

North East 400kV Power Line Projects

Community Update, July 2009

EirGrid is moving towards the final preparation of the planning application.

The North East power line projects will:

- facilitate cross-border sharing of electricity
- promote better competition
- ensure a future secure supply of electricity throughout the North East

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In April 2009, following a rigorous route selection process, EirGrid progressed the Meath-Cavan and Cavan-Tyrone power line projects to the next phase and announced two preferred route corridors for further study. These corridors are:

Route Corridor 3B for the Meath-Cavan Project

Route Corridor A for the Cavan-Tyrone Project

Following this announcement, EirGrid and its consultants, Tobin Consulting Engineers and ESBI, began non-statutory consultation with landowners on the indicative line routes. Consultation with all other stakeholders also continued as normal through the Information Centres, phone line, written and email services.

Many people have taken the opportunity to meet with the EirGrid Project Team and have provided useful feedback. All of this feedback has been carefully considered and, where possible, these suggestions will be accommodated in the final line route that is submitted to An Bord Pleanála.

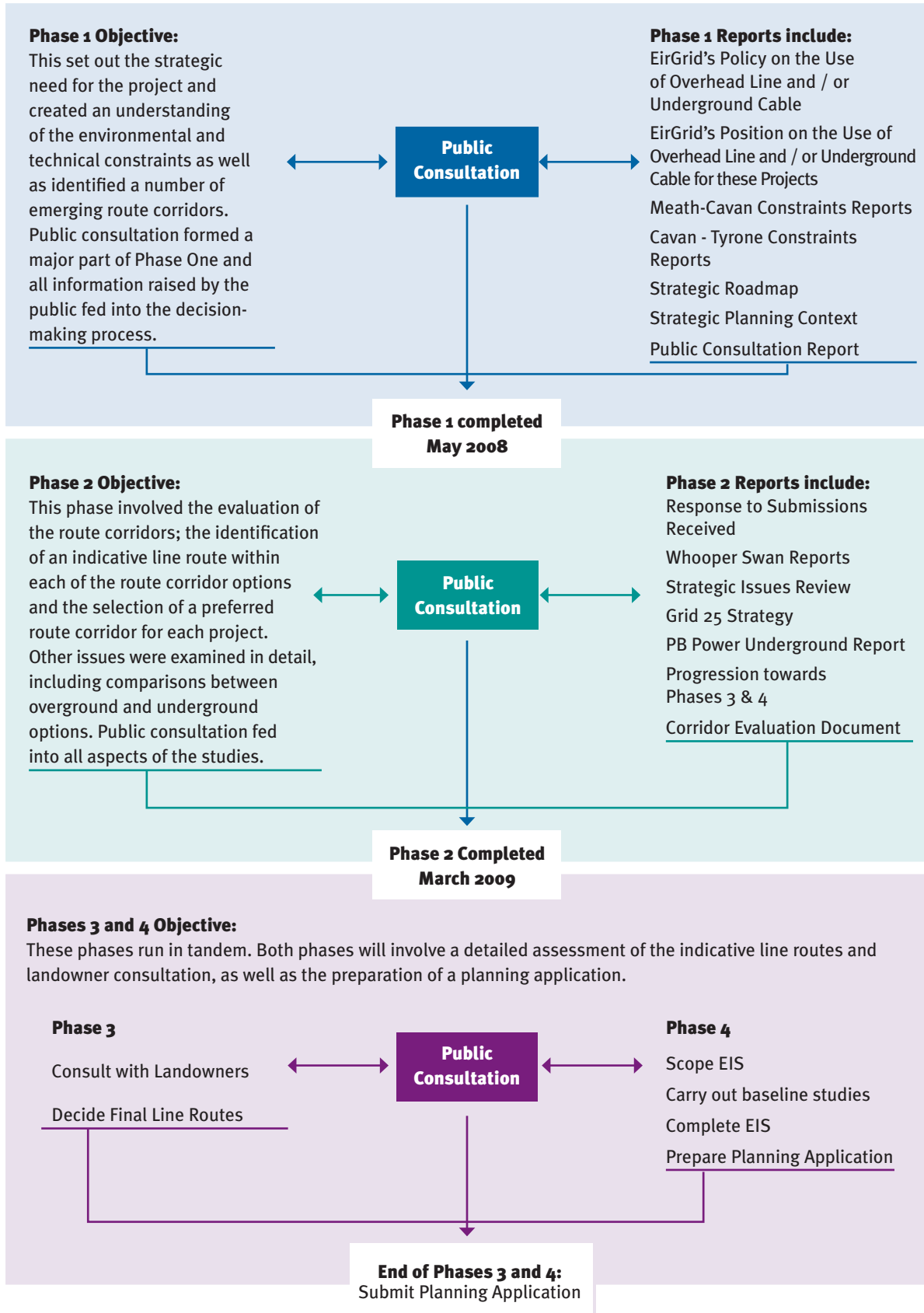
The current consultation is voluntary and does not prevent people from making a planning submission with respect to any aspect of the project during the formal planning process. Engaging with EirGrid at this point means that issues voiced during consultation can be considered and accommodated where feasible, before the line is determined for the purposes of making a planning application.

