



# The Grid Link Project

## Electricity Transmission Scheme Linking Leinster & Munster

AUTUMN 2012

# What is The Grid Link Project?

To ensure future electrical power needs are met in the south and east of Ireland, an estimated €500 million is being invested in a development called the Grid Link Project. The project consists of a new high voltage power line linking Leinster and Munster.

The Grid Link Project is a vital development for Leinster and Munster that will deliver a wide range of benefits, including:

- A secure future electricity supply for homes, businesses, farms, factories and communities in Leinster and Munster
- Help empower growth in the south and east of Ireland
- Help Ireland to meet its 40% renewable electricity target

EirGrid has established a dedicated project team to develop a route and substation sites for the Grid Link

Project. Public consultation will form an important part of all stages of the project over the coming years.

EirGrid does not expect to submit an application to An Bord Pleanála for planning approval before 2015. In pursuing the Grid Link Project, EirGrid encourages you to participate in the consultation process and is interested to hear your views.



## Why is the project needed?

### 1 The Grid Link Project will help secure a future electricity supply for Leinster and Munster

- Based on EirGrid's assessment to date, it has been identified that, if left unchecked, the existing grid in the south and east of Ireland will not be sufficient to meet our future electricity needs, thus jeopardising electricity supply to the area.
- The Grid Link Project will facilitate the integration of renewable energy onto the transmission system, and reduce our reliance on imported fossil fuels.
- The Grid Link Project will facilitate further electricity interconnection with the European grid, providing a more secure electricity system.

### 2 The Grid Link Project will empower growth in the south and east of Ireland

- A region with a high-quality, secure supply of electricity is better placed to attract inward investment that will bring employment and prosperity. The Grid Link Project will facilitate this for communities in the south and east of Ireland.
- The Grid Link Project will help ensure that the most efficient electricity generators in the south and east are utilised in the most effective way, helping Ireland to make best use of its resources.
- The Grid Link Project will help enable Ireland to shift from a heavy reliance on imported fossil fuels to more sustainable sources of energy.

### 3 The Grid Link Project will help enable Ireland to meet its 40% renewable electricity target

- Ireland's national goal is to meet 40% of electricity demand from renewable sources by 2020 – these include wind, wave and tidal energy. The Grid Link Project will enable this to happen.
- The growth of the wind energy sector represents an opportunity to reduce our dependence on imported fossil fuels and foster a clean, indigenous, and sustainable energy source and therefore reduce our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- Ireland has one of the best wind resources in Europe and the Grid Link Project will form a critical element in helping to maximise the potential use of this natural resource.
- The Grid Link Project will facilitate supply of enough wind energy to power 750,000 homes.

# The Grid Link Project Linking Leinster & Munster

## AUTUMN 2012 UPDATE

12 APRIL 2012

8 JUNE 2012

### What has happened so far?

In April 2012, EirGrid began the process of developing a new high voltage power line linking Leinster and Munster, called the Grid Link Project. Consultation 1 ran for an eight week period ending in June 2012.

To date EirGrid has:

- ✓ Launched the Grid Link Project
- ✓ Published the Proposed Study Area Map
- ✓ Completed Consultation 1
- ✓ Reviewed Feedback
- ✓ Established the Project Study Area
- ✓ Published Report on Consultation 1
- ✓ Published the Constraints Report

The public and all interested parties were invited to comment on the proposed study area map and identify constraints within the study area that should be considered for further review. The project team used desk-top studies, along with expert input and consultation feedback, to develop a

list of proposed constraints within the study area. The results of their findings are published in the Constraints Report.

EirGrid received feedback from hundreds of stakeholders during the first period of public consultation and would like to thank all those who participated in the process.

Issues raised ranged from general comments on the study area to the listing of specific constraints that should be mapped and taken into account. Feedback was also received on the development of corridors and how the project should proceed. There was also considerable feedback regarding how best to consult and communicate with the public.

The feedback received in Consultation 1 has given the project team a better understanding of the study area. It has assisted in confirming the study area and in identifying constraints. It has also influenced the communications activities to be undertaken as part of Consultation 2.



