North Connacht 110 kV Project

EirGrid Capital Project 0816

Project Information Brochure
Summer 2018

EIRGRID

The current. The future.

Who are EirGrid and what do we do?

EirGrid is responsible for a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity – now, and in the future.

We develop, manage and operate the electricity transmission grid. This brings power from where it is generated to where it is needed throughout Ireland. We use the grid to supply power to industry and businesses that use large amounts of electricity. The grid also powers the distribution network. This supplies the electricity you use every day in your homes, businesses, schools, hospitals and farms.

Background to this project

EirGrid is legally obliged to connect those who generate electricity. This means we must develop the grid in response to plans for new electricity generation, such as wind farms.

There is a large amount of electricity generated by wind farms in North Connacht and there is more planned over the coming years.

The level of renewable generation is greater than the capacity of the local electricity network. This means we have to look at ways at improving the electricity infrastructure in the region.

Our original proposal was the Grid West project, a large scale development based on 400 kV technology. However, by June 2017 the amount of planned renewable generation capacity in the region had dropped by half and Grid West was no longer required.

EirGrid announced in September 2017 that the large-scale Grid West project was no longer needed. We anticipated then that the reduced amount of renewable energy generated could be met through a smaller 110 kV development. That remains the case and we are now bringing forward the North Connacht 110 kV project.

The start point for the North Connacht project will be at the Moy substation near Ballina. The end point will be either Tonroe substation near Ballaghaderreen or Srananagh substation near Sligo. Routes between Moy and the two possible end points will be identified at a later stage of the project.

The project will be a 110 kV overhead line or underground cable. If an overhead line is used the majority of the line would be carried on twin pole sets.

The development is at step three of our new six-step approach to developing the grid and consulting with stakeholders.

This process, as detailed in our 'Have Your Say' publication, is available on www.eirgrid.com.

The first two steps identified the need for the project and a number of possible technology options. Step three involves selecting the best performing technology option.

Why do we need this project?

The Irish Government has mandated that 40% of electricity consumption is to be met by renewable energy. The vast majority of this renewable energy will come from wind farms. EirGrid is required by law to connect them to the national grid.

The North Connacht project will facilitate the transport of this energy across the country. It will also improve security of supply for customers across North Connacht and provide the robust electricity infrastructure required by industry.

Technology Options

As part of our six-step approach to developing the grid, we have considered a range of technologies and developed a long list of possible options to meet the need of this project.

We then looked at the technical benefits and expected cost of each option. As a result we have now identified four possible options which we are seeking your views on.

This list contains two overhead line options and two underground cable options, plus related upgrade works that are required on existing lines. Full details of that assessment are available on our website.

The four options are as follows:

- 1A –Moy (Ballina) – Tonroe (Ballaghaderreen) 110 kV – overhead line plus 32 km upgrade from Tonroe to Flagford;
- 1B –Moy (Ballina) – Tonroe (Ballaghaderreen)110 kV – underground cable plus 32 km upgrade from Tonroe to Flagford;
- 2A –Moy (Ballina) – Srananagh (Sligo) 110 kV – overhead line plus 58 km upgrade from Castlebar to Cloon;
- 2B –Moy (Ballina) – Srananagh (Sligo) 110 kV – underground cable;

In summary, the start point will be at Moy substation near Ballina. The end point will be at Tonroe substation near Ballaghaderreen or Srananagh substation near Sligo. The project will be either a 110 kV overhead line or underground cable. Three of the options require upgrade work on existing lines.

Feedback

We are now seeking feedback from the public, community groups and other stakeholders. This feedback, along with social, economic, environmental and technical considerations, will help us to identify the best technology option.

Step three does not select a route for the project. The selection of a route will take place at Step four, following further consultation with stakeholders and the public.

How we develop projects

Many people might not take an active interest in a project until we identify a precise route. However, it is important that we gather your views before this point.

We want you to know how and why we plan our projects, so you can give us your feedback as early as possible.

Designing an electricity transmission project can be a complex and lengthy process.

Because of this, we use a consistent project planning process to explore options and make decisions. This means we follow the same steps for every project.

The decision-making tools we use, and the amount of engagement we carry out at each step, depends on the scale and complexity of each project.

Step 1
How do we identify the future needs of the electricity grid?

Step 2
What technologies can meet these needs?

Step 3
What's the best option and what area may be affected?

Step 4
Where exactly should we build?

Step 5
The planning process

Step 6
Construction, energisation and benefit sharing

Step 3 What's the best option and what area may be affected?

Step 4 Where exactly should we build?

Step 5 The planning process

Step 6 Construction, energisation and benefit sharing

Step 3 At a glance

What's happening?

We consider technology options in more detail. We also look at the broad study areas we may use for possible site locations, and we then narrow our analysis to a preferred option and its study area.

How long will this take?

Until the end of this autumn.

What can you influence?

You will be able to influence our choice of technology, and where we build the project. We want your feedback on which option you prefer for this project.

How can I get involved?

In Step 3, we will speak to environment and planning agencies, elected representatives and to specialist representative groups. We may also engage at local level with members of the public, landowners, and local representatives from the potential project areas.

We want to hear from you. If would like to feedback on this project, or find out more information contact +353 (0)1 677 1700, or northconnachtproject@eirgrid.com.

