

MAJOR NEW ELECTRICITY POWER LINK FOR LEINSTER & MUNSTER TO ENSURE A SECURE AND RELIABLE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY, PROVIDE A PLATFORM FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE & CLEAN ENERGY

PUBLIC CONSULTATION OPENS TODAY

Cork, 12TH April 2012: Public consultation starts today on the Grid Link Project, an estimated €500 million project planned by EirGrid to upgrade the electricity grid that will deliver a wide range of benefits to the national and regional economies. The development will involve the construction of a new power line linking Leinster and Munster.

Launching the Grid Link Project in Cork today Mr. Pat Rabbitte, T.D., Minister for Communications, Energy & Natural Resources, said it will provide a secure, long-term electricity supply for homes and businesses across the south and east of the country.

He said: “The Grid Link Project will reinforce the electricity grid and have direct economic benefits for our local communities. I encourage people to engage in the public consultation and provide feedback to EirGrid.”

EirGrid carried out a detailed analysis of the national transmission grid to identify the level of reinforcement required to ensure a secure electricity supply and to enable the country achieve its renewable energy targets. This analysis identified a capacity shortfall in the south and east of the country.

Dermot Byrne, chief executive of EirGrid, said: “This is a vital development strengthening the electricity grid across the south and east of the country that will help empower economic growth and enable Ireland to meet its renewable energy targets.

“The project will help enable Ireland to shift from a heavy reliance on imported fossil fuels to more sustainable sources of energy. It will also help ensure that the most efficient electricity generators in the south and east are utilised in the most effective way,” he added.

Seán Murphy, head of policy & communications at Chambers Ireland, said: “EirGrid’s initiative to reinforce the grid in the south and east of the country will ensure that the area is well positioned to deal with future growth in energy demand in the medium term. A robust and future-proofed energy infrastructure is a vital prerequisite for new industries that may be attracted to locate in the region. The Grid Link Project is a significant opportunity that will underpin the attractiveness of the area. It will also assure electricity availability for existing homes, farms and businesses while underpinning the development of the renewable energy sector. This in turn will create new job opportunities. For these reasons, we welcome EirGrid’s plans.”

EirGrid has established a dedicated project team that has identified a proposed study area within which the project will be located. The project team will undertake detailed studies and extensive public consultation over the coming years to determine constraints that will influence the siting and route selection.

The initial proposed project study area, spanning counties Carlow, Cork, Dublin, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Limerick, Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford and Wicklow, is now the subject of non-statutory public consultation. This first stage of consultation will run for an eight-week period from today, Thursday 12th April 2012 to Friday 8th June 2012. For more information visit www.eirgridprojects.com/gridlink

“During this first stage of public consultation, EirGrid is seeking comment on the proposed study area map, feedback on what constraints should be identified and on how EirGrid should develop corridors for the project,” said John Lowry, the Grid Link Project manager. “This is a non-statutory consultation that will provide all interested individuals and organisations an opportunity to feed into the early development of the project.”

Based on assessments to date, EirGrid has determined that the optimum solution is the construction of a 400 kV alternating current (AC) overhead line linking Cork and Kildare via Wexford. EirGrid will review its technology analysis at key stages throughout the project to ensure it remains valid.

EirGrid has established a comprehensive information service to inform people about the project, answer their questions, provide access to maps and technical documentation and hear their views. Information offices will open in New Ross, Carlow, Carrick-on-Suir and Midleton from next Monday, 16th April. A lo-call information line, 1890-422 122, is operated during office hours and public open days will be held in May. People may also email the project to gridlink@eirgrid.com.

The Grid Link Project is a key element of EirGrid’s Grid25 strategy - a €3.2 billion investment in developing and upgrading Ireland’s electricity transmission grid.

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