



# North Connacht 110 kV Project

Step 4 Consultation Update

Summer 2020





# The EirGrid Liaison Team are ready to keep the conversation flowing.



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*Proper infrastructure is key to Ireland maintaining its international competitiveness. We must maintain an environment that is conducive to doing business – and adequate commercial energy capacity is central to that. IDA Ireland welcomes EirGrid's stated aim of transitioning the electricity sector to low-carbon, renewable energy.*

*The North Connacht project is an important part of that strategy, providing the necessary electricity infrastructure required by industry across North Connacht through renewable energy means, ensuring security of supply for customers and businesses across Mayo, Sligo and Roscommon.*

**Martin Shanahan, IDA Ireland CEO.**

# Who are EirGrid – and what do we do?

EirGrid is responsible for a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity – now and in the future. We develop, manage and operate the electricity transmission grid. This brings power from where it is generated to where it is needed throughout Ireland. We use the grid to supply power to industry and businesses that use large amounts of electricity. The grid also powers the distribution network that supplies the electricity you use every day in your homes, businesses, schools, hospitals and farms. As part of our role, we look at ways of improving regional electricity infrastructure to ensure it is able to meet the increasing demand and support the growth of regional industry.

## About this update

This update is for stakeholders, communities, landowners and members of the public who want to find out more about this project.

The purpose of this document is to provide information on the North Connacht 110 kV project and to support the Step 4 public consultation process.

This document provides up-to-date information on the project including what has been learned on the project so far, and how you as a stakeholder can get involved.

## Why is the North Connacht project needed?

Currently, just 30% of the electricity that we use comes from renewable energy. Last year's Government's Climate Action Plan 2019 has set the target of achieving 70% of electricity consumption via renewable energy sources by 2030. At present a large amount of electricity is generated by wind farms in the North Connacht region with more planned over the coming years.

The level of renewable generation is far greater than the capacity of the local electricity network. This means we have to look at ways of improving the electricity infrastructure in the region.

EirGrid is legally obliged to connect those who generate electricity. This means we must develop the grid in response to plans for new electricity generation, such as the aforementioned wind farms.

The North Connacht project also supports Mayo County Council plans to boost business and investment in the region. The region will also play host to the recently approved Government backed Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) at Ireland West Airport Knock. This demonstrates the regional plans to drive the regional economy.

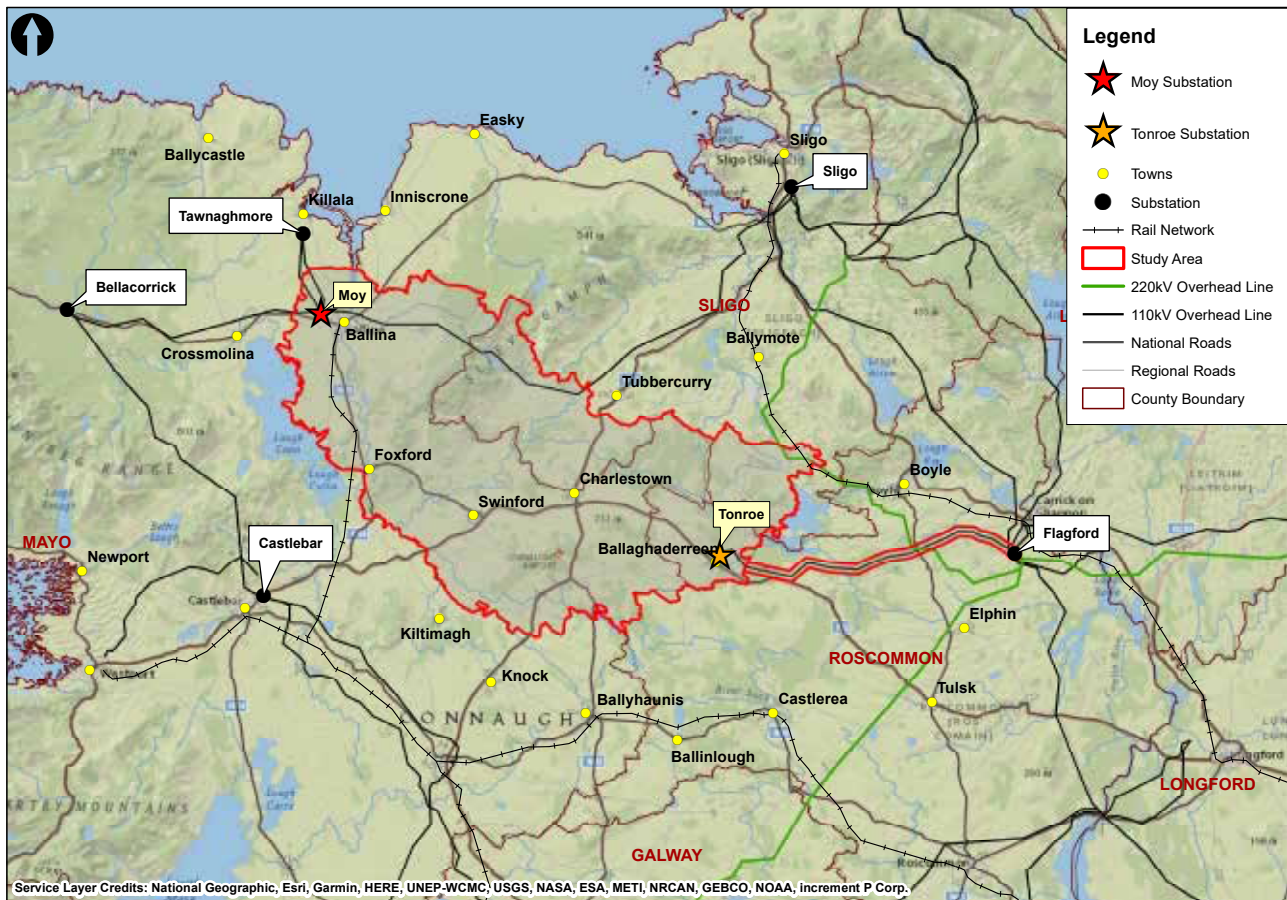
## What is the North Connacht project?

