

News Release

EirGrid Begins Consultation for North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development

May 9, 2011 – EirGrid is today embarking on a fresh round of non-statutory public consultation for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development.

This is taking place in advance of the submission of a new application for the project this year to An Bord Pleanála.

EirGrid commenced a comprehensive review of the project shortly after the original application was withdrawn in June 2010. The preliminary findings of the review are published today in a *Preliminary Re-Evaluation Report*, which will form the basis for non-statutory consultation over the next six weeks. The Report includes a review of key project documentation, including consultants' studies, reports and feedback from earlier public consultation - including submissions made to An Bord Pleanála - and it identifies an indicative project solution.

Aidan Geoghegan, EirGrid project manager, said: "There are some changes to the original route submitted as part of our first application to An Bord Pleanála. However, the *Preliminary Re-Evaluation Report* suggests that the new route should substantially follow that which formed the basis of the original application."

EirGrid is aware of the proposal in the Programme for Government to appoint an independent expert commission on undergrounding all or part of the North South line. "We will of course co-operate fully with any such review and have due regard for its findings," said Mr Geoghegan.

EirGrid plans to spend the coming weeks consulting with landowners and other stakeholders. Feedback will be taken on board by the EirGrid team as the process evolves towards a preferred project solution that will ultimately form the basis of a new application to An Bord Pleanála.

"We want to meet with as many people as possible before the identification of a preferred project solution. We know that there is a significant amount of interest in the project. We have relocated our Information Centre in Navan town centre, which people can visit to ask any questions they might have. The new Centre is located at 10A Kennedy House, Kennedy Road, Navan. They can also visit our Centre in Monaghan, which is based in the Workhouse, Carrickmacross," added Mr Geoghegan.

People can also make appointments to meet the project team at any time or get further information by contacting EirGrid on lo-call 1890 252690 or visiting www.eirgrid.com.

ENDS

Note to editors: EirGrid withdrew its original planning application following an issue in relation to the public notice for the development which arose at the planning hearing. The North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development will facilitate cross-border sharing of electricity; improve the efficiency of the electricity market, resulting in lower electricity bills for customers; allow more renewable energy to be connected to the

network, reducing Ireland's dependency on imported fossil fuels; and ensure a future secure supply of electricity throughout the North East.