You can also contact our Community Liaison Officer, Eoghan O'Sullivan on +353 87 247 7732 or eoghan.osullivan@eirgrid.com.

What have we decided at the end of this step?

At the end of this step we will have selected a preferred technology option.

Future Plans

We will gather all views at this step of the project which will help us decide what is the best option. When the technology option is selected we will publish a report containing the details of our assessment. That report will be available on the EirGrid website. It will include a summary of all information we receive and how that feedback was considered. We publish this report to demonstrate transparency in our approach. Following this, we will then move to the next step which is to identify where the project will be built.

We will continue to engage with stakeholders, local communities, organisations and individuals to assist in further information gathering and to keep all stakeholders and interested parties fully informed about the project.

This project is considered national strategic infrastructure, as set out in law. Therefore a planning application will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála. The planning process takes place at Step five. At the moment, we expect that a planning application will probably not be submitted until 2020.

Consistent with industry arrangements, in 2022 ESB Networks is expected to start a two-year construction programme and in 2024 we plan for it to go live.

Project Timelines and Next Steps

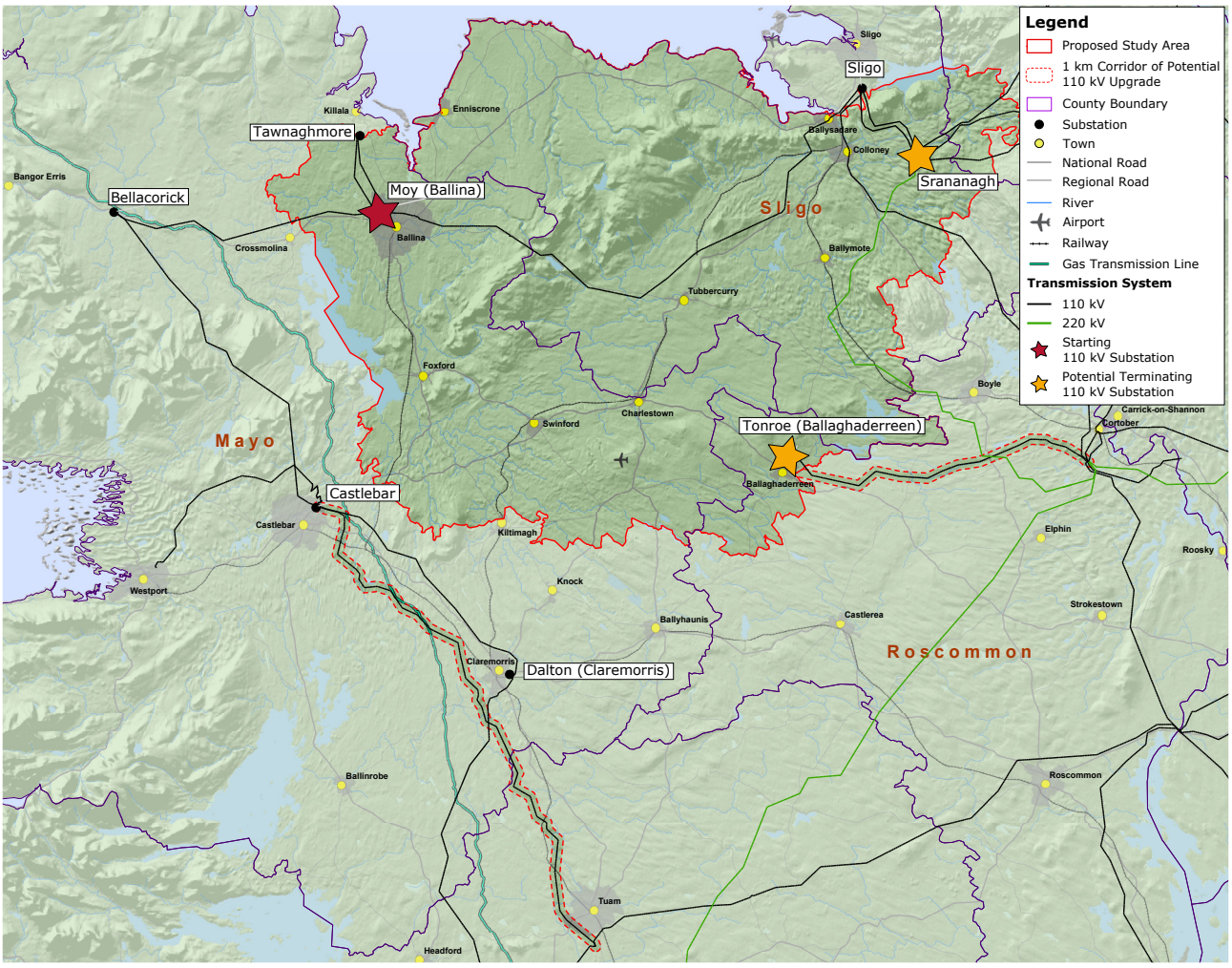
What's happening on the project now?

The four technology solutions will be analysed in Step three to determine the best performing option. They will be evaluated in terms of social, economic and technical performance. This also involves looking at environmental concerns and deliverability.

As part of this process, we are engaging with stakeholders, local communities, organisations and individuals and inviting them to make submissions by 23rd July. This will feed into the selection of the best performing technology option.

Our team is available to meet and discuss this project with you.

Study Area for North Connacht 110 kV Project



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