultation period on 16th June. The FAQ will be available in hard copy format at the three project information centres.</p>
Website	<p>The project website was updated with information to reflect the opening of the project information centres, the publication of the <i>PCI Public Information Leaflet</i> and the closure of the project information centre in Kingscourt. Details of the new project information centre in Cootehill, Co. Cavan were added in June 2015 coinciding with its opening.</p> <p>EirGrid published the Community Update Brochure – June 2015 on the project website to coincide with its issue to stakeholders and landowners prior to the submission of the planning application to An Bord Pleanála.</p> <p>The website will be further updated to coincide with the submission of the planning application to the Board and, on commencement of the statutory consultation period on 16th June, will link to the planning website.</p>

7.2.3 Statutory Consultation Process

As set out in Section 3.3.1.3 of the *Concept for Public Consultation Report*, the requirements of the planning approval process under the *Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2014*, make provision for consultation during the statutory process. Relevant provisions include *inter alia*:

- An applicant is required to publish notice of the application in at least one National newspaper and one newspaper circulating in the area and site notices will also be required.
- A dedicated website has been set up for the statutory application process and includes all the planning application documentation submitted to the Board. All information is available for view and download. A link to this new website is provided from the project webpage on the EirGrid website which hosted all the information on the project and consultation to date. Application documentation, such as the EIS and NIS, are available on the dedicated website in the Irish language. The website will continue to be updated and documents made available throughout the planning process.

- The planning application documentation is also available at the Board's offices and those of the planning authorities in whose jurisdictions the proposed development will be located (i.e. Monaghan, Cavan and Meath County Councils). EirGrid will also make hard copies of the application, including the EIS and NIS available for inspection and for purchase (for the reasonable cost of making the copy) during the statutory consultation phase, following submission of the application.
- The statutory process provides for the making of written submissions to the Board. Any person or body may make a submission to the Board within the period allowed for the application to be inspected in relation to the implications of the proposed development on the proper planning and sustainable development and the likely effects on the environment or adverse effects on the integrity of a European site, of the proposed development. The requirements for making a submission are set out in Article 217 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001* (as amended).
- The statutory process also makes provision for the holding of an oral hearing and in the case of strategic infrastructure proposals these are generally convened. In the event that an oral hearing is held, parties will have the right to make oral submissions and at the discretion of the inspector to put questions to the applicant.

In addition, EirGrid will continue to operate the project phone line and email service throughout the statutory consultation phase. In addition, each of its three project information centres (Navan, Carrickmacross and Cootehill) will be open throughout the period and staff will be available to provide guidance and assistance in relation to obtaining information / viewing the application documentation.

8 CONCLUSIONS REGARDING REGULATION (EU) NO. 347/2013

This report summarises the results of activities related to the participation of the public prior to the submission of the application file for the proposed North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development. The activities related to the participation of the public comprise the following:

- Activities during the period 2007-2010;
- Activities during the re-evaluation process 2011-2013;
- Activities relating preferred project solution process;
- Landowner participation activities; and
- Activities since publication of the Preferred Project Solution, including the *Information Leaflet* published by EirGrid as required by the modified concept for public participation (refer to **Appendix A** of this report).

In respect of each of the above and in accordance with Article 9(4) of the Regulation 347/2013, the report has summarised the results of the activities including in terms of the nature of such activities and consultations; submissions and feedback from the public as a result of such activities and the manner in which this has been taken into account by EirGrid.