

The Grid West Project



Lead Consultant's Stage 1 Report

Volume 3 Appendix 5.1

Report and Feedback on Second Round of Public Consultation



March 2013



REPORT

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Grid West Project

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1 INTRODUCTION

The second round of consultation on the Grid West project took place over a 4 week period from August 21st to September 21st. This document sets out the approach to consultation, details of how the project team engaged with the general public and relevant stakeholders and provides an overview of feedback received over the course of the period of consultation.

1.1 THE GRID WEST PROJECT

The Grid West project will deliver 21st century energy infrastructure to the west of Ireland. It is run by EirGrid, the operators of the national electricity grid, and is one of a series of projects within the Grid25 programme. Grid25 is a national programme throughout the country to develop and upgrade the national electricity transmission network over the next thirteen years. The Grid West project is the largest Grid25 project in the west, initially accounting for €240 million of the investment earmarked for the region.

By connecting the electricity generated by the region's huge renewable energy resources, the Grid West project will facilitate significant job creation and investment. It will contribute to national recovery and growth while at the same time allowing the region to attract inward investment that requires a strong reliable source of power.

1.2 WHY IS IT NEEDED?

The existing transmission infrastructure in the region needs substantial investment to accommodate the west's increasing level of renewable generation.

The Grid West project will initially consist of a new high capacity power circuit linking the Bellacorick area of County Mayo to a strong point on the transmission grid. Based on the region's renewable potential, it is envisaged that, in time, the project will involve two high capacity power lines from the Bellacorick area to both Cashla in County Galway and Flagford in County Roscommon. The pace at which a second line is installed is dependent on a number of factors including the speed at which further renewable energy generation is developed in the region.

1.3 TIMELINE FOR PROJECT

Developing the Grid West project involves a number of steps over the coming years. Assuming no delays in the planning or consultation processes and no significant reductions in the volume of wind development planned in Mayo, the Grid West project is expected to be completed by late 2019. The public and other stakeholders are being consulted extensively through a series of consultations to gather information and feedback from the earliest stages of project development right through to the completion of the project. This is in accordance with EirGrid's comprehensive consultation roadmap (as attached below) which ensures that the views of the public and other stakeholders interested in the project will be heard.

Plate 1-1 EirGrid Project Development & Consultation Roadmap

You are Here



The project is currently at Stage 1 which commenced with the identification of the study area. Following the launch of the project in May 2012, a first round of public consultation took place, including a series of open days, direct engagement with groups and individuals in the region and the promotion of various channels of engagement including an information office, dedicated phone line and project website.

Over the course of the next three years or so, the project team will update members of the public directly in accordance with the project roadmap and will seek views in relation to specific studies and reports, which have a direct influence on the development of the project. The project team remains open to taking on board views and submissions and has a number of dedicated channels by which the public can engage with the project.

2 SECOND ROUND OF CONSULTATION

EirGrid is committed to early, transparent engagement and consultation with the general public. The second round of public consultation took place over a 4 week period from 21st August to 21st September 2012.

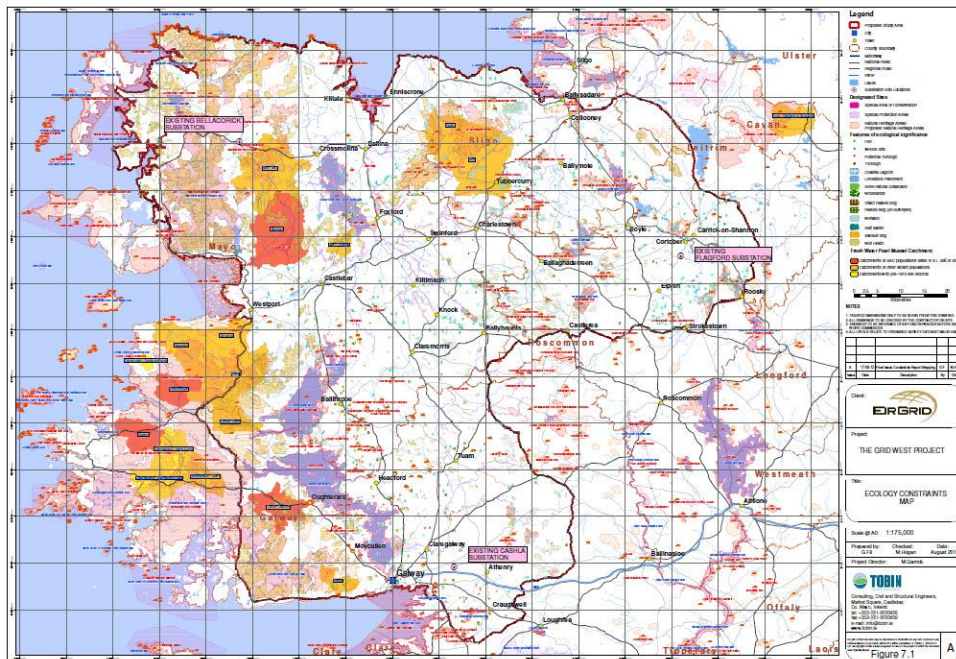
2.1 CONSTRAINTS

This second round of public consultation focused on presenting and consulting on the information gathered to date on the project study area. This information was compiled into a Constraints Report, which was published on 21st August, and included a series of detailed maps showing key points of note which may have a bearing on the project. All material was made available on the project website at www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest and also for public viewing at the information centre in Castlebar.

These constraints range from heritage sites to national monuments, areas designated for conservation, towns, villages and all existing infrastructure such as transmission lines, roads and railways. The information was categorised and captured as follows:

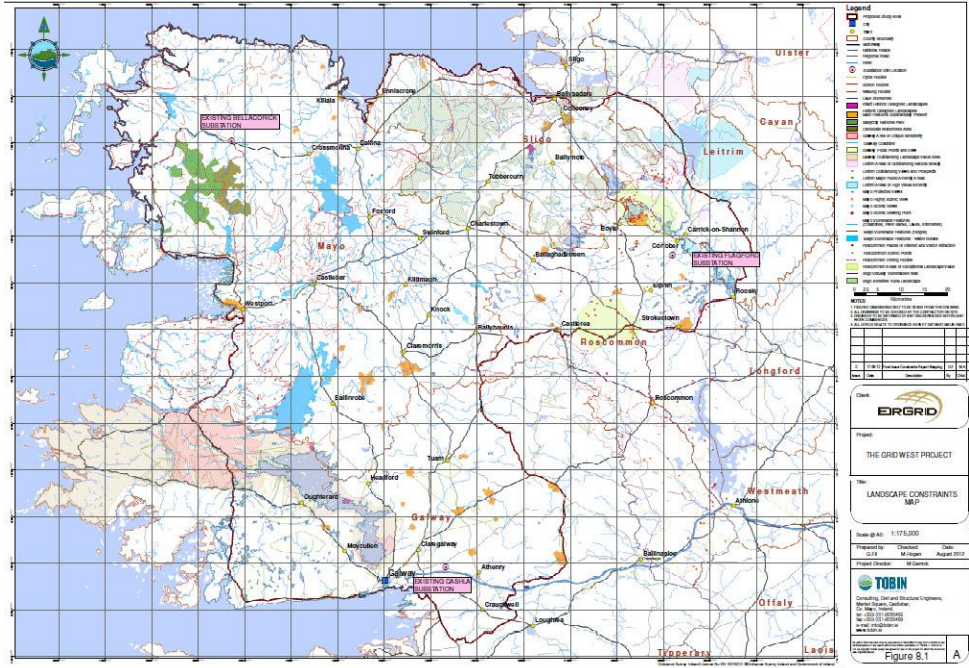
- **Ecology:** a review of conservation designated areas, including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Areas of Protection (SPAs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and other sites of ecological interest (refer to Figure 2-1 below).

Figure 2-1: Ecology Constraints Map



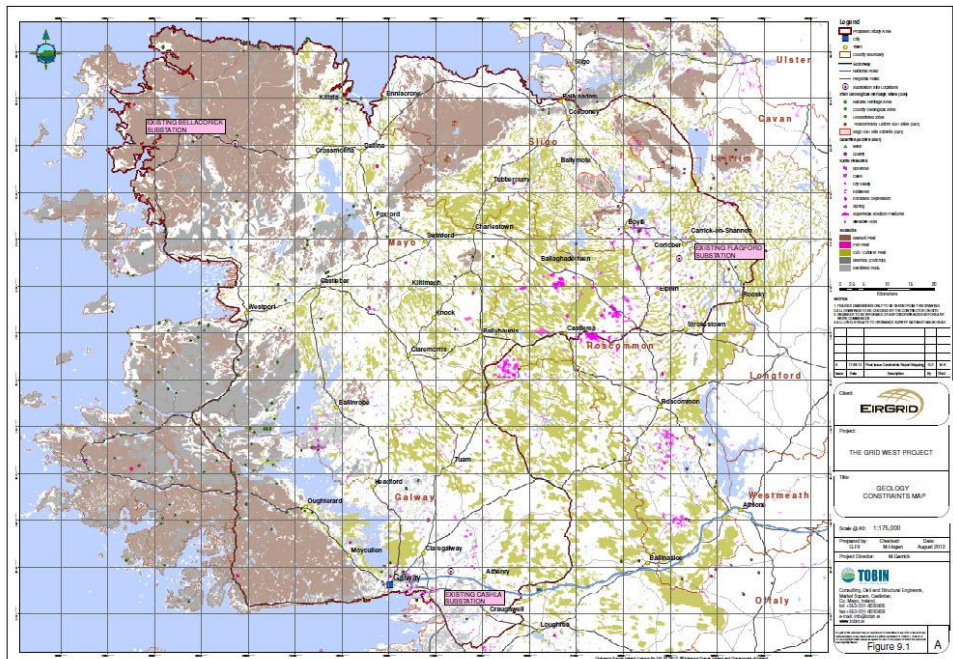
- **Landscape:** a review was undertaken in order to determine scenic views, sensitive landscapes and recreation routes (refer to Figure 2-2 below).