Our original proposal was the Grid West project in 2012, a large scale development to facilitate the level of renewable generation planned at that time. However, by June 2017 the amount of planned renewable generation in the region had dropped by half and Grid West was no longer required. We anticipated then that the reduced amount of renewable energy could be met through a smaller scale of development. That remains the case and we are now progressing with the North Connacht 110 kV project.

The need is for a 110 kV project and there are a number of possible technology options to consider. The project will be either a 110 kV overhead line or an underground cable. If an overhead line is used the majority of the line will be carried on timber twin pole sets, with steel angle masts where required, which is no different to the existing national electricity infrastructure which measures in the region of 5,000km. The start point for the North Connacht 110 kV project will be at Moy substation near Ballina, Co. Mayo. The end point will be at Tonroe substation near Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon. There will also be 32km of upgrade works on the existing line from Tonroe to Flagford (Carrick-on-Shannon). During Step 4, technology and corridor options will be assessed. The best performing technology option and route corridor will be identified.



# Study Area for North Connacht 110 kV Project



*Currently, just 30% of the electricity that we use comes from renewable energy. Last year's Government's Climate Action Plan 2019 has set the target of achieving 70% of electricity consumption via renewable energy sources by 2030.*

# Key Facts



## Competition

Apply downward pressure on the cost of electricity to consumers



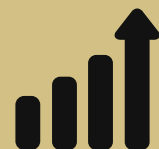
## Sustainability

Help facilitate Ireland's transition to a low carbon energy future



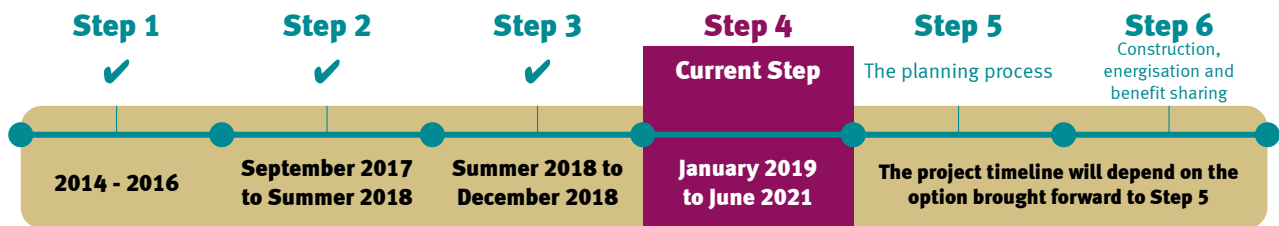
## Security of Supply

Enhanced security of supply for Irish electricity consumers



## Economic Benefits

Help support the growth of regional industry



## Six-step approach

We follow a six-step approach to planning electricity grid projects.

This approach guides how we:

- Engage and consult with stakeholders and communities
- Explore options fully
- Make more informed decisions

The North Connacht project is now in Step 4 of this process.

