



The Grid West Project

Project Information Brochure
Stage 2: Evaluate Options

Autumn 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 is one of the projects in the west of Ireland under the Grid25 programme. It consists of a new high capacity power line linking the North Mayo area to the existing Flagford substation near Carrick-on-Shannon which is a strong point on the transmission grid.

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 capture the west's increasing

levels of renewable energy generation. This critical infrastructure will also allow the western 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 western region is particularly rich in wind and wave renewable energy resources, as well as having potential for biomass and other renewable technologies. The existing transmission infrastructure in the region is not designed to accommodate the level of renewable energy generation planned (650 MW) for this region. The Grid West project is being developed to connect this resource to the national grid.

Facilitating job creation and investment

By connecting the region's huge renewable energy resources to 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 €240 million investment in 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.

What work has been done so far?

The Grid West project was launched in May 2012 by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny T.D. and Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Pat Rabbitte T.D. Since then EirGrid has:

- Held three rounds of public consultation; in June 2012, October 2012 and March 2013, with a total of 17 open days across the study area
- Published the proposed study area map and a detailed Constraints Report
- Set up a dedicated project website, phone line, email and a text update system
- Established an Information Centre in Castlebar
- Introduced a Community Liaison Officer
- Met and engaged with numerous groups and individuals
- Delivered a letter to over 200,000 homes in the region outlining contact details for the project
- Undertook print and radio advertising
- Published the Stage 1 Report outlining 16 potential route corridors including the least constrained corridor
- Attended community events over the summer to inform people about how they can interact with the project.

What feedback has been received?

To date there has been a high level of engagement from the community. This level of engagement increased significantly following the publication of the Stage 1 Report.

EirGrid received feedback from groups and individuals during this round of consultation and would like to thank those who participated in the process. This feedback has been extremely beneficial to the project team in progressing the project.

In addition to receiving general comments and information on the route corridors identified in the Stage 1 Report, members of the public and stakeholders have enquired about and provided feedback under the following broad themes:

- The communications and consultation process and forthcoming planning and statutory process
- The economic impact of the project regarding jobs and inward investment to the region
- Concerns regarding perceived health effects in relation to electricity transmission lines
- Queries relating to proposed technology and structural design of the project
- Potential impact of the project on the environment, ecology and heritage.

Further information on these topics is available on the project website,

www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest

Emerging preferred route corridor

Figure 1 identifies the emerging preferred route corridor for the Grid West project. The chosen 1km wide corridor starts north west of Moygownagh, runs west of Ballina, east of Foxford and Swinford, south of Charlestown and Ballaghaderreen before linking into the existing Flagford substation, near Carrick-on-Shannon. No decision regarding the final line route has been made.

Work since Stage 1 Report

In March 2013, the Grid West project published the Stage 1 Report identifying 16 potential route corridors for the Grid West project. It also identified a least constrained corridor, which was considered to be the corridor which best avoided environmental and other constraints. Following a round of public consultation, further technical studies were conducted. A comprehensive analysis of all studies and submissions received was undertaken by the project team. This work identified the emerging preferred route corridor, which is broadly the same as the least constrained corridor in the Stage 1 Report with some modifications.



FIGURE 1: EMERGING PREFERRED ROUTE CORRIDOR

Amendments to the previously published least constrained route corridor

Figure 1 also shows the amendments to the least constrained corridor at three points. The changes were made to this corridor based on feedback received along with further technical studies, while other feedback will be considered as a line within this corridor is designed over the coming months.

Selection of substation site

The 400kV power line will run from the existing Flagford substation near Carrick-on-Shannon to a proposed new substation in North Mayo, approximately 2.5km north west of Moygownagh. The connection of this new substation to the existing regional 110kV network will now be subject to further technical studies and subsequent consultation once the studies have been completed.

What stage is the project at now?

EirGrid announced details of the emerging preferred route corridor on 8th October 2013. The next steps in the project will involve EirGrid contacting landowners within the emerging preferred route corridor to

commence land surveys and to discuss a possible line route, substation and tower locations.

This work is scheduled to take place from October 2013 to spring 2014.

Following this consultation with landowners and further technical work, EirGrid will publish a Stage 2 Report, presenting all information in relation to an indicative line route and substation and tower locations.

This report is expected to be published mid 2014, at which time the public, communities and other stakeholders will be given the opportunity to review the report and provide feedback on the indicative line route and substation and tower locations identified.

No final line route has been decided for the Grid West project. All public, community and stakeholder input in respect of the indicative line route and substation and tower locations will be considered as part of final line design. It will influence our final planning application, which we anticipate will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála in 2015.

Project Development & Consultation Roadmap

You are Here



You are Here

About EirGrid

EirGrid is a state-owned company and 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 carriageways and main roads of the national road network. It is operated at three voltage levels; 400kV, 220kV and 110kV 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 encourages 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

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).