Figure 2-2: Landscape Constraints Map



- **Geology:** a review of soils, subsoils and bedrock (refer to Figure 2-3 below).

Figure 2-3: Geology Constraints Map





This involved:

- Updating of Grid West **project website** on 21st August 2012 with full details of second round of public consultation, forthcoming open days, links to Constraints Report, guide to Constraints Report, an information brochure and all published map.
- Publication of a second **information brochure** outlining details of the project, the constraints report and the welcoming of feedback from the general public along with details of how feedback can be submitted (copy attached at Annex 2.1).
- Development and publication of a **Guide to Constraints Report**, which was made available to the general public at open days and at the information centre (copy attached at Annex 2.2).
- Separately publishing and making available the **Executive Summary of the Constraints Report**, also at information days and at the information centre in Castlebar, which provided an accessible overview to the Constraints Report (copy attached at Annex 2.3).
- Promotion via local radio and papers of the commencement of the second round of consultation (copy of **advertisement** attached at Annex 2.4).
- Issue of a **press release** to local media with full details of the second round of consultation and tailored to individual regions with details of relevant open days in their county / local area (copy of press release attached at annex 2.5).
- **Media notification** to local media inviting them to attend open day in their local area and **direct contact with individual journalists** to brief them on detail of constraints report and forthcoming open days.
- **Radio interviews** with local radio conducted in and around the open days.
- Submission of an opinion piece to the Western People, which was published on 21st August.
- Distribution of **posters** advertising the open days to local libraries via country librarians and also the direct postering in towns where open days were scheduled to take place (copy of poster attached at Annex 2.6).
- The **issue of 269 letters and 147** emails to a) local representatives, b) members of the general public who had previously engaged with the project, c) community groups and d) relevant business associations, providing them with details of the information brochure and forthcoming round of open days.
- The issue of emails to 700 groups via the Mayo County Community Forum, a similar number via the Galway County Community Forum and to all associated groups of the Leitrim Development Company.
- The issue of a **follow- up press release** after the open days with reminders for people to engage with the project and of our channels of communications (copy attached at Annex 2.7).

2.4 OPEN DAYS

A series of five open days were held across the region from the 28th August to 5th September. Previous open days have been held in Kiltane, Ballina, Tuam and Ballaghaderreen. Open day locations are selected on the basis of their geographical spread across the region and also with the



objective of visiting a new town / area where appropriate to the project in order to engage with as many members of the general public as possible.

The open days took place from 1pm-8pm to allow as many people as possible to attend at a convenient time of the day to them. A total of 135 individuals attended over the course of the five open days. Members of the project team were on hand to greet members of the public each day to take them through details of the project, the constraints report and address any issues raised by the attendees. On average 12-15 Grid West project personnel were made available at each event. These included environmental and engineering specialists, ensuring that where specific environmental queries were raised, a specialist was available to address these.

The open days took place at:

- Kiltane GAA Club, Belmullet, County Mayo - Tuesday 28th August
- Teach Laighne, Tubbercurry, County Sligo - Wednesday 29th August
- Landmark Hotel, Carrick-on-Shannon, County Leitrim - Thursday 29th August
- McWilliam Park Hotel, Claremorris, County Mayo - Tuesday 4th September
- Raheen Woods Hotel, Athenry, County Galway - Wednesday 5th September

Project information was presented via display boards which were set up at each of the open day locations. Members of the public were guided through these by members of the project team. These comprised:

1. An overview of the general transmission network
2. A map of the project study area
3. Key benefits from the project
4. Composite map with details of all the constraints captured
5. Population Density map
6. Landscape map
7. Ecology map
8. Culture and Heritage map
9. Utilities and Infrastructure map

The entire range of constraints maps were made available for viewing at a central table. Laptops were also available to the general public who wished to view an interactive mapping programme or to zoom in on a particular area or townland.

Members of the public were given a series of information leaflets on the project including the information brochure, guide to constraints report and an executive summary of the constraints report. Full copies of the constraints report, the EMF brochure, and EirGrid's Approach to the Development of Electricity Transmission Lines were also available for interested members of the public.

2.5 MEDIA RELATIONS

Media relations were used extensively to promote details of the commencement of the second round of consultation to members of the public. A press release was issued in line with the publication of the constraints report, highlighting that the second round of public consultation had commenced and that five open days were to take place across the west. The release was tailored for individual publications, specifically highlighting open days in Mayo for media in the Mayo region and in Roscommon for Roscommon media and so on. This was followed up directly with the individual media outlets and media were also contacted via email and follow up phone calls to invite them to attend at open days relevant to their publication.

Members of the communications team contacted a series of radio stations and secured interviews with project representatives on Ocean FM (27th August), Radió na Gaeltachta (27th August) and Galway Bay FM (12th September). Media were also followed up with a press release post open days across the region noting the success of the events and the level of interest from members of the public. Photography from the open days was also issued to local media.

Details of the second round of consultation were carried by the:

- Connaught Telegraph, 21st August
- Sligo Weekender, 21st August
- Western People; Opinion Piece by Project Manager Alan McHugh and Article, 21st August
- Tuam Herald, 23rd August
- Mayo Advertiser, 24th August
- Leitrim Observer, 24th August
- Sligo Weekender, 28th August
- Mayo News, 28th August

Articles noting the positive feedback received by EirGrid at open days and the importance of people continuing to engage via the various channels were also carried after the open days by the:

- Leitrim Observer, 7th September
- Western People, 25th September

Significant advertisements were placed in local media following publication of the constraints report, noting the commencement of the second round of consultation and inviting members of the public to attend an open day in their area.

These were placed in:

- Connaught/City Tribune
- Connaught Telegraph
- Mayo News
- Leitrim Observer
- Roscommon Herald
- Sligo Champion
- Tuam Herald
- Western People
- Galway Bay FM
- MidWest Radio
- Ocean FM
- Shannonside FM

There have been ongoing one-one meetings with local and national media to secure engagement with the project team and to raise awareness and promote the project.

2.6 PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The project team acknowledges the importance of ongoing engagement with political representatives, particularly recognising their role as conduits of information for local constituents. The Grid West project team has sought to closely engage with political representatives since the outset of the project and has already met with the majority of representatives throughout the region on a one to one basis or via individual presentations to county councils.

Political representatives were issued letters directly following the publication of the constraints reports with full details of the second round of consultation and the forthcoming series of open days in the study area. This was followed up by a subsequent reminder email and telephone calls directly to political representatives in advance of the open days to encourage attendance and ensure they were aware of the consultation opportunity for their constituents. There was a positive level of feedback from political representatives, particularly on phone calls reminding people of the open days.

The project team also followed up with all relevant public bodies throughout the study area with details of the constraints report, the information brochure and executive summary of the constraints report. (Full list of those contacted attached in Appendix 13).

2.7 CONSULTATION PERIOD

The consultation period concluded on 21st September 2012, however submissions from the general public continue to be welcomed on the project. EirGrid expect to publish the Stage One Report with potential route corridors in 2013 and will engage in further consultation with the general public and stakeholders across the study area.



3 FEEDBACK REVIEW PROCESS

EirGrid is grateful to all who engaged with the process, be it by email, phone, post, by calling in to the information centre or attending one of the five open days which took place across the region. The primary objective for this phase of consultation was to present and consult on the information gathered to date on the project study area.

The project team recorded all feedback received from the general public and stakeholders and submissions received were very useful in finalising work on the next stage of the project.

Feedback from the open days was generally positive, with recognition of the benefits of infrastructural investment. There was also a general consensus that the level of detail captured in the constraints mapping was very comprehensive. Stakeholders gave some very valuable local insight, particularly in relation to locally significant sites, which were noted in detail by the project team for consideration.

Feedback received was considered and specific questions and queries were responded to. The project team then analysed the feedback and categorised it under the following broad headings, which are discussed below in greater detail.

- The importance of a comprehensive public consultation
 - Next stage of the project and route selection
 - How the project will progress

- Comments on the potential impact on environment, ecology and heritage
 - Cultural heritage
 - Flooding
 - Impact on landowners
 - Visual impact
 - Impact of wind farm development

- Structural design and queries relating to technology, substations and future developments
 - Queries in relation to peaking plant development
 - Proximity to houses
 - Tower design
 - Use of overhead lines