EirGrid is now close to determining the line route and will be completing the Environmental Impact Statement and planning application shortly for submission to An Bórd Pleanála. We encourage you to engage with us prior to the finalisation of the planning application. The EirGrid Project Team can be contacted at our local Information Centres in Navan and Carrickmacross, via phone (1890.25.26.90) or email (*meathcavanpower@eirgrid.com / cavantyroneinterconnector@eirgrid.com*). Please see the back page of this brochure for full contact details.



Indicative Project Road Map

Below is the Indicative Project Road Map, which demonstrates where the project has been and where it will go next. EirGrid is currently near the end of Phases 3 and 4 and is moving towards the submission of a planning application.



Frequently Asked Questions

EirGrid has received a number of questions from landowners and members of the public in relation to the power lines. Some of these are answered below, the remainder can be found at www.eirgrid.com. If you have more questions, we encourage you to meet with EirGrid. Please see the final page for contact details.

Planning Process

What stage is the project at now?

The project is proceeding along the sequential development timeline. We are currently in Phases 3 and 4, which involve landowner consultation, leading to the determination of the line and the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and planning application.

The planning application for this project will be submitted shortly to An Bord Pleanála, the independent national board responsible for planning applications and appeals in Ireland. The application to An Bord Pleanála is specifically governed by the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006.

How can I have my say in the formal planning process?

A submission can be made to An Bord Pleanála within the period specified in the planning notice (minimum 6 weeks). Notice of planning will be placed in local newspapers and on the EirGrid website. A submission typically outlines the implications of a proposed development on the environment, planning and sustainable development of an area. An Bord Pleanála charges a fee of €50 for making an initial submission.

What is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?

Electricity transmission projects such as these require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to be included as part of the planning application. An EIS is a document that sets out the possible impact that a proposed development may have on an area. An EIS firstly assesses the current situation in the area with regard to health, noise, ecology, visual amenity, air quality, flora, and fauna. It will then examine the possible impacts a proposed development might have on each of these and put forward design or other measures that can be taken to avoid or to reduce these effects to acceptable levels.

Where do I view the planning application and EIS?

In line with statutory requirements, EirGrid will make the application and the EIS available for inspection and for purchase for a period of at least six weeks. The documents will be available to view at the Navan and Carrickmacross Information Centres and in the Meath, Monaghan, and Cavan Local Authority offices. They will also be on view at the An Bord Pleanála Head Offices. EirGrid will publish notice of the proposed application in local newspapers before submitting the application to An Bord Pleanála.

Will there be an Oral Hearing?