## Coming out of Step 3

EirGrid considered two potential project end points; Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon and Srananagh Co. Sligo. Ballaghaderreen was identified as the best performing option. Both overhead line and underground cable technologies were explored, and a consultant engaged to review the constraints in the region.

Areas of opportunity and corridors able to accommodate both sets of technologies were produced and available for consideration during public consultation.

Step 4a report can be viewed in related documents at:

<http://www.eirgridgroup.com/NorthConnachtProject>

### Step 1

How do we identify future needs of the electricity grid?

### Step 2

What technologies can meet these needs?

### Step 3

What's the best option and what area may be affected?

### Step 4

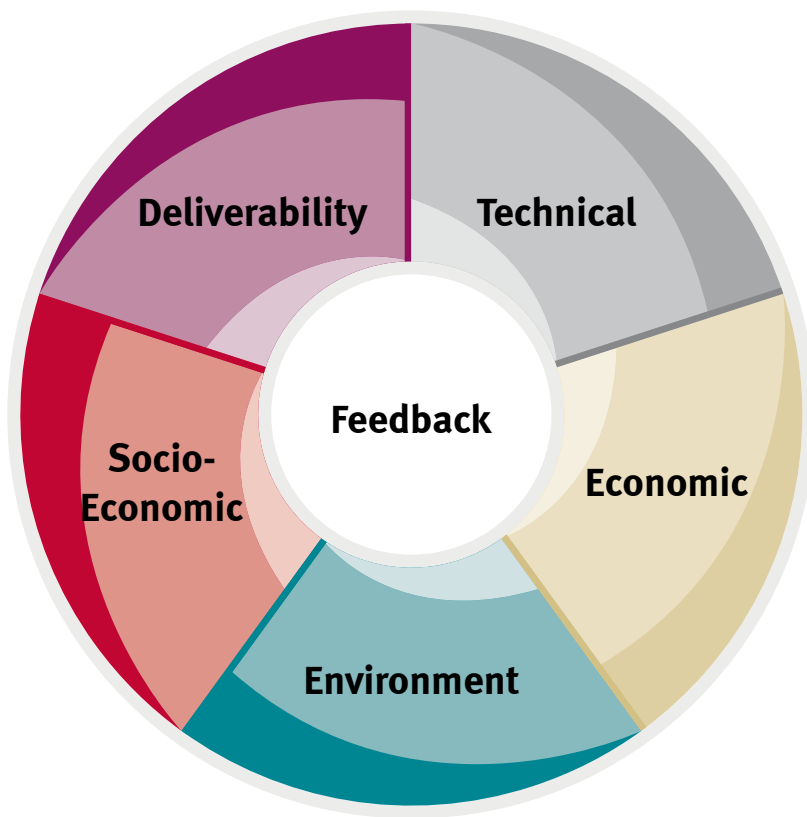
Where exactly should we build?

### Step 5

Apply for planning permission.

### Step 6

Construct, energise (make live) and share benefits.



**Opposite page top left:**  
110 kV OHL Double Poleset  
with Earth Wires.

**Opposite page top right:**  
110 kV OHL Angle Mast View.

**Opposite page bottom left:**  
Constructing Underground  
Cable in road.

**Opposite page bottom right:**  
Constructing Joint Bay in Road.

## Assessment Criteria

We studied the responses to the Step 3 consultation. This allowed us to understand the concerns people raised, and to assess new information about the proposed options.

We studied the responses received during Step 3 and evaluated the short-listed technology options. This process confirmed that they were all still viable.

We carefully considered this information, alongside our analysis. We then decided which options to take forward.

Respondents raised several common themes:

- The need for swift project completion
- Route & corridor options and starting points
- Preservation of wildlife
- Damage to the countryside's natural beauty
- Noise concerns
- Impact on property values