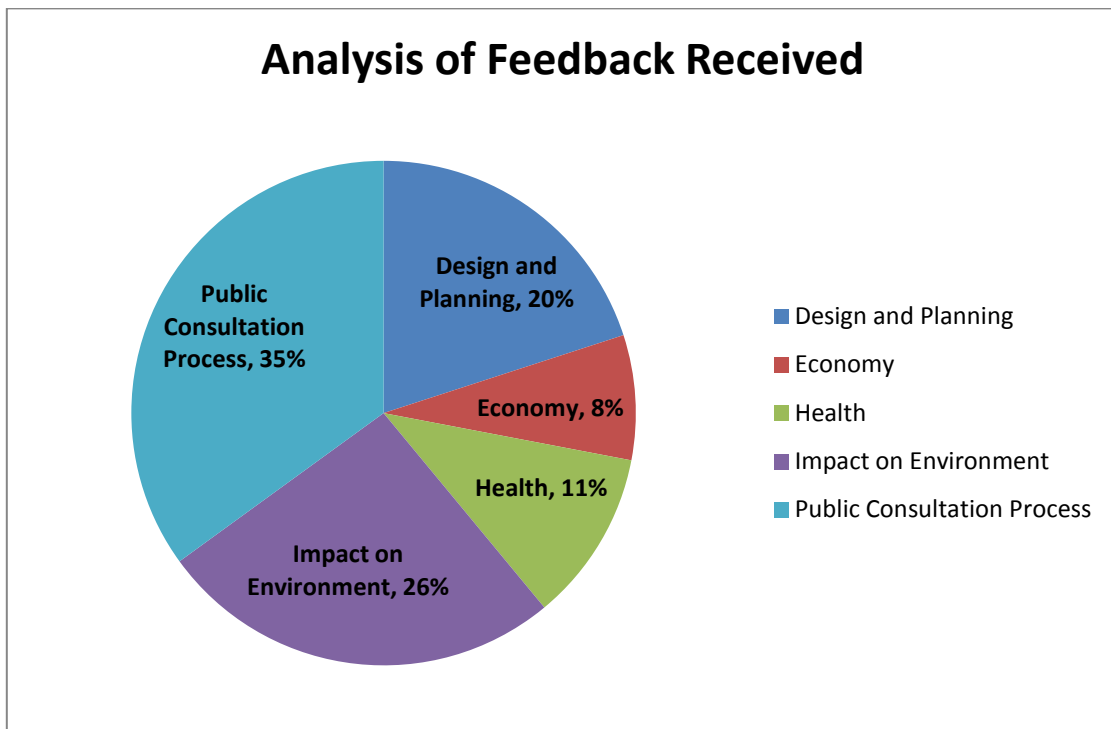
- Questions regarding perceived health effects in relation to electricity transmission lines
 - Electromagnetic Fields
 - Health implications of development

- The economic benefit of the project – jobs, renewable development, inward investment to the region
 - Employment
 - Community gain
 - Beneficial implications of wind energy

Each query raised by a stakeholder was noted by the project team members. The review of this stakeholder feedback provides general information and guidance on issues to be considered by the project team.

3.1 CONSULTATION FEEDBACK CHART

Figure 3-1: Consultation Feedback



3.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF A COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

This was the most recurring theme, accounting for 35% of feedback. Whilst the extent of public consultation to date was appreciated, the need for extensive on-going consultation was highlighted in several submissions, especially with landowners and community groups.

There was broad support for the project and for the process of consultation, with recognition of the potential development benefits for a project of this nature for the western region.



For example, one typical submission emphasised the importance of courteous respect in explaining the project to individual farmers likely to be affected and in explaining the benefits in clear, simple terms.

A number of submissions highlighted the believed ineffectiveness of consultation processes previously carried out by other infrastructure projects in the region, noting how it was felt that developers had alienated local communities and created widespread opposition to individual projects. It was commented that this could potentially have an adverse effect on how communities engage with future infrastructural projects, and the importance of a transparent and genuine public consultation process. Some submissions also made reference to the Flagford-Srananagh 220kV project, noting that there are legacy issues around the Boyle area resulting from this project.

Submissions reflected positively on the detail contained in the constraints maps and the level of information gathered by the team, which was of interest to the majority of stakeholders. A number of stakeholders highlighted their wish to be kept informed of the project and progress as it moved forward. There were some submissions relating to what is perceived as the slow development of the project. For example, one submission asked why EirGrid was not developing the project at a quicker pace, noting the importance of consultation and not confrontation with the local community. A separate submission also noted that there was already a gas line routed through the stakeholders land and that he wished to see the electricity line being built quicker. Another submission queried why the development had not been built before now given the renewable energy projects already underway in the area.

Submissions were received highlighting the potential for engagement with schools in local areas. There was interest in particular in how details of the ongoing work could be brought to life for local schools demonstrating to pupils the mapping and environmental work associated with a large scale infrastructure project.

There was also particular interest in how the routes will be selected, and which are the most likely at this stage of the project. Stakeholders were advised that no decision has yet been made on this matter.

3.3 COMMENTS ON THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON ENVIRONMENT, ECOLOGY AND HERITAGE

26% of feedback received was in relation to the environment, with particular focus on the environmental impact on agricultural land and the visual impact, particularly the visual impact of related developments, such as wind farms. There was also some concern expressed about the scenic impact of the development, in an area which heavily relies on tourism. Stakeholders were also concerned that the development could disturb the natural flood plains in the area which could cause flooding in the future. A separate submission noted that the area around Cashla station is prone to flooding as well as the area to the north west of Cashla.



The following are some examples of specific environmental comments / issues raised by individual stakeholders:

- A peat area around Bellacorick which is cut peak rather than blanket
- The scenic beauty of Ballycroy National Park
- The church south of the townland in Bonniclon is no longer present, only a graveyard remains at that site
- A helicopter pad at Dooncarton Radar Station
- Heritage sites, specifically burial sites and maybe even famine burial sites are located around the Kiltane area
- Importance of a lake that provides high quality water to Tubbercurry
- Hooper Swans area below Lough Nubricklessy Bog at Turloughmore
- Local walkways were noted as significant including a local walk between Drumsna and Jamestown, the Trollope Trail and the Foxford Way and Loop Walks around Callow Lake, and also mountain biking trails particularly one west of Killagh
- Doon of Drumsna which was noted as a major unexcavated archaeological feature
- The bend of the Shannon at Jamestown was referenced as being of great heritage significance as the original ford of the Shannon, linking Connaught and Ulster.

3.4 STRUCTURAL DESIGN AND QUERIES RELATING TO TECHNOLOGY, SUBSTATIONS AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Design and planning accounted for 20% of feedback, especially the future developments that could take place subsequent to the Grid West project. There were a number of submissions on whether the Flagford or Cashla line is likely to be developed first and also submissions in relation to future plans beyond Grid West for the region and how regularly the Grid25 Plan is updated. The most notable concerns were in relation to the overgrounding of the line, sub stations and peaking plants and wind farm developments.

The design of the line and the use of overground or underground lines were raised in many submissions. There was some feedback from stakeholders that if overhead lines are to be used it would need to be for more than economic reasons. Another separate submission noted that EirGrid would need to be very clear with the local community on their approach to overgrounding for the development.

There was also concern expressed by stakeholders in relation to the number of lines already going into the Cashla substation and the additional voltage to be carried on existing transmission lines with the addition of a 400kV line to the area. Submissions asked specifically if it would be possible to underground in this area specifically. Queries were also raised in relation to the voltage with one submission asking if there were higher than 400kV lines in use elsewhere in the world, and if Ireland would need higher voltage looking ahead to future needs.



A number of submissions also raised questions in relation to the design of towers, tower spacing and height and the proximity of towers to houses. It was noted by one stakeholder that it would be useful to show a photomontage of transmission towers at a future open day.

The size of substations required for this project and how big an area would be required for substations was also a recurring theme in submissions.

Wind farms were a recurring theme with many stakeholders referencing the renewable capacity in the west and supportive of the need to develop the grid to support wind farm connections. Wind farm developers also made direct submissions interested specifically in the timeline for the project and issues in relation to connection and the capacity of the line. For example, a separate submission asked if EirGrid could speed up the implementation of wind farm connection processes ('Gates'), acknowledging that the Grid West project was required for Gate 3.

Many submissions, particularly received at the Athenry open day, raised concerns in relation to a previous unsuccessful (withdrawn) planning application for the development of a power generation plant. There was some concern that the granting of planning permission for the Grid West project may lead to the resubmission of the gas peaking plant planning application.

Micro-generation was raised by some stakeholders with one submission asking how power from a micro-generation scheme would be directed into the national grid. Other comments related to the development of energy at a local level, with one submission indicating that energy should be county based. Another submission noted that society should be looking at micro-generation to resolve the demand for large infrastructure projects.

Some submissions also made reference to broadband and the opportunities for strengthening the network with the laying of fibre optic cables in line with the electricity infrastructure.

3.5 QUESTIONS REGARDING HEALTH EFFECTS IN RELATION TO ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION LINES

11% of all stakeholders' feedback raising concerns about possible health effects, making specific reference to EMF. The EMF brochure was made available to those who expressed concerns of this nature and the project team responded to any questions raised.

Some stakeholders made the general comment that health was likely to be an issue of significant concern to members of the general public. One stakeholder noted his views that the main concern of people in relation to the project would be in relation to health and that the EMF brochure should be an independent document. It was noted that even perceived health concerns may be an issue for the project. An individual submission expressed concern about the level of EMF close to one stakeholder's house which is already located close to power lines emanating to/from the substation at Cashla and the impact of further power through these lines if the 400kV line is built to Cashla.



3.6 THE ECONOMIC BENEFIT OF THE PROJECT – JOBS, RENEWABLE DEVELOPMENT, INWARD INVESTMENT TO THE REGION

Some 8% of feedback related to the economic aspect of the project. The majority of these were in relation to job creation in the region, both from the development itself and the region's potential heightened appeal for new investment. A number of submissions inquired about job opportunities for themselves or a family member.

Submissions raised the employment benefits of the project highlighting the profile of industry around the Bangor Erris area and a separate stakeholder wanted to know what sort of companies would be attracted by the new line.

Some of those who raised economic queries, wondered how the community could gain from the development.

There were also some negative comments on wind farm developments with one submission querying whether wind energy is really viable as a significant contributor to Ireland's power generation.



4 CONCLUSION

EirGrid is committed to a comprehensive consultation process and to meaningful engagement with the local community. The feedback received as part of the second round of consultation is very useful for the project team and plays an important role in guiding our approach to consultation and highlighting individual issues of significance which will be considered in the development of the project.

EirGrid is looking forward to publication of a Stage One report in early 2013 and will engage in an extensive consultation with the general public and relevant stakeholders to seek feedback on the next stage.

ANNEX 2.1

Information Brochure



The Grid West Project

Project Information Brochure
(Stage 1: Information Gathering)

Autumn 2012





The Grid West Project

What is the Grid West project?