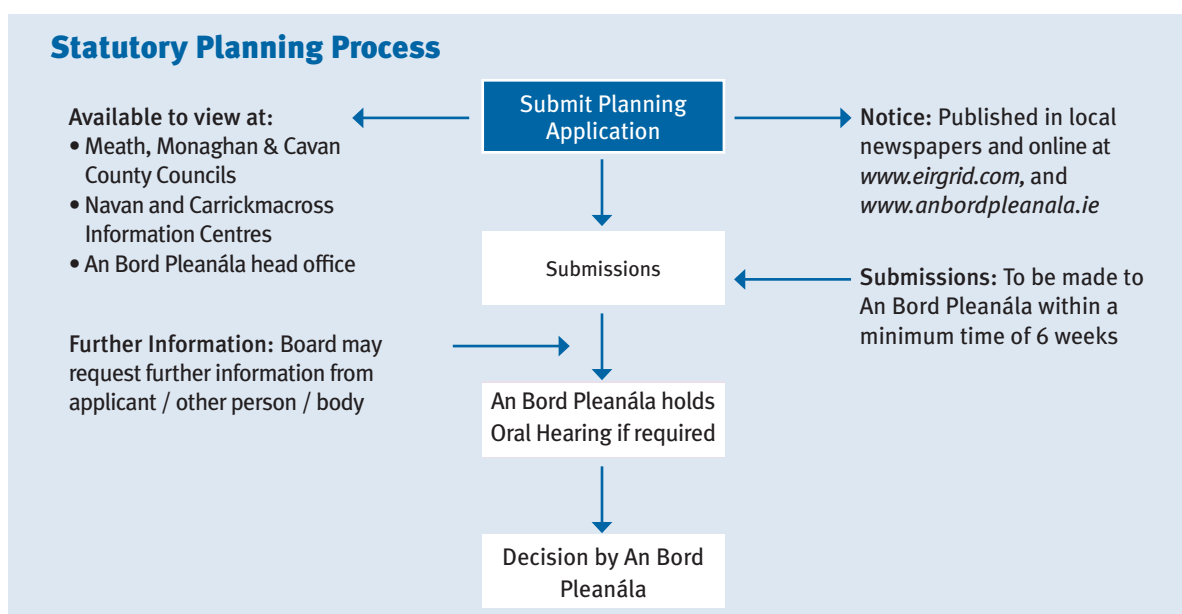
If An Bord Pleanála decides to hold an Oral Hearing, both the applicant and those who have made submissions or observations will be alerted and will be given the chance to put their case before the Board during the Oral Hearing process. Generally, an Oral Hearing is held when it will help the understanding of a case that is particularly complex or where there are significant national or local issues involved.

How will I know when a decision has been made on the planning application?

Once a decision has been made, An Bord Pleanála will notify all those who participated in the formal planning process by post.

Can a person appeal the Board's decision?

The Planning Acts state that the Board's decision cannot be questioned other than by way of application to the High Court for judicial review (generally within eight weeks from when the decision was made). A judicial review can only be made on procedural or legal grounds. The Court will not revisit the planning aspects of the case; it will simply review the way in which the decision was made to ensure it was not unconstitutional.



Undergrounding

I heard that EirGrid has drafted a Response to Askon Report; what did it say?

EirGrid's *Response to Askon Report* identifies a number of inaccurate fundamental assumptions made in the Askon Study that resulted in flawed calculations and conclusions. The key errors identified were on the following topics:

- Power losses calculation
- Financial analysis
- Safety issues
- Operating and reliability standards
- Environmental impacts
- Underground cable reliability

EirGrid, with the assistance of its team of international experts, carried out a comprehensive review of the Askon report and also spent two days with the authors of the report. Based on this, EirGrid concluded that a) Askon does not make a valid case in favour of the use of underground cable; and b) for these projects an overhead line is appropriate and consistent with EirGrid's mandate to provide Ireland with a 'safe, reliable, secure and cost effective transmission system, while having due regard for the environment'. The full report is available from www.eirgrid.com or by request from the Project Team.

What is the situation in Denmark? Is it true that they are putting all lines underground?

EirGrid has consulted with its counterpart in Denmark and can confirm that this is incorrect. The strategy for the future development of Denmark's 400kV network has been misunderstood and misrepresented by people outside of Denmark, who are opposed to the construction of 400kV overhead lines in their own countries.

