



Grid25 Initiatives

28th January 2014

EirGrid's role is critical to keeping the lights on 24/7 and ensuring that reliable, secure and economic power networks are in place for the future; for homes, farms, small and medium sized businesses and large employers.

We are aware of the issues around our plans for the additional network set out in the Grid25 programme which is designed to ensure that Ireland's current and future energy needs are met.

We have been listening to all of the feedback we have received to date and we will continue to do so.

A high level of submissions has been made on the Grid Link project and we are in the process of evaluating these. However, there are a number of themes which are emerging from recent consultations and a number of initiatives are being put in place to address these:

- 1** Conduct a comprehensive underground analysis for the Grid Link and Grid West projects. We will work with the Government-appointed Independent Expert Panel to review underground and overhead options before we proceed to the next stages of project development.
- 2** Introduce a Community Gain Fund encompassing a fund for localities and residences located close to new pylons and stations.
- 3** Continue to monitor research developments and provide information on health and power lines.
- 4** Comprehensively address major issues arising such as tourism, agriculture and equine concerns.
- 5** Review of our consultation process to enhance future public engagement.

1. Conduct a comprehensive underground analysis for the Grid Link and Grid West projects.

We will work with the Government-appointed Independent Expert Panel to review underground and overhead options before we proceed to the next stages of project development.

In response to feedback received on the Grid Link and the Grid West projects that more consideration should be given to underground options, EirGrid will now conduct a detailed assessment of a fully underground option for both projects.

To provide the public with assurance that this analysis is carried out in a fair and objective manner, Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Pat Rabbitte TD, is appointing an independent panel of experts to conduct an independent review of the overhead and underground options before EirGrid proceeds to the next stage of public consultation (where both the overhead and underground options will be set out side-by-side in objective and comparable terms).

2. Implement a Community Gain Fund encompassing a fund for localities and one for residences located close to new pylons and stations.

The Government policy statement published in July 2012 underlined the appropriateness of incorporating community gain considerations into major infrastructure projects. In recognition of the visual impact of transmission infrastructure EirGrid is proposing a community gain mechanism with two elements:

Local Community Fund

- A fund to which EirGrid will contribute €40,000 per kilometre for communities in proximity to new 400 kV pylons and stations.
- This fund will be put in place on completion of the line and will be administered on a ring-fenced basis by the local authority on behalf of local communities

Proximity Allowance

- A once off payment to occupied residential properties (or those with full planning permission) within a 200 metre corridor of new pylons or stations.
- For 400kV there would be a payment of €30,000 for residences at 50m and this would decrease (on a sliding scale) to €5,000 at 200m.
- EirGrid seeks to locate new lines at least 50m from homes, in exceptional cases where this is not achievable, EirGrid will deal with the affected property owners on an individual basis.

3. Continue to monitor research developments and provide information on health and power lines.

EirGrid designs and operates the transmission network to the highest safety standards and complies with the most up-to-date national and international guidelines.

We will continue to monitor the latest research and developments in the area of Electric and Magnetic Fields and public health. We will continually review and improve our communication around this issue.

4. Comprehensively address major issues arising such as tourism, agriculture and equine concerns.

While there is engagement with all relevant stakeholders across Grid25 projects, recent consultations have raised specific issues regarding the possible impact of new electricity lines on tourism, agriculture and equine industries.

We need to address all of the issues raised in submissions in a thorough and comprehensive manner, and that process is ongoing. However, a number of specific issues have already been identified and must be addressed. EirGrid will comprehensively engage with the relevant representative organisations and Government departments such as the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine on these issues.

This commitment is to ensure that the concerns and issues raised are thoroughly addressed and any negative impacts of infrastructure development are appropriately managed.

Undoubtedly as we continue our review of submissions, other issues may arise and we will deal with them in a similarly comprehensive manner.

5. Review of our consultation process to enhance future public engagement.

The Grid25 projects are being implemented across Ireland and affect a large number of people. At the outset, we outlined the roadmap for developing these projects, and the opportunities for public participation throughout.

We have received feedback that the consultation process could be improved. We are keen to respond positively to this feedback and will conduct a thorough review of our consultation process to enhance future public engagement.