All project information, including project reports and mapping, is available for review in any of the project information centres, at public open days, and online at [www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridlink](http://www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridlink)

27 AUGUST 2012

22 OCTOBER 2012

### What is happening now?

#### Consultation 2 – Have your say

**This second stage of public consultation will run for an eight week period from Monday, 27th August to Monday, 22nd October.** The public and all interested parties are invited to engage with the project team and comment on the Constraints Report. Feedback from Consultation 2 will assist in further developing the constraints and identifying corridors.



# The Grid Link Project Constraints Report

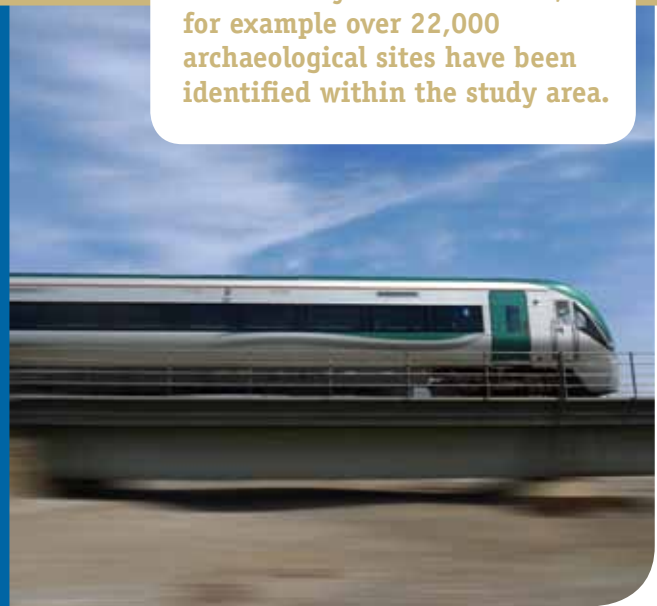
Feedback gathered from Consultation 1, as well as desktop studies and expert input, all fed into the completion of the Constraints Report. A key part of the report is the associated mapping that graphically shows the constraints that have been identified within the study area to date.

Thousands of constraints have already been identified, for example over 22,000 archaeological sites have been identified within the study area.



## What are Constraints?

'Constraints' mean any physical, technical, legal, environmental, topographical or other consideration that may potentially affect, limit, restrict or confine the location or other aspect of the project, within the study area.



## The Constraints Report

In developing the Constraints Report, the project team undertook a desk based study of the regions and acquired data from various local and government authorities. The data gathered, along with consultation feedback, played a large part in informing the Constraints Report.

Constraints are identified to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the study area.

The Constraints Report contains information which is important in the identification of corridors, e.g. elevated topography such as mountains; bodies of water such as rivers and lakes; designated or protected areas such as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC); existing infrastructure such as roads and railways; archaeological and heritage sites such as national monuments; and many more.

The Constraints Report also contains information which will be considered at a later stage in the project, such as local historical sites, sites of local ecological importance and historical landscapes. These factors, while important in the overall development of the project, are not relevant to corridor identification.



The Constraints Report is grouped under the following headings:



**Population and Settlement Patterns**



**Land Use**



**Infrastructure and Utilities**



**Cultural Heritage**



**Biodiversity**



**Water**



**Landscape and Visual**



**Soils and Geology**

# Developing Corridors within the Project Study Area



## What are Corridors?

Corridors are the geographical areas within which a route can be located, that meet the objectives of the project. The Grid Link Project corridors will be published once they are identified in early 2013.

## How are Corridors Determined?

Following Consultation 2, the Constraints Report together with professional judgement and consultation feedback, will be used to identify corridors. The methodology for determining corridors broadly consists of the following steps:

- Consider all feedback from Consultations 1 and 2 and confirm Constraints Report.
- Categorise the constraints identified as Primary, Secondary and Other (see table).
- Identify areas that may present opportunities for development of corridors.
- Ensure that corridors meet the objectives of the project.