Denmark needs to strengthen the 'backbone' of its 400kV network and proposes to do this by constructing a new double circuit 400kV overhead line. This project is expected to be completed by 2020. Beyond that, they have expressed an aspiration that 'non-backbone' 400kV power lines be placed underground and, to investigate the feasibility of this, have commissioned a 10-year research and development programme, in association with Danish universities, to investigate the feasibility of this. The proposed power lines for the North East of Ireland can be considered 'backbone' infrastructure. Full details of the strategy for the expansion and undergrounding of the Danish electricity transmission grid can be found on the website of the Danish transmission system owner: www.energinet.dk.

Why did PB Power not look at the railway corridor for a possible underground cable?

One of the aims of the PB Power report was to find an underground cable route that is technically and environmentally feasible, at the least cost. This was done for the purpose of establishing a realistic cost and environment impact comparison between an underground cable alternative and the proposed overhead line. Following a review of various criteria, including the Meath County Development Plan and Transport 21, it was found that railway lines, either in-service or disused, would not constitute the optimum route option for the underground alternative.

Why is the East-West Interconnector from Rush to Woodlands being placed underground?

The proposed Meath-Cavan-Tyrone 400kV circuits are required to provide further interconnection between the transmission grids of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. These transmission grids already operate as a single 'synchronous' HVAC (high voltage, alternating current) system. HVAC is the most appropriate technology for such circuits. The proposed East-West Interconnector is required to provide further interconnection between the transmission system on the island of Ireland and that on the island of Great Britain. These two transmission systems are required to operate independently of each other and are therefore two 'asynchronous' HVAC systems. HVDC (as is used for the existing Moyle Interconnector) is most appropriate technology for providing interconnection between asynchronous systems.

EirGrid's long-standing policy and practice for the use of HV underground cable (UGC) and overhead line (OHL) guides the decision on whether to use OHL or UGC whenever a new project is proposed. It is EirGrid's policy that UGC will only be used if all of the following four conditions apply:

- a) An OHL is not feasible
- b) A technically and environmentally acceptable route for UGC can be found.
- c) The effect that the electrical characteristics of UGC have on the transmission network is acceptable and the relatively poorer 'availability' of underground cable is tolerable.
- d) The relatively high cost of the UGC can be justified.

In the case of the proposed 400kV North East Power Lines, EirGrid is of the opinion that OHL is environmentally, technically and economically feasible. As a result EirGrid is obliged to proceed with an OHL proposal for these circuits. In the case of the East-West Interconnector, all of the above four conditions apply and UGC is therefore the appropriate solution.

Indemnification and Compensation

I have heard rumours about possible health effects from the power lines; will EirGrid indemnify my family, guests and me against these possible effects?

EirGrid and ESB are companies, owned by the State. They jointly design, construct, operate and maintain the electricity transmission network. They do this in compliance with all national and international guidelines and in accordance with 'best practice'. They are jointly satisfied from the totality of studies and the views of international authoritative agencies that the balance of evidence is that overhead transmission lines proposed for use do not have any adverse effect on public health. Accordingly, the issue of indemnification in respect of perceived health effects does not arise in the context of the proposed lines.

Will EirGrid be willing to compensate farmers for health effects on their livestock? If so, what will be the basis for calculating such compensation?

As per above, EirGrid and ESB are jointly satisfied from the totality of studies and the views of international authoritative agencies that the balance of evidence is that overhead transmission lines proposed for use do not have any adverse effect on animal health. Accordingly, the issue of compensating for perceived animal health effects does not arise in the context of the proposed lines.

ESB Networks will take every care during the erection and subsequent work on the line to ensure that farmers' operations, including livestock operations, are not impacted. ESB Networks, after consultation with the landowner, shall take all necessary precautions to prevent the straying of livestock and shall compensate the landowner for all loss, damage or claims arising from the loss of such animals and pay compensation for injury or death or loss of the animals where such straying is clearly due to any act or omission on the part of the Board. The Board shall ensure that the local District Veterinary Officer is informed of the entry of ESB vehicles onto a farm with a disease problem and that the Epidemiology Unit of the Department of Agriculture is made aware of ESB activities in TB affected areas.

