



The Grid West Project

Project Information Brochure
(Stage 1: Information Gathering)

Spring 2013





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 €240m 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.

The Grid West project will initially consist of a new high capacity power line linking the Bellacorrick area of Mayo with a strong point on the transmission grid at either Flagford in County Roscommon or Cashla in County Galway.

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. This critical infrastructure will additionally allow the west region to attract the type of industry that requires a secure high voltage power supply.

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 €240m expenditure on the Grid West project will be made in the western region providing direct and indirect employment.

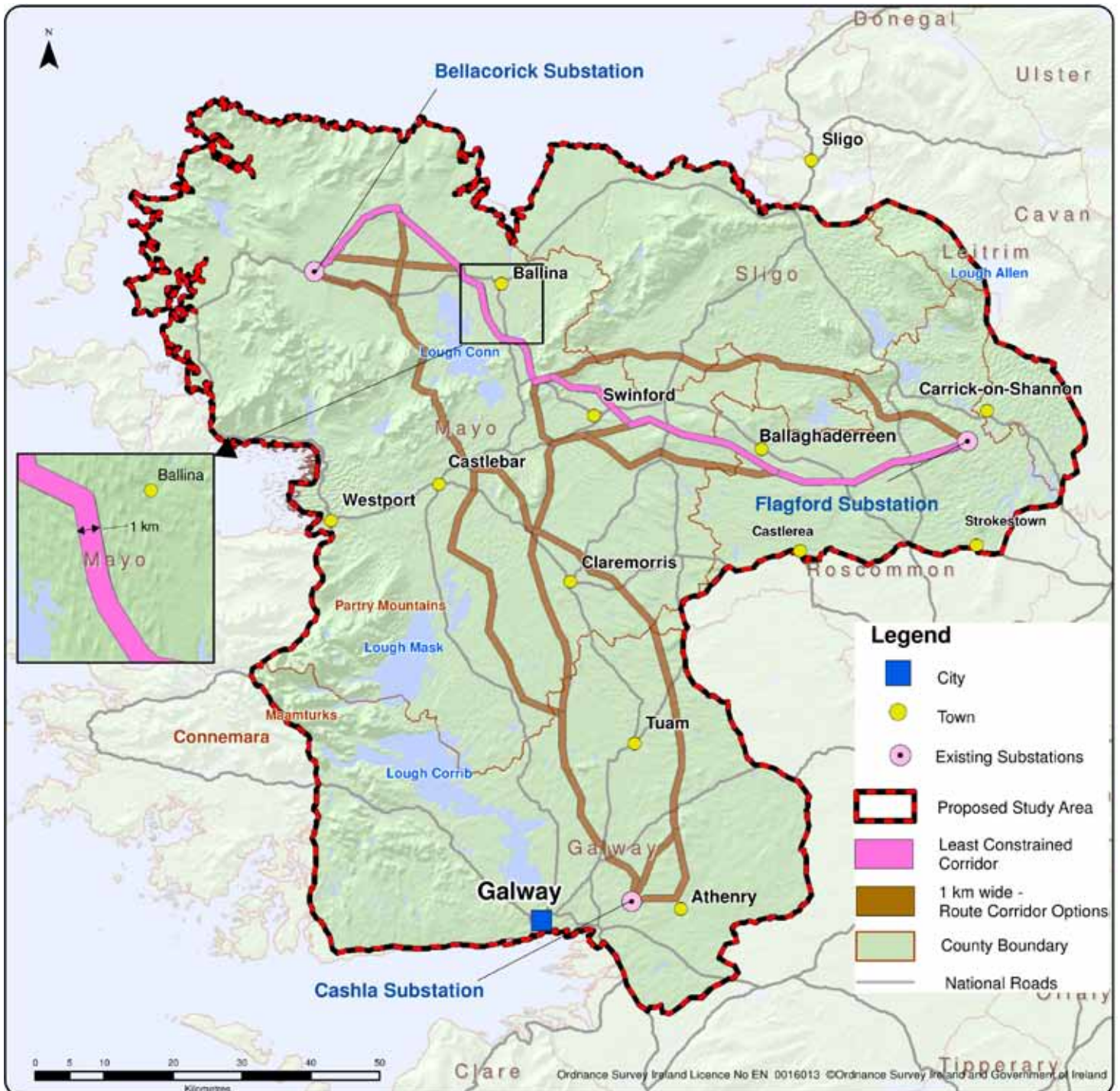
Contributing to national recovery and growth

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.