The Grid West project will deliver 21st century energy infrastructure to the west of Ireland. Grid25 is EirGrid's plan to develop and upgrade the electricity transmission network from now until 2025. The Grid West project is the largest Grid25 project in the west, initially accounting for E240m of the investment earmarked for the region.

By connecting the electricity generated by the region's huge renewable energy resources, the Grid West project will facilitate significant job creation and investment. It will contribute to national recovery and growth while at the same time allowing the region to attract inward investment that requires a strong reliable source of power.

Why is it needed?

Ireland's national goal is to meet 40% of electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020 – these include wind, wave and tidal energy. The existing transmission infrastructure in the region needs substantial investment to accommodate the west's increasing levels of renewable generation.

What are the benefits of the Grid West project?

Connecting renewable energy

The north west region in Grid25 has the largest (35%) expected regional distribution of renewable generated electricity capacity in Ireland. The area is particularly rich in wind and ocean renewable energy resources, as well as having potential for biomass and other renewable technologies. The current transmission infrastructure is not designed to accommodate the level of renewable energy planned for this region. The Grid West project is critical to connecting this resource to the national grid.

Facilitating job creation and investment

By connecting the region's huge renewable energy resources into the national grid, the Grid West project will facilitate significant job creation and investment through:

- **the construction and maintenance of wind farms and other renewable energy sources.**
- **making the region more attractive for inward investors, particularly those requiring a secure supply of energy.**
- **a significant portion of the E240m investment in Grid West will be made in the western region providing direct and indirect employment.**

Contributing to national recovery and growth

The future economic competitiveness of Ireland will require more efficient use of our resources. 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 while reducing our CO₂ emissions. It also helps prepare Ireland for a future of oil scarcity and significant carbon costs. Electricity from our renewable resources (mainly wind) will produce less carbon waste and help Ireland reach its 40% targets by 2020.

What work has been done so far?

The first round of public consultation on the Grid West project commenced in May 2012. To date EirGrid has:

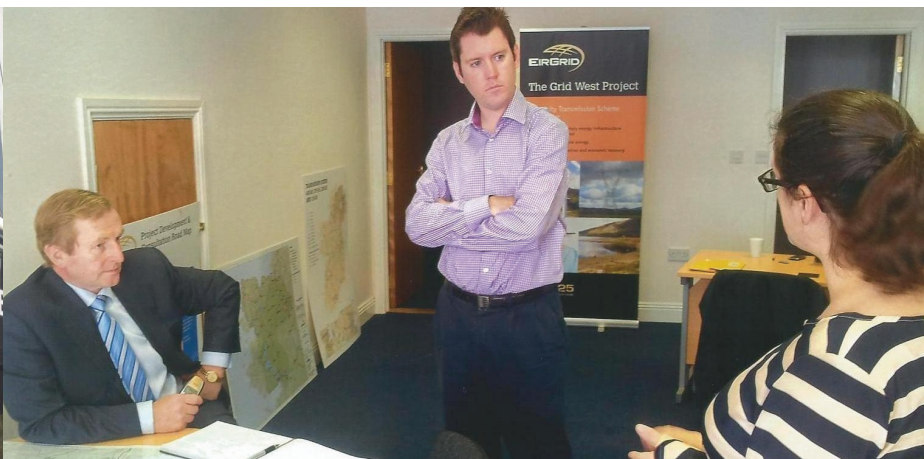
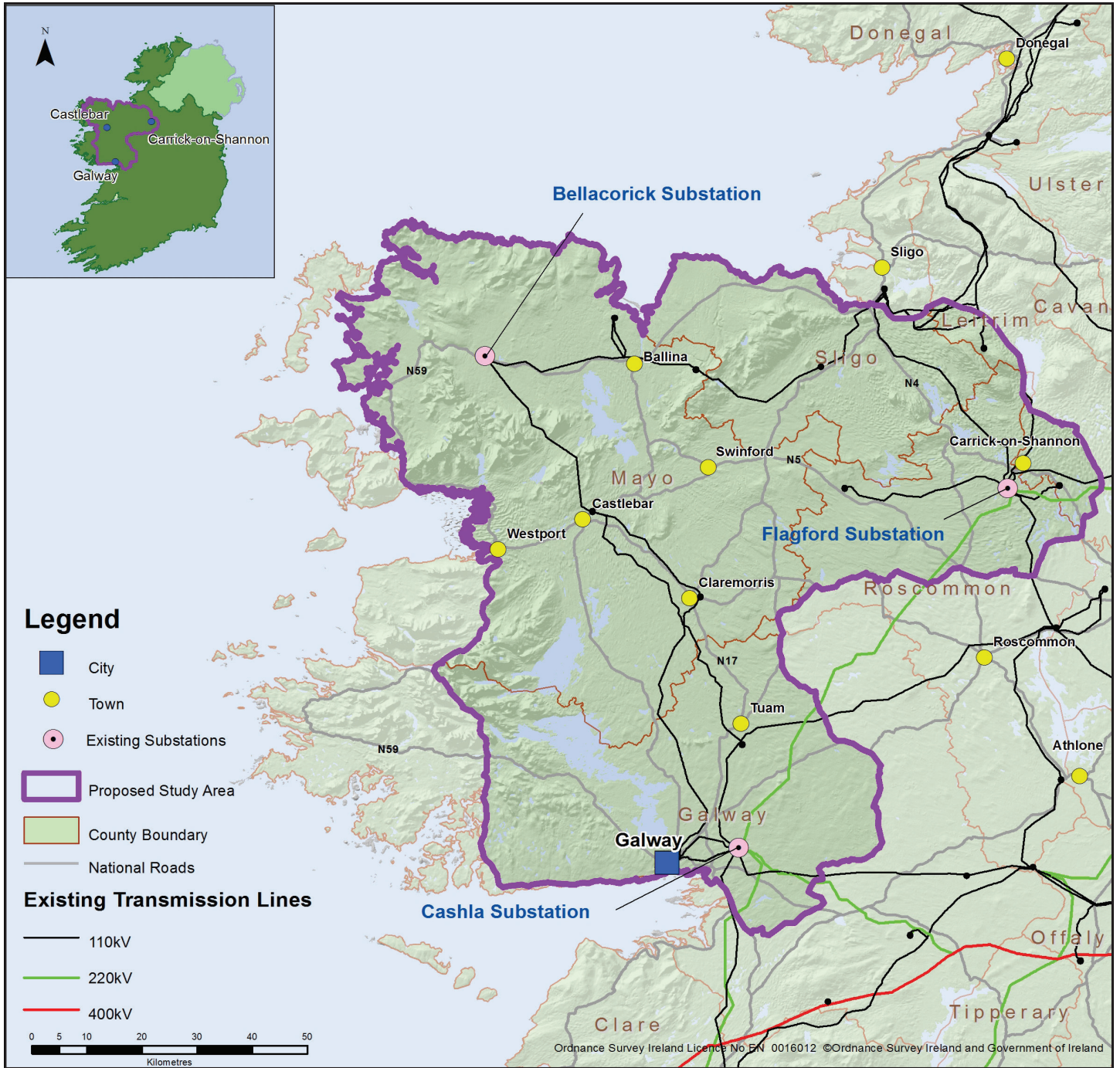
- Launched the consultation with An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny T.D. and Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Pat Rabbitte T.D.
- Published the proposed study area map
- Opened an Information Centre in Castlebar
- Held a series of four open days across the study area
- Held meetings with numerous groups and individuals
- Undertook print and radio advertising
- Set up a dedicated project website, phonenumber and email



At the launch of public consultation on the Grid West project at Turlough House

From L-R - Alan McHugh, Project Manager; Minister Pat Rabbitte TD; An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD; Bernie Gray, Chairperson EirGrid; and Dermot Byrne, Chief Executive EirGrid.

Map of Study Area



At a visit to the Grid West Information Centre, Castlebar. From L-R - An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD; chatting with Ronan O'Keefe and Dr Emma Sweeney from the project team.

What is required?

The Grid West project will initially consist of a new high capacity power circuit linking Bellacorick, Co. Mayo to a strong point on the transmission grid. Based on the region's renewable potential it is envisaged that, in time, the project will involve two high capacity power lines from Bellacorick, Co. Mayo to both Cashla in Co. Galway and Flagford in Co. Roscommon.

The pace at which a second line will be installed is dependent on a number of factors including the speed at which further renewable energy generation is developed in the region.

What feedback has been received?

The public and interested stakeholders were invited to comment on the study area map and identify constraints within the study area that should be considered by the project team. The project team also carried out desktop studies and research to gather further information about the study area.

To date there has been a high level of engagement from the community with a clear recognition of the significant economic benefit the project will bring to the region. In addition to receiving general comments and information on potential constraints across the study area, feedback received was grouped under 6 broad headings:

- The need for early, on-going consultation
- The economic benefit of the project – jobs, renewable development, inward investment to the region
- Questions regarding perceived health effects in relation to electricity transmission lines
- Structural design and queries related to underground and overhead
- Comments on environment, ecology and heritage
- Steps and timelines for the project which are to be followed

EirGrid has been in contact with hundreds of groups and individuals during the first period of consultation and would like to thank those that participated in the process.

This feedback has been beneficial to the project team in forming a better understanding of the study area and identifying important factors for consideration as the project progresses.

Second round of consultation

The Grid West project team will now commence a second round of consultation which will take place over a 4 week period from **21st August to 21st September 2012**.

This second round of public consultation will focus on presenting and consulting on the information gathered to date on the project study area. This information is contained in the Constraints Report which has been

published and is available at www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest and at our Information Centre in Castlebar.

What is the Constraints Report?

