



## 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](http://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.