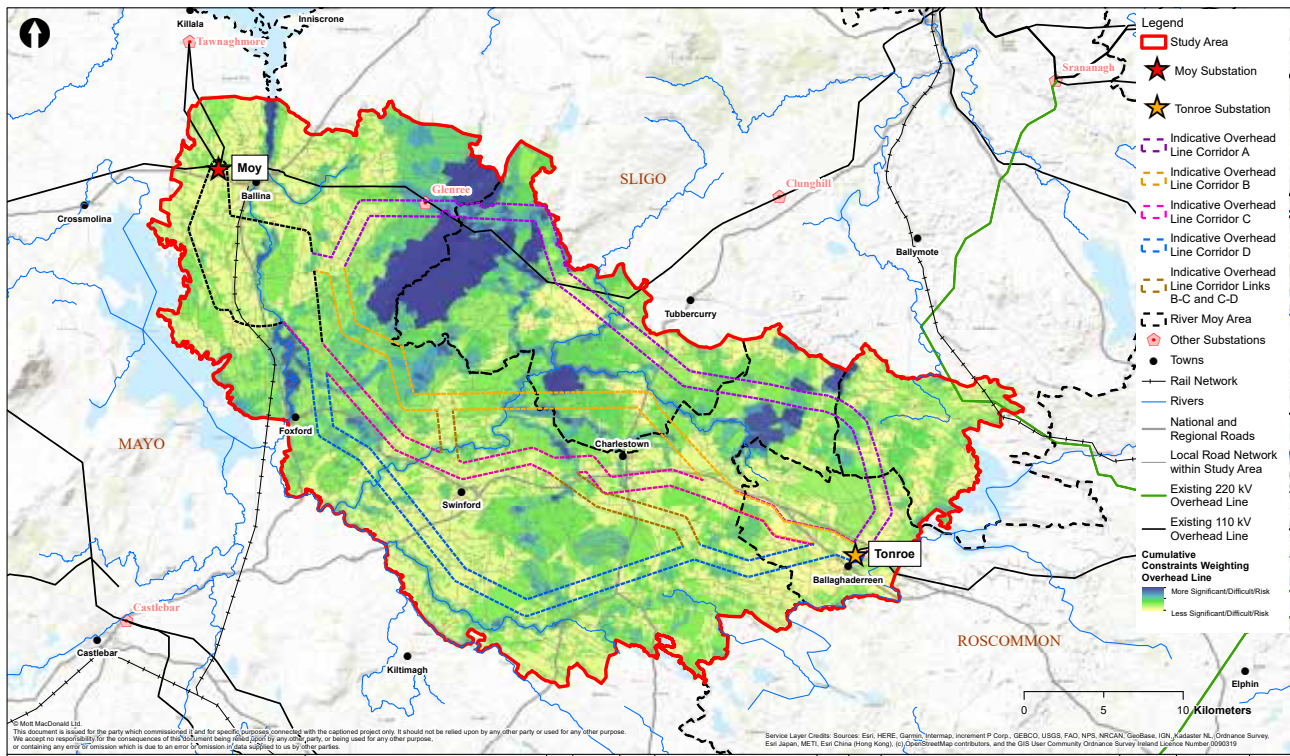






# Study Area for North Connacht 110 kV Project

## Overhead Line Technology Options



More detailed maps are available. Contact us if you need one.

There are 4 OHL route corridor options to consider. These options are highlighted in colour on the below map. The 4 presented options have minor variations that allow for an additional 2 options to be considered.

The map identifies the areas with the capacity to accommodate the OHL. This is referred to as a 'constraints map' with the areas in dark blue representing the areas least likely to be able to accommodate the technology. The areas in light green/yellow are those areas most able to support the OHL technology.



[illegible]

There are 3 underground cable route options to consider. These options are highlighted in colour on the below map.

The areas in light green/yellow are those areas most able to support the underground cable technology.

# Community fund



EirGrid will work with a specialist grant-making organisation in order to determine how this fund should be managed and spent. This will ensure that EirGrid is a participant in the process rather than a decision maker. It will allow us to work closely and collaboratively with communities while the fund is facilitated by an independent body. We welcome all and any ideas about how a community fund can best be applied in the community.

We encourage you to think about how your locality could benefit from the North Connacht Community Fund. This will help to inform our process of appointing the specialist grant making organisation. The final value can only be determined once Step 4 of our process is complete.

The focus is often on projects to help the community.

These could be:

- Community walkways like the one we did in Moyvane, Co. Kerry;
- Education initiatives like IT equipment for local schools;
- Environmental initiatives like installing beehives;
- Youth facilities like a playground;
- Sports facilities like a play pitch; and more.

We will seek your views on how to use the community funds we have for projects that would benefit your community.