Route corridor options

This map illustrates a number of indicative 1 kilometre wide corridors within which the new 400kV power line could be placed. It also identifies one corridor from Bellacorick to Flagford as being the “least constrained” (coloured pink) to meet the needs of the project. The least constrained corridor is considered to be the corridor which best avoids the environmental and other constraints. It is important to note that no decisions regarding the final corridor or route have been made.



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 and a detailed Constraints Report
- Established an Information Centre in Castlebar
- Held a total of nine open days across the study area
- Met and had discussions with numerous groups and individuals
- Undertook print and radio advertising
- Set up a dedicated project website, phonenumber and email
- Introduced a Community Liaison Officer
- Set up a text update system
- Issued a letter outlining details of the project to over 200,000 houses in Mayo, Sligo, Galway, Roscommon and Leitrim.

What feedback has been received?

The two rounds of public consultation undertaken to date invited the public and stakeholders to comment on the proposed study area map and on a detailed Constraints Report which set out information collected across the areas of ecology, landscape, geology, water, cultural heritage, settlements, utilities, infrastructure and engineering.

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, members of the public and stakeholders have enquired about and provided feedback under the following broad themes:

- The importance of comprehensive public consultation
- Potential impact on environment, ecology and heritage
- Queries relating to technology, substations and future developments
- Questions regarding perceived health effects in relation to electricity transmission lines
- The economic benefit of the project - jobs, renewable development, inward investment to the region

EirGrid received feedback from 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 extremely beneficial to the project team in getting a better understanding of

the study area and identifying important factors for consideration as the project proceeds.

What stage is the project at now?

The Grid West project team will now commence a third round of focused consultation which will take place over a 6 week period commencing on the 5th March 2013.

This round of consultation will focus on the Stage 1 Report and marks the end of the initial information gathering stage of the project. This information gathering phase focussed on mapping the key features including towns, villages and settlements, national monuments, landscapes, areas designated for conservation and all existing infrastructure which may have a bearing on the project.

Using detailed information on these constraints and the feedback which has been received from the public and other stakeholders, EirGrid's experts have identified a number of indicative 1 kilometre wide corridors which could accommodate the new transmission line. These are illustrated on the map on the page opposite.

The report analyses in detail how various constraints impact on these corridors and identifies one corridor from Bellacorick to Flagford as being the "least constrained" to meet to needs of the project. This corridor is coloured pink on the map on the page opposite. This least constrained corridor is considered to be the corridor which best avoids the environmental and other constraints. It also identifies potential locations for the necessary new substations at Bellacorick and Flagford or Cashla.

Why your feedback is important

It is important to note that no decisions regarding the final corridor or route have been made. We are asking the public and communities to view the work which has been carried out to date and to share their views. This feedback is very important at this stage and it can influence the next step in the project which is the identification of a preferred corridor for this new development. Comment and discussion on all indicative corridors and on any aspect of the report is very valuable and important for the project.

Next steps

Following this round of consultation, EirGrid will review and consider all feedback received from stakeholders and identify an emerging preferred corridor, generally being the best option from a technical, environmental, community and economic perspective.

Project Development & Consultation Roadmap

You are Here



About EirGrid

EirGrid is a state-owned company and 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 carriageways 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:** The Grid West project Information Centre at Linenhall Street, Castlebar (open every Monday and Tuesday, except Bank Holidays) from 9am to 5pm. (Open Monday–Thursday from 5th March–16th April 2013).

You can also contact the Grid West project Community Liaison Officer through any of the above channels.

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