The Constraints Report describes the key information gathered and how it has been collected. It also contains detailed maps which show the locations of constraints. The information collected has been categorised and captured in thematic maps as follows:

- Ecology: a review of conservation designated areas, including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Areas of Protection (SPAs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and other sites of ecological interest.
- Landscape: a review was undertaken in order to determine scenic views, sensitive landscapes and recreation routes.
- Geology: a review of soils, subsoils and bedrock.
- Water: a review of surface water features such as rivers, lakes, turloughs, estuaries and coastal waters.
- Cultural Heritage: a review of architectural and archaeological heritage sites.
- Settlements: a review of the main towns, villages and settlements.
- Utilities and infrastructure: a review of all existing utilities and infrastructure such as transmission lines, roads, airports, railway lines, gas pipelines and wind farm generators.
- Engineering: the avoidance, wherever possible, of areas of excessive land slope, flood plains, or areas of likely poor ground conditions.

Why we want your feedback?

While we are confident that we have a comprehensive list of constraints, we know that the people who live, or have a specific interest in, the study area can greatly help us with their local knowledge, often providing information that may not be in maps or public records. The public and all interested stakeholders are invited to view and comment on the Constraints Report. Feedback from this second round of consultation will assist in the evaluation of constraints and identifying feasible route corridors for the project.

Next steps

Following this second round of public consultation, the Constraints Report will be confirmed and EirGrid will publish an overall Stage 1 Report. This report will present all the information gathered to date including feasible route corridors and station sites.

The report is expected to be published in early 2013, at which time the public and other stakeholders will be given the opportunity to review the report and provide feedback.

Project Development & Consultation Roadmap

Is anseo atá tú

Céim 1

Bailiú Eolais

An Limistéar Staidéir a Aithint

Srianta chomhshaoil & eile a aithint

Roghanna indéanta a aithint (conair/láithreáin)

Tuarascáil Céim 1 a Fhoilsiú

Comhchomhairle réamhiarratais leis An mBord Pleanála

Poiblí

Comhchomhairle leis an bpobal agus le geallsealbhóirí ar limistéar an staidéir agus ar srianta

Comhchomhairle leis an bpobal agus le geallsealbhóirí ar thorthaí Thuarascáil Céim 1

Is anseo atá tú

Céim 2

Tuairimí a Mheas

An t-aiseolas ar fad ó **Céim 1** a bhreithniú

An rogha is dealraithí a roghnóidh EirGrid a aithint (conair bealaigh/ láithreán)

Líne tháscach laistigh de chonair nó teorainn láithreáin a aithint

Úinéirí talún na líne táscaí / an láithreáin a aithint agus bualadh leo; suirbhé tosaigh

Tuarascáil Céim 2 a Fhoilsiú

Comhchomhairle réamhiarratais leis An mBord Pleanála

Poiblí

Comhchomhairle leis an bpobal agus le geallsealbhóirí ar thorthaí **Thuarascáil Céim 2**

Céim 3

Dearadh a Dhearbhú

An t-aiseolas ar fad ó **Céim 2** a bhreithniú

Staidéir chomhshaoil agus suirbhéanna comhshaoil a dhéanamh

Dearadh togra líne/láithreáin a dhearbhú, lena n-áirítear modheolaíocht foirgníochta

Plé leanúnach le húinéirí talún maidir leis an mbealach líne nó láithreán is fearr le EirGrid

Comhchomhairle réamhiarratais leis An mBord Pleanála

Poiblí

Eolas leanúnach don phobal

Céim 4

Iarratas Pleanála a Ullmhú

Tuarascálacha a chur i gcrích agus iarratas pleanála a ullmhú

Ráiteas Tionchair Timpeallachta (EIS) nó Tuarascáil Tionchair Timpeallachta a ullmhú de réir mar is cuí

Tabhairt chun críche chomhchomhairle réamhiarratais leis An mBord Pleanála

Iarratais a dhéanamh leis An mBord Pleanála

Poiblí

Eolas leanúnach don phobal

Féadfaidh an pobal aighneachtaí a dhéanamh leis An mBord Pleanála chomh luath is a bheidh an t-iarratas curtha isteach, lena n-áirítear ag éisteacht ó bhéal, más ann dí.

Céim 5

Cead slí agus foirgníocht

Pleananna foirgníochta a ullmhú

Fógra maidir le cead slí a thabhairt d'úinéirí talún agus rochtain i gcomhair foirgníochta a chomhaontú

Tús a chur le foirgníocht

Poiblí

Eolas leanúnach don phobal

An próiseas Comhchomhairle Phoiblí a mheas

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.

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

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.

How do I find out more/provide feedback?

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

You can contact the project team or provide feedback through the following:

- **Telephone:** Lo-call 1890 94 08 02
- **Email:** gridwest@eirgrid.com
- **Website:** www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest
- **Letter:** Grid West project office, EirGrid, PO Box 12226, Dublin 4
- **Visit:** Grid West project Information Centre at Linenhall Street, Castlebar (open every Monday and Tuesday, except Bank Holidays) from 9am to 5pm.

If you wish to receive text updates on the Grid West project generally text GridWest to 51444. For county specific updates (ie Mayo, Galway, Sligo, Roscommon or Leitrim) text the county name (eg Mayo) to 51444 (standard SMS rates apply).



ANNEX 2.2

Guide to Constraints Report



The Grid West Project

Guide to Constraints Report

August 2012

TOBIN CONSULTING ENGINEERS



GUIDE TO CONSTRAINTS REPORT

What is a Constraints Report?

Having identified the need for a major investment in the electricity transmission network in the west of Ireland, the Grid West project team has been gathering as much information as possible to inform and shape the project.

In particular, the EirGrid project examined a wide range of environmental and other considerations that may influence or constrain the identification of corridors within which the proposed transmission lines will be sited.

The report details key information gathered and outlines how it has been collected. It contains detailed maps which illustrate how each constraint impacts on the study area (the search area within which the project will be located).

How was this information gathered?

The Constraints Report was compiled using a number of research tools such as desktop studies and site visits in addition to extensive consultation with stakeholders and the public. This work involved examining and mapping over 150 different sets of data including, for example, heritage sites, scenic views and routes, national monuments, conservation designated areas, towns, villages and communities and all existing infrastructure like transmission lines, roads and railways.

What information was gathered?

The information gathered has been categorised by theme and mapped in thematic maps which are available in Volume 2 of the report. Specific constraints include:

- **Ecology:** a review of conservation designated areas, including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Areas of Protection (SPAs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and other sites of ecological interest.
- **Landscape:** a review was undertaken in order to determine scenic views, sensitive landscapes and recreation routes.
- **Geology:** a review of soils, subsoils and bedrock.
- **Water:** a review of surface water features such as rivers, lakes, turloughs, estuaries and coastal waters
- **Cultural Heritage:** a review of architectural and archaeological heritage sites.
- **Settlements:** a review of the main towns, villages and settlements.
- **Utilities and infrastructure:** a review of all existing utilities and infrastructure such as electricity transmission lines, roads, airports, railway lines, gas pipelines and wind farm generators.
- **Engineering:** the avoidance, wherever possible, of areas of excessive land slope, flood plains, or areas of likely poor ground conditions.



How is the Report laid out?

Chapter 1 - contains the Executive Summary.

Chapter 2 - sets out the purpose of the report, the background to Grid25, the Grid West project and EirGrid's consultation roadmap.

Chapter 3 - summarises the communications and consultation activity to date on the Grid West project.

Chapter 4 - sets out key national, regional and local policy, legislative and planning frameworks within which the project is being developed.

Chapter 5 - explains the rationale for the selection of the study area within which the Grid West project is sited.

Chapter 6 - explains how the constraints data was selected.

Chapters 7-13 - lists the constraints categories, explains how the information was gathered and the main findings for each constraint.

Chapter 14 - discusses potential engineering constraints associated with a 400kV transmission line.

Chapter 15 – conclusion.

Volume 2 of the report contains a series of thematic maps based on the constraints identified above.

Where can I view the report?

The Constraints Report is available on the project's dedicated website www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest

Copies of the report and maps are available at the Grid West Information Centre at Linenhall Street, Castlebar and will also be available at open days held throughout the region.

Can the public influence the Constraints Report?

Yes. While we are confident that we have a comprehensive list of constraints, we know that people who live, or have a specific interest in, the study area can greatly help us with their local knowledge, often providing information that may not be available in maps or public records.

This is why we are making the report available through our website, at our Information Centre in Castlebar and at a series of open days throughout the study area. The public and all interested stakeholders are invited to view and comment on the Constraints Report. Any comments will be taken into consideration at this early stage in the project development. Furthermore, if additional constraints are identified during this and/or further consultation stages, they will be documented and considered in future stages of the project.

ANNEX 2.3

Constraints Report Executive Summary



The Grid West Project

Constraints Report

Executive Summary

August 2012

TOBIN CONSULTING ENGINEERS



TOBIN
Patrick J. Tobin & Co. Ltd.

REPORT

PROJECT:

The Grid West Project

CLIENT:

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DOCUMENT AMENDMENT RECORD

Client:	EirGrid plc
Project:	The Grid West Project
Title:	Executive Summary

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Rev A	Final Executive Summary	MH	210812	MG	210812	MG	210812
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TOBIN Consulting Engineers							



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Constraints Report is to identify key environmental and other constraints within the defined study area which may influence the identification of potential indicative corridors and substation site options, and ultimately an indicative line route, along which the proposed transmission line will be sited.

A “constraint” incorporates two strands: it includes factors which could comprise potential obstacles in the identification of substation locations, route corridors and line routes, and might best be avoided where possible or appropriate; it also includes considerations which will assist in the design of the project. Constraints are identified to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the study area.