Prior to the fund being released EirGrid will publish a set of guidelines and will host a launch evening to open the fund for applications. For more info please visit:

[www.eirgridgroup.com/about/in-the-community/community-fund/](http://www.eirgridgroup.com/about/in-the-community/community-fund/)





**Step 1** How do we identify the future needs of the electricity grid?

**Step 2** What technologies can meet these needs?

**Step 3** What's the best option and what area may be affected?

**Step 4** Where exactly should we build?

**Step 5** The planning process

**Step 6** Construction, energisation and benefit sharing

## Step 4 At a glance

### Recap

Following a number of studies carried out in Step 3, EirGrid identified two technology options (overhead line and underground cable) that would address the need in North Connacht. These were assessed on five criteria. EirGrid identified the best performing technology option as being the overhead line from Moy to Tonroe. However as a commitment to the Framework for Grid Development, EirGrid is carefully assessing the underground cable technology option in addition to the overhead line option. We have developed a refined study area for the proposed new 110 kV circuit and we have developed corridors for both the overhead line and underground cable options. We now seek feedback from the community and stakeholders in North Connacht on the route corridor and technology options.

### How long will this take?

Until the end of 2020 and early 2021.

### What can you influence?

You will be able to influence our choice of technology, and the route corridor which will be ultimately chosen to develop the project. You can also influence the project by highlighting any relevant information not captured to date.

### How can I get involved?

The initial period of public consultation in Step 4a will last 12 weeks. During this time, we are holding Public Consultation Events online.

If you would like further information on this project, or have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to or get in touch via the contact details listed on this brochure.

### What have we decided at the end of this step?

At the end of Step 4 we will have selected the best performing technology option and associated route corridor.

**We want to hear from you. If you would like to feedback on this project, or find out more information contact: +353 (0)1 677 1700, or [northconnachtproject@eirgrid.com](mailto:northconnachtproject@eirgrid.com)**

**You can also contact our Community Liaison Officer, Eoghan O'Sullivan on: +353 87 247 7732 or [eoghan.osullivan@eirgrid.com](mailto:eoghan.osullivan@eirgrid.com) or our Agricultural Liaison Officer, Aidan Naughton on: +353 86 172 0156 or [aidan.naughton@eirgrid.com](mailto:aidan.naughton@eirgrid.com)**



## Next steps

### What's happening on the project now?

We now have two possible technology options and associated route corridor options on which we are seeking your views.

As a part of this process, you will have an opportunity to give feedback to the team at public consultation events which will be held throughout 2020. These will take place in towns within the study area.

You can also contact us directly via email [northconnachtproject@eirgrid.com](mailto:northconnachtproject@eirgrid.com).

## Feedback

We will assess and compare the different technology options and route corridors against the five criteria outlined on page 6. Following our assessment process, we are seeking feedback on the possible route corridors for both overhead line and underground cable options. Stakeholders and the public can also influence the project by highlighting any relevant detail not captured to date, such as any environmental or heritage information and existing amenities including popular walking routes or local areas of historic significance etc. This process will ultimately identify the best performing technology option and associated route corridor.

Feedback at this stage of the project is essential for EirGrid to understand the various issues and concerns of all stakeholders.



# North Connacht 110 kV Project/EirGrid Capital Project 0816

Small-scale grid infrastructure is being proposed for North Connacht after a review of the region's renewable energy plans.



View project information  
and documents online



Sign up for webinar



Take a virtual tour  
of our Open Day



Complete the Questionnaire  
online and speak with a  
member of our team remotely

**During August 2020, EirGrid conducted a survey across the study area to understand the types of engagement the residents wished to receive. As a result, EirGrid has increased the number of ways the public can speak with the North Connacht Project Team.**

2020 has presented a number of challenges for us all. We will continue to follow government guidelines and ensure strict Health & Safety measures are in place and adhered to. EirGrid prioritises the safety of our stakeholders and are willing to adapt our consultation methods to meet the needs of stakeholders at this difficult time.

For more information please visit:  
[http://www.eirgridgroup.com/  
NorthConnachtProject](http://www.eirgridgroup.com/NorthConnachtProject)



## Get in touch

Throughout September to Mid November, the North Connacht Project Team will be available to share information with the public and take feedback.

Project advertisements will be placed throughout towns across the study area during September and October 2020.

EirGrid will conduct both public meetings and online events during October and November. People are encouraged to attend the online events, and where this is not possible, public meetings will be held that follow strict HSE guidance and protocol.

These events are scheduled to take place for the following towns with dates to be confirmed:

Ballina, Foxford, Ballaghaderreen, Tobercurry, Charlestown, Swinford & Carrick-on-Shannon.

Please see [www.eirgridgroup.com/NorthConnachtProject](http://www.eirgridgroup.com/NorthConnachtProject) for up to date information on the North Connacht project events.



### Contact Details for North Connacht 110 kV Project

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