Property

I am concerned that my house may lose value as a result of the new power lines. How will EirGrid measure property devaluation?

EirGrid will ensure that every reasonable effort is made to minimise the impact of the 400kV overhead lines on adjacent householders, whether in relation to visual amenity or any perceived environmental emissions. In the case of visual impact this will include, among other things:

- the use of a less visually intrusive pylon design than was used in the past;
- the careful positioning of pylons in agreement with landowners where possible
- the implementation of any other reasonable mitigation measures that are agreed with potentially affected property owners.

In circumstances where these potential impacts will be mitigated, EirGrid does not perceive that there will be any significant depreciation in the value of property in the vicinity of the proposed overhead lines, over and above the depreciation in the property market generally. Where land or wayleaves are required in order to facilitate the construction and operation of the proposed overhead line, a scheme of compensation has been put in place for the assessment of any loss in the value of lands affected.

What are EirGrid's powers in relation to entering property, prior to submitting plans to An Bord Pleanála? Cite any relevant legislation or Court decisions.

Without prejudice to such rights, EirGrid is not proposing to rely on statutory powers to enter land 'prior to submitting plans to An Bord Pleanála'. Rather, entry onto lands is being approached on a voluntary basis. While EirGrid is endeavouring to meet landowners prior to the application, this is primarily to hear landowner views to ascertain whether and how the proposed overhead line might impact upon them. Talking with landowners at this stage will enable mitigation measures to be appropriately identified and, where possible, included in the planning application.

Construction

What are the average, minimum, and maximum distances between each pylon tower?

The placement of pylons across the landscape is dependent on many factors, some of which are:

- Terrain
- Design constraints
- Landowner input into location
- Environmental considerations

The draft design for the Cavan-Tyrone 400kV power line has a maximum distance between pylon towers of 498m, a minimum of 206m, and an average of 365m. The corresponding distances between pylon towers for the Meath-Cavan 400kV power line are 450m, 200m, and 330m respectively.

Who is responsible for a ring fence to be placed around the base of each tower?

ESB Networks will be responsible for the construction of the overhead line. During the construction period it may be necessary, from time to time, to place temporary fencing around a pylon site for safety reasons. The erection, maintenance and removal of this fencing will be the responsibility of ESB Networks.

Once construction is complete and the line is in service, it is not normal practice to have permanent fencing around pylons. Farm animals can, and do, graze in between the legs of pylons. On occasion however, particularly where pylons are located in stud farms, a landowner has requested that a fence be placed around a specific pylon and EirGrid and ESB Networks have accommodated such requests. Such a fence is erected by ESB Networks, while the landowner is responsible for its subsequent maintenance.

Has my land been assessed physically and evaluated as suitable land for towers?

EirGrid's consultants, ESBI and Tobin Consulting Engineers, have utilised a variety of techniques to assess the land, including aerial photography, drive-by land reviews, submissions from the public and site visits. Every effort is made to ensure that landowners have agreed in advance to a site visit.

Contact Us

EirGrid is committed to engaging with the local community and all interested stakeholders at every stage in the project's development. Please get in touch if you would like to meet with the project team or have any further queries.

Information Centres:

Navan Information Centre

Number 1, Newbridge, Athlumney,
Navan, Co. Meath.

Open: Tuesdays, 1 pm to 7 pm or
outside these hours upon request.

Drop in, or call 1890.25.26.90 to
make an appointment.

See: www.eirgrid.com

Lo-call: 1890.25.26.90

Email: meathcavanpower@eirgrid.com or
cavantyroneinterconnector@eirgrid.com

Carrickmacross Information Centre

Carrickmacross Workhouse, Shercock Road,
Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan.

Open: Wednesdays 1pm to 7pm or
outside these hours upon request.

Drop in, or call 1890.25.26.90 to
make an appointment.