CONSTRAINTS TYPE	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLES
Primary Constraints	Constraints that should be avoided in the first instance and only considered where no alternatives exist.	Airports, population settlements, EU Natura 2000 sites.
Secondary Constraints	Constraints that should be avoided where possible, but can be considered subject to applying suitable mitigation measures.	Rivers, areas of poor ground, county landscape designations.
Other Constraints	Other constraints and considerations have been identified and will be taken into consideration during the subsequent detailed route design, environmental assessment and planning stages of the Grid Link Project.	Dwellings, local historical sites.

## Consultation 2

27th August to 22nd October 2012

The Constraints Report has been published and the search for corridors has begun.

The key questions EirGrid is asking stakeholders to consider are as follows:

### Comment on the Constraints Report:

- Are you aware of any other constraints – national or regional – that should be taken into account, within the project study area?
- Has EirGrid identified key features that should be taken into account at this point in the project? These features (constraints) include cultural heritage, infrastructure, ecology, landscape features, etc.
- Are the key features of your area captured in our Constraints Report?

### Provide feedback on how EirGrid should develop corridors for the project:

- How should EirGrid consider constraints when determining corridors?
- Are the categories of constraints appropriate for the development of corridors?
- What mitigation measures should EirGrid consider when evaluating constraints?
- What opportunities should be considered when determining corridors?

**All feedback on this consultation should be received by 5pm on 22nd October 2012.**

# Ongoing Engagement

EirGrid is fully committed to consulting extensively with the public and all interested parties. It is vital that everyone has an opportunity to provide feedback on information presented and decisions that are made by the project team. We encourage you to participate by writing to us, calling us, dropping into one of our information centres or attending one of our open days. It is your opportunity to influence and inform the decision making process.

**WE ARE  
HERE**

## STAGE 1

### Information Gathering

Identify Project Study Area

Identify environmental & other constraints

Identify feasible options (corridor/sites)

Publication of **Stage 1 Report**

Pre-application consultation with An Bord Pleanála



1

#### Public

Public and stakeholder consultation on study area and constraints

Public and stakeholder consultation on findings of **Stage 1 Report**

## STAGE 2

### Evaluate Options

Consideration of all feedback from **Stage 1**

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

Identification of indicative line within corridor or site boundary

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

Publication of **Stage 2 Report**

Pre-application consultation with An Bord Pleanála



2

#### Public

Public and stakeholder consultation on findings of **Stage 2 Report**

## STAGE 3

### Confirm Design

Consideration of all feedback from **Stage 2**

Conduct environmental studies and surveys

Confirmation of design of line/site proposal including construction methodology

Ongoing engagement with landowners on preferred line route or site

Pre-application consultation with An Bord Pleanála



3

#### Public

Ongoing public information

## STAGE 4

### Prepare Planning Application

Complete reports and prepare planning application

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

Conclusion of Pre-application consultation with An Bord Pleanála

Submit application to An Bord Pleanála



4

#### Public

Ongoing public information

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

## STAGE 5

### Wayleaving and Construction

Preparation of construction plans

Serve wayleave notice to landowners and agree access for construction

Commence construction



5

#### Public

Ongoing public information

Evaluation of Public Consultation process

**WE ARE  
HERE**



# Public Consultation

EirGrid is open to engaging with the public on all aspects of the project at any time. Ongoing engagement is undertaken through the network of four information centres open throughout the study area. However, there are critical points in the development of any project where key decisions are made. In addition to the ongoing engagement, EirGrid has introduced structured consultation where feedback from the public is gathered and taken into account as part of the project decision-making process.



## Consultation 1 – April to June 2012 – Stage 1 Identify Study Area

Consultation 1 involved identification of the study area, or the area within which the project will be located.

EirGrid asked the public and all interested parties to:

- Comment on the proposed study area map
- Identify constraints that should be considered for further review

- Provide feedback on how corridors should be developed

Feedback gathered during Consultation 1 was reviewed and considered by the project team. The findings of the first period of consultation were recorded in the Report on Consultation 1 and were used to establish the study area and develop the Constraints Report.