This report has been compiled based on desktop studies, site visits and consultation with a number of strategic stakeholders and members of the public. This Constraints Report will include considerations of ecology, landscape, geology, water, cultural heritage, settlements, utilities & infrastructure and engineering constraints; factors which may influence the development of a transmission line. The constraints described in this report are based upon a review of local, regional and national datasets. This report is presented as part of Stage 1 of the EirGrid Project Development & Consultation Roadmap, entitled *Information Gathering*. The constraints identified within the study area have been identified and mapped.

1.1 ECOLOGY

Based on this assessment, it is clear that the study area has a large number of important ecological sites and receptors. At this stage avoidance should be prioritised, where possible, of all designated sites in particular Natura 2000 sites (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas), Ballycroy National Park, Natural Heritage Areas, designated freshwater pearl mussel catchments (in rivers protected as Special Areas of Conservation) and lakes.

It is also recommended that other features of ecological significance detailed in this report be avoided as much as possible at the corridor selection stage or, if this is not possible, be fully considered at a more localised scale at later stages in the project i.e. Stage 2 *Corridor Evaluation*, based on more detailed studies. Other important ecological receptors include proposed Natural Heritage Areas, other freshwater pearl mussel catchments, fens, turloughs, bogs, wet heath, semi natural woodland, wintering bird sites and semi natural grassland. This approach is recommended given their importance in a national context and the commitments of the National Biodiversity Plan (2011-2016) which includes conservation of ecosystems, habitats and species particularly high value habitats.

1.2 LANDSCAPE

The main international, national and county level landscape designations have been identified and mapped. In the absence of finalised national guidelines, each local authority uses its own terminology to describe parts of the landscape considered to be of significant aesthetic or

recreational value on a county scale. This desktop study has been supplemented by a site visit which verified the key constraints and ascertained the characteristics of the wider landscape. The most important constraints are those of international (candidate World Heritage Sites) and national significance. The remainder of the constraints vary in their importance, and in the nature of their sensitivity.

1.3 SOILS & GEOLOGY

The most relevant geological constraints within the study area for this stage of the project have been identified and mapped. It is recommended that Irish Geological Heritage Sites (proposed Natural Heritage Areas and County Geological Sites) are avoided, where possible, and that areas of peat, bedrock outcrop and karstified rock, are also avoided. In addition, it is also recommended to reduce the potential for unfavourable construction conditions in areas of steep topography and to reduce the requirement for specialised geotechnical input at the construction design phase.

It should also be noted that additional studies and site assessments will be carried out as the project progresses, since geological features are often quite localised and of more significance locally, and can be more effectively considered at later stages of the project when decisions start to be made with regard to the design of the transmission line.

1.4 WATER

The most relevant water related constraints within the study area for this stage of the project have been identified and mapped. It is recommended that larger lakes are avoided, where possible, and that floodplains in the vicinity of rivers are avoided. In addition, it is also recommended to avoid areas where there is a high occurrence of turloughs, estuarine and coastal areas. Major rivers may be a physical constraint but where there is a requirement to cross rivers, best practice should be incorporated into project design and construction so as to minimise pollution risks particularly for freshwater pearl mussel catchments.

Additional studies and site assessments will be carried out as the project progresses. In addition more specific information on water features, including water quality baseline studies and water status under the Water Framework Directive may influence the selection of the indicative line route for the proposed transmission line.

1.5 CULTURAL HERITAGE

Based on this assessment, it is clear that the study area has a rich and varied archaeological and historical past, with multi period monuments, ranging from humble sites of local interest, to large complexes of international significance. All of the features, from a prehistoric megalith, to a 19th century gate pier, have varying degrees of statutory protection but the primary principle should be their preservation *in situ*. Given the nature of the project, and the relative flexibility in designing transmission lines, this initial goal is achievable, thus the emphasis will be on reducing

any potential impacts from the proposed development on the settings of monuments, structures and areas of cultural heritage significance.

1.6 SETTLEMENTS

The study area includes within it, a wide range of settlements, one national Gateway centre (Galway City) and three designated Hubs (Castlebar, Ballina and Tuam). There are otherwise a wide range of smaller towns and villages but generally the population density of this part of Ireland is relatively low and well below the national average. The lists provided of settlements are comprehensive including many very minor settlements to which there is reference in county development plan settlement strategies.

Some rural areas have seen significant levels of development including extensive 'one-off' housing, these may present significant difficulties for the eventual delineation of any route corridors. There is a band of higher density development in a north south direction through the centre of the study area from Ballina towards Galway. Generally densities are lower on the western and eastern parts of the study area and generally lower in the vicinity of the existing Flagford substation than in the vicinity of the existing Cashla substation.

1.7 UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

All of the known utilities and infrastructure within the study area for this stage of the project have been identified and mapped.

The identified utilities and infrastructure are a constraint in that the route of any proposed corridor will have to take due consideration of the location of any existing utilities and infrastructure. In addition, the utilities and infrastructure identified will have an impact on the location of the new Bellacorick substation site. This substation location will be further influenced by the location of wind farm generators near Bellacorick, which will require connections to the new substation at Bellacorick.

1.8 ENGINEERING CONSIDERATIONS

Based on studies carried out to date, high voltage alternating current, overhead line technology is the preferred technology for the Grid West project. The engineering design will be undertaken in accordance with international best practice. It is important that the technology selection is kept under constant review, such that both the technology and the design can be adjusted if the constraints and consultation indicate that this is necessary.

1.9 CONCLUSION

This Constraints Report has identified the key environmental and other constraints within the defined study area, which may influence the identification of both substation site options and potential indicative corridors, and which may ultimately define an indicative line route along which the proposed transmission line will be routed.

While the Project Team is confident that an extensive database of all 'recorded constraints' has been gathered, it has also recognised how important local knowledge is in identifying unrecorded constraints that may be of folkloric or local importance and which are often left undocumented. This information is very often only garnered from dialogue with local people living in the area. One of the objectives of consultation with the public is to allow such dialogue to take place.

With the publication of the Constraints Report, we are now in a position to consult on this report and associated Constraints Mapping. This Constraints Report is available to stakeholders (public, statutory and non statutory agencies) in order to seek their input on this report, so that any comments can be taken into consideration at an early stage in the project development. This consultation is being undertaken in line with the EirGrid Project Development & Consultation Roadmap and involves:

- Face to face meetings with stakeholders;
- A series of Open Days for the public, widely advertised in the study area;
- The production of a 'Guide to Constraints Report';
- Making the material available in the project Information Centre in Castlebar; and
- Publishing the Constraints Report on the dedicated project website.

ANNEX 2.4

Advertisement



The Grid West Project – Second Public Consultation

EirGrid is the state-owned independent electricity transmission system operator and market operator in Ireland. It is EirGrid's role to develop quality connection, transmission and market services to electricity generators, suppliers and customers utilising the high voltage electricity system.

Grid25 is EirGrid's plan to develop and upgrade the electricity transmission system from now until 2025. The Grid West project will deliver 21st century energy infrastructure to the west of Ireland, facilitating job creation and investment. The project will initially consist of a new high capacity circuit linking Bellacorick, Co. Mayo, to a strong point on the national grid. It is envisaged that, in time, the project will involve two high capacity power lines from Bellacorick, Co. Mayo to both Cashla, Co. Galway and Flagford, Co. Roscommon.

The second round of consultation on the project is taking place from **21 August to 21 September 2012** and will focus on presenting and consulting on the information gathered to date on the project study area. This is contained in the Constraints Report which describes the key information gathered and how it has been collected. This report includes considerations of ecology, landscape, geology, water, cultural heritage, settlements, utilities & infrastructure and engineering constraints; factors which may influence the development of the project.

Five open days are being held across the region which will give people an opportunity to meet with the project team, view the work which has been carried out to date and share their views with us. This feedback will influence the identification of potential corridors for the new development.

THE OPEN DAYS WILL BE HELD AS FOLLOWS:

TUESDAY 28 AUGUST

Kiltane GAA Club, Bangor Erris, Co. Mayo, 1pm-8pm

WEDNESDAY 29 AUGUST

Teach Laighne, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo, 1pm-8pm

THURSDAY 30 AUGUST

Landmark Hotel, Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim, 1pm-8pm

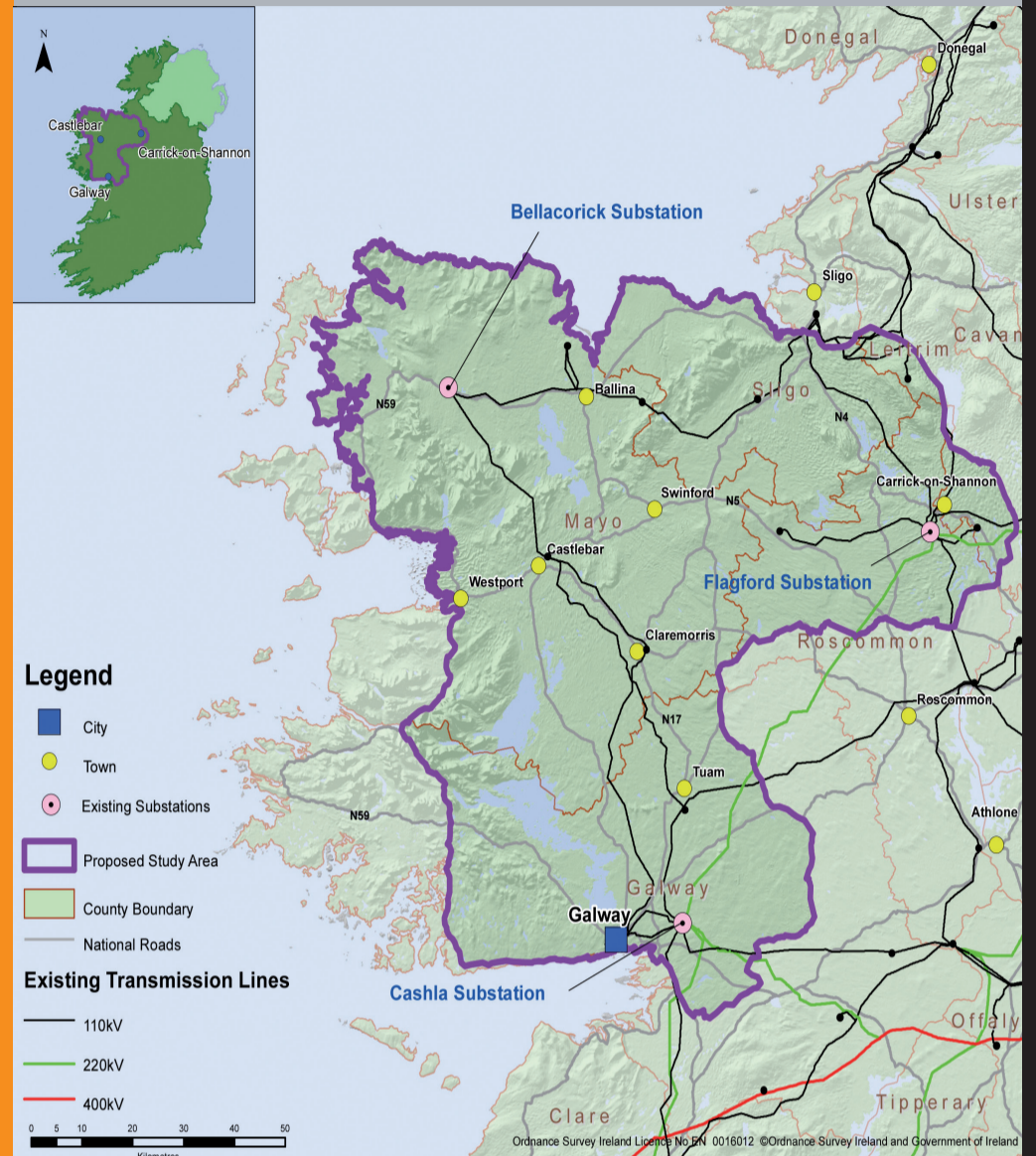
TUESDAY 4 SEPTEMBER

McWilliam Park Hotel, Claremorris, Co. Mayo, 1pm-8pm

WEDNESDAY 5 SEPTEMBER

Raheen Woods Hotel, Athenry, Co. Galway, 1pm-8pm

Proposed Study Area



You can also contact the project team or provide feedback through the following:

- Telephone: Lo-call 1890 94 08 02
- Email: gridwest@eirgrid.com
- Website: www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest
- Letter: Grid West project office, EirGrid, PO Box 12226, Dublin 4
- Visit: Grid West Project Information Centre at Linenhall Street, Castlebar, Co. Mayo, open every Monday and Tuesday (except Bank Holidays) from 9am to 5pm.

If you wish to receive text updates on the Grid West project generally text GridWest to 51444. For county specific updates (ie Mayo, Galway, Sligo, Roscommon or Leitrim) text the county name (eg Mayo) to 51444 (standard SMS rates apply).

GRID25
DELIVERING IRELAND'S ELECTRICITY FUTURE

ANNEX 2.5

Press Release

Second round of consultation on Grid West project commences

Five open days to be held across the West

Eirgrid has today (day/date) announced the commencement of the second round of public consultation on the Grid West project and has also invited the public to attend an open day in their area. A series of open days will take place across the west in the coming weeks:

- Tuesday 28 August - Kiltane GAA Club, Bangor Erris, Co Mayo, 1pm-8pm
- Wednesday 29 August - Teach Laighne, Tubbercurry, Co Sligo, 1pm-8pm
- Thursday 30 August – Landmark Hotel, Carrick on Shannon, Co Leitrim, 1pm-8pm
- Tuesday 4 September – McWilliam Park Hotel, Claremorris, Co Mayo, 1pm-8pm
- Wednesday 5 September – Raheen Woods Hotel, Athenry, Co Galway, 1pm-8pm.

This second round of public consultation will focus on information gathered over the past number of months in relation to the study area for the proposed Grid West electricity development.

The Grid West project will deliver 21st century energy infrastructure to the west of Ireland. By connecting the electricity generated by the region's renewable energy resources, the project will facilitate significant job creation and investment as well as contributing to national recovery and growth. The Grid West project is part of Grid25, EirGrid's plan to develop and upgrade the national electricity transmission network from now until 2025.

The project will initially consist of a new high capacity power line linking Bellacorick in County Mayo to a strong point on the transmission grid. Based on the region's huge renewable potential it is envisaged that, in time, the project will involve two high capacity power lines from Bellacorick, County Mayo, to both Cashla in County Galway and Flagford in County Roscommon.

Alan McHugh Project Manager for Grid West said that since the launch of the project on 4 May 2012 by An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny T.D. and the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Mr. Pat Rabbitte T.D., there has been a very positive level of engagement from the community with a clear recognition of the significant benefit the project will bring to the region.

“In line with our dedicated project roadmap, which sets out the project in a number of key stages, EirGrid is committed to early, transparent engagement and consultation with local communities and stakeholders. We have engaged in a first round of consultation with the public and stakeholders in the west through a number of channels; a dedicated project office, open days, meetings, dedicated email, web and phone and local media advertisements,” explained Mr. McHugh.

The Grid West project team has now completed a comprehensive Constraints Report which identifies key points of note in the study area such as heritage sites, national monuments, areas designated for conservation, towns, villages and communities and all existing infrastructure like transmission lines, roads, and railways, which may have a bearing on the project.

EirGrid is asking the public to view the work which has been carried out to date and to share their views. This feedback will influence the identification of potential corridors for the new development.

Mr McHugh continued, “While we are confident that we have a very comprehensive list of constraints, we know that people who are based within the study area can greatly help us with their local knowledge, often providing information that may not be in maps or plans or developed on a national scale. During the first round of consultation people in the region told us of the importance to them of early and open consultation on major infrastructural projects. We want to continue our consultation now and ensure everyone has an opportunity to give their views on the project.”

EirGrid is holding five open days across the region which will give people an opportunity to meet with the project team. The Grid West project team is encouraging anyone who has an interest in the project to come along to one of the five open days being held or to contact the project team through the website, by phone or by calling into the Castlebar Information Centre.

End

Notes for Editor

The Constraints Report is published on the project’s dedicated website www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest and copies of all the material and maps involved will be available at the Grid West Information Centre at Linenhall Street, Castlebar.

This second round of consultation will take place over a 4 week period from August 21st to September 21st.

Dates and venues for open days

Tuesday 28 August - Kiltane GAA Club, Bangor Erris, Co Mayo, 1pm-8pm

Wednesday 29 August - Teach Laighne, Tubbercurry, Co Sligo, 1pm-8pm

Thursday 30 August – Landmark Hotel, Carrick on Shannon, Co Leitrim, 1pm-8pm

Tuesday 4 September – McWilliam Park Hotel, Claremorris, Co Mayo, 1pm-8pm

Wednesday 5 September – Raheen Woods Hotel, Athenry, Co Galway, 1pm-8pm.

The Constraints Report published today identifies a wide range of environmental and other issues that may influence or constrain the project. Specific constraints reported on include:

- **Ecology:** a review of conservation designated areas, including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Areas of Protection (SPAs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and other sites of ecological interest.
- **Landscape:** a review was undertaken in order to determine scenic views, sensitive landscapes and recreation routes.
- **Geology:** a review of soils, subsoils and bedrock.
- **Water:** a review of surface water features such as rivers, lakes, turloughs, estuaries and coastal waters.
- **Cultural Heritage:** a review of architectural and archaeological heritage sites.

- **Settlements:** a review of the main towns, villages and settlements.
- **Utilities and infrastructure:** a review of all existing utilities and infrastructure such as transmission lines, roads, airports, railway lines, gas pipelines and wind farm generators.
- **Engineering:** the avoidance, wherever possible, of areas of excessive land slope, flood plains, or areas of likely poor ground conditions.

EirGrid: is a state-owned commercial company responsible for the development and operation of the national electricity transmission system.

Renewable energy in the North West: The North West Region in Grid25 has the largest (35%) expected regional distribution of the renewable generation capacity of Ireland. The Grid West project is critical to connecting this resource to the national grid.

400kV line: 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 Bellacorick to a strong point on the national grid. EirGrid will review its technology analysis at key stages throughout the project to ensure it remains valid.

Facilitating job creation and investment: By connecting the region's huge renewable energy resources into the national grid, the project will facilitate significant job creation and investment through:

- the construction and maintenance of wind farms and other renewable energy sources
- making the region more attractive for inward investors, particularly those seeking locations with a safe and secure supply of energy
- a significant portion of the €240m investment in Grid West will be made in the western region providing direct and indirect employment

Timeline for project: The second phase of consultation on the project commences on August 21st and will last for a four week period to September 21st. EirGrid is following a comprehensive consultation roadmap which will seek to ensure that the views of all stakeholders interested in the project will be heard. Assuming no delays in the planning or consultation processes and no significant reductions in the volume of wind development planned in Mayo, the Grid West project is expected to be completed by late 2019.

ANNEX 2.6

Poster



The Grid West Project Public Consultation - Stage 1

The Grid West Project - Electricity Transmission Scheme in the West of Ireland

EirGrid is the state-owned independent electricity transmission system operator and market operator in Ireland.

It is EirGrid's role to develop quality connection, transmission and market services to electricity generators, suppliers and customers utilising the high voltage electricity system.

Grid25 is EirGrid's plan to develop and upgrade the electricity transmission network from now until 2025. The Grid West project will deliver 21st century energy infrastructure to the west of Ireland.

By connecting the electricity generated by the region's renewable energy resources, the Grid West project will facilitate significant job creation and investment. It will contribute to national recovery and growth while at the same time allowing the region to attract inward investment that requires a strong reliable source of power.