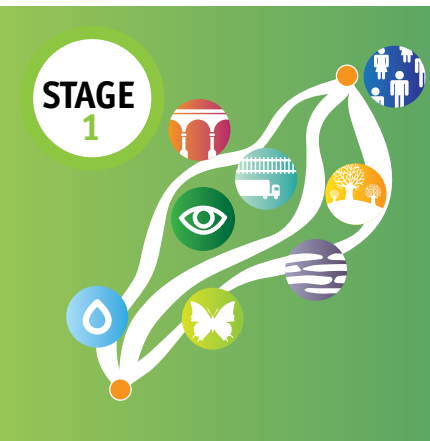
## Consultation 2 - 27th August to 22nd October 2012 – Stage 1 Identify environmental & other constraints

Consultation 2 is now underway. The public and all interested parties are being asked to:

- Comment on the proposed Constraints Report
- Provide feedback on how EirGrid should develop corridors for the project

Feedback will be recorded and used by the project team to compile a full list of constraints and enable the development of corridors within the study area.

We are here



## Consultation 3 – Stage 1 Identify feasible options

In Consultation 3, EirGrid will outline the corridors for the Grid Link Project. The public and all interested parties will be asked to:

- Comment on the corridors identified
- Provide feedback on the criteria that should be used to determine a least constrained corridor

A least constrained corridor is the corridor that achieves the most acceptable balance between competing constraints while meeting the needs of the project.

The feedback from Consultation 3 will be used by the project team to facilitate the evaluation of corridors and identify the least constrained corridor for further consideration.



## Consultation 4 – Stage 2 Identification of least constrained option

Consultation 4 will focus on the least constrained corridor and the indicative line route within it. The indicative line route is the proposed route for the project based on the information available at the time.

EirGrid will be asking the public and all interested parties to:

- Comment on the least constrained corridor and indicative line route

Feedback from Consultation 4 will be used to finalise the route alignment. Once the route alignment has been finalised, the project team will consult with landowners on the indicative line route and undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which will form the basis of a planning application that will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála for approval.

# About EirGrid

EirGrid, a state-owned company, is the national operator of the electricity grid.

The national grid is an interconnected network of high voltage power lines and cables, comparable to the motorways, dual carriage ways and main roads of the national road network. It is operated at three voltage levels, 400 kV, 220 kV and 110 kV, and is approximately 6,400km in overall length.

The grid is the backbone of Ireland's power system and is vital to ensuring that all customers, including industrial, commercial and residential, from both rural and urban areas, have a safe, secure, reliable, economic and efficient electricity supply.

## Contact Details

EirGrid is committed to ensuring that all members of the public are fully aware of the project and encourage you to participate in public consultation.

**Write:** The Grid Link Project Manager, EirGrid,  
PO Box 12213, Glenageary, Co. Dublin, Ireland

**Telephone:** Lo-call 1890 422 122

**Email:** [gridlink@eirgrid.com](mailto:gridlink@eirgrid.com)

**See:** [www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridlink](http://www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridlink)

**Visit:** The Grid Link Project Information Centres:

<b>Midleton</b>	Oikoseen House, Castleredmond, Midleton, Co. Cork	Every Monday from 12 noon to 6pm
<b>Carrick-on-Suir</b>	Carrick Community Business Centre at the Nano Nagle Centre, Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Tipperary	Every Tuesday from 12 noon to 6pm
<b>New Ross</b>	The Coach House, Marsh Lane, New Ross, Co. Wexford	Every Wednesday from 12 noon to 6pm
<b>Carlow</b>	Enterprise House, O'Brien Road, Carlow, Co. Carlow	Every Thursday from 12 noon to 6pm

Note: Project Information Centres are closed on Bank Holidays

### What is Grid25?

Grid25 is a major initiative to put in place a safe, secure and affordable electricity supply throughout Ireland, supporting economic growth and utilising our renewable energy resource to its maximum potential.

Development of the grid is essential to provide a platform for renewed economic growth and regional development, and is vital if we are to effectively tap into our abundant renewable energy resources.

Grid25 will involve upgrading the high voltage system and an overall investment of approximately €3.2 billion in the period up to 2025. This new infrastructure is every bit as essential to the future growth of the country as any investment in road, rail and broadband.

The Grid Link Project is a major part of Grid25.