The project initially consists of a new high capacity power circuit linking Bellacorick, Co. Mayo, to a strong point on the national grid. Based on the region's huge renewable potential it is envisaged that, in time, the project will involve two high capacity power lines from Bellacorick, Co. Mayo to both Cashla in Co. Galway and Flagford in Co. Roscommon. The pace at which a second line will be installed is dependent on a number of factors including the speed at which further renewable energy generation is developed in the region.

It is anticipated that a planning application will be lodged with the relevant planning authority in 2015.

EirGrid is following a comprehensive consultation roadmap which will ensure that the views of the public and other stakeholders are heard over the course of the project. At this first stage of the process we have published the proposed study area for this project and are seeking input from the public in relation to the study area. As part of this process we are holding an initial series of open days which will give members of the public an opportunity to learn more about the project and provide feedback to our project team.

The first stage of public consultation focusing on the proposed study area is taking place over a period of 8 weeks from **4th May to 6th July 2012**.

THE OPEN DAYS WILL BE HELD AS FOLLOWS:

THURSDAY, 7 JUNE

Kiltane GAA Club, Bangor Erris, Co. Mayo, 1pm - 8pm

FRIDAY, 8 JUNE

Downhill Hotel, Ballina, Co. Mayo, 1pm - 8pm

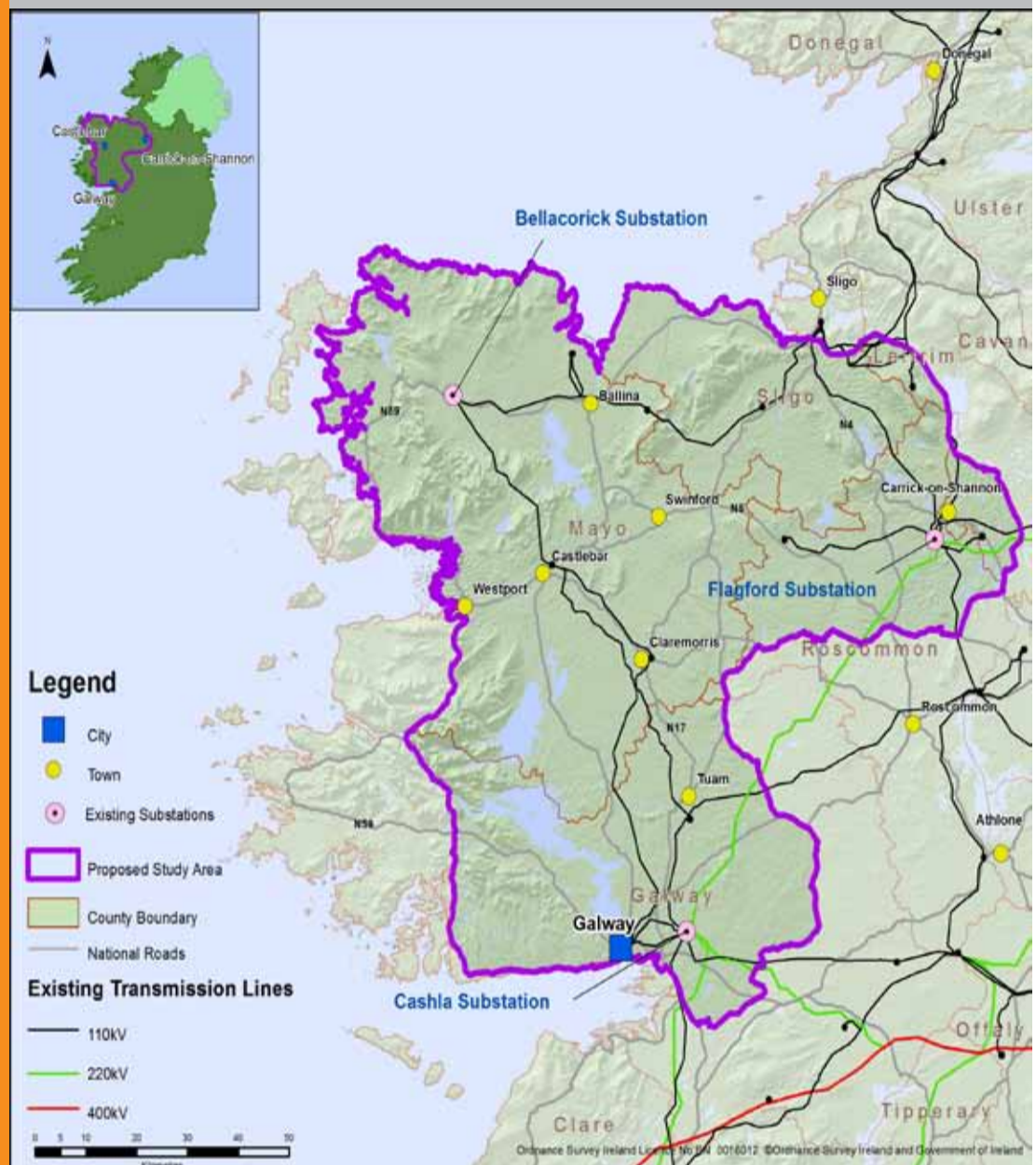
THURSDAY, 14 JUNE

Corrlea Court Hotel, Tuam, Co. Galway, 1pm - 8pm

FRIDAY, 15 JUNE

Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly Office,
The Square, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon, 1pm - 8pm

Proposed Study Area



A Grid West project information office will open shortly in Linenhall Street, Castlebar, Co. Mayo and further open days will be held as the project develops. Regular updates will be provided through local media and on the dedicated website:

www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest

You can contact the project team directly by calling the lo-call number **1890 94 08 02** which will be open Monday-Friday between 9.00am and 5.00pm (excluding bank holidays) or by email to gridwest@eirgrid.com

Telephone: 1890 94 08 02

Email: gridwest@eirgrid.com

Website: www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest

By post: Grid West Project Office, EirGrid,
PO Box 12226, Dublin 4.

GRID25

DELIVERING IRELAND'S ELECTRICITY FUTURE

ANNEX 2.7

Follow Up Press Release

Public consultation continues on the Grid West project

~ *Public encouraged to continue to engage with project team* ~

The Grid West project team is encouraging people to continue to get involved and share views on the proposed €240million investment in the west of Ireland. A second round of open days has now been completed with events held in five centres across the west. [Two of the open days were held in Co. Mayo, the first in Kiltane GAA Club in Bangor Erris and the second one in the McWilliam Park hotel in Claremorris] or [One of the open days was held at – Insert as appropriate: Sligo/Galway/Carrick-on-Shannon].

The Grid West project will deliver 21st century energy infrastructure to the west of Ireland. By connecting the electricity generated by the region's renewable energy resources, the project will facilitate significant job creation and investment as well as contributing to national recovery and growth. The Grid West project is part of Grid25, EirGrid's plan to develop and upgrade the national electricity transmission network from now until 2025.

Alan McHugh, the Grid West Project Manager said that EirGrid was pleased with the turnout for the open days and the level of interest shown by members of the public in the development of the project to date. *"EirGrid is committed to early, transparent engagement and consultation with local communities and stakeholders. Since June, we have completed a series of nine open days across the west and, as well as building awareness of the Grid West project, we have received very useful feedback from the public."*

"At this latest series of open days, we briefed visitors on the information gathered to date on the project study area. This information is contained in the project constraints report, available on our website, and includes a series of detailed maps showing key points of note which may have a bearing on the project. These range from heritage sites to national monuments, areas designated for conservation, towns, villages and all existing infrastructure like transmission lines, roads and railways."

Most importantly we received really valuable insights and local knowledge from people living and working in the study area who attended the open days. Many of them were able to point out local features and considerations to the project team which are not always captured national maps and plans."

"The next round of open days on the Grid West project will take place in the spring of 2013, however consultation on the project is always ongoing and open. We are constantly looking for feedback and further engagement on the project and would encourage members of the public to contact us via phone, email, on the web or call into our information centre in Castlebar."

~ ends ~

For further information:

Ronan O'Keeffe
Grid West Project
1890 94 08 02

Gridwest@eirgrid.com

<http://www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest/>

Post: Grid West project office, EirGrid, PO Box 12226, Dublin 4

Grid West Information Centre, Linenhall Street, Castlebar, Co. Mayo

Notes for Editor

The Constraints Report is published on the project's dedicated website www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest and copies of all the material and maps involved are available at the Grid West Information Centre at Linenhall Street, Castlebar.

EirGrid: is a state-owned commercial company responsible for the development and operation of the national electricity transmission system.

Renewable energy in the North West: The North West Region in Grid25 has the largest (35%) expected regional distribution of the renewable generation capacity of Ireland. The Grid West project is critical to connecting this resource to the national grid.

400kV line: 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 Bellacorick to a strong point on the national grid. EirGrid will review its technology analysis at key stages throughout the project to ensure it remains valid.

Facilitating job creation and investment: By connecting the region's huge renewable energy resources into the national grid, the project will facilitate significant job creation and investment through:

- the construction and maintenance of wind farms and other renewable energy sources
- making the region more attractive for inward investors, particularly those seeking locations with a safe and secure supply of energy
- a significant portion of the €240m investment in Grid West will be made in the western region providing direct and indirect employment

Timeline for project: The second phase of consultation on the project commenced on August 21st with a series of five open days across the western region. EirGrid is following a comprehensive consultation roadmap which will seek to ensure that the views of all stakeholders interested in the project will be heard. Assuming no delays in the planning or consultation processes and no significant reductions in the volume of wind development planned in Mayo, the Grid West project is expected to be completed by late 2019.



The Grid West Project

Lead Consultant's Stage 1 Report

March 2013