

North-South 400kV Interconnection Development Project Activity - 2013

December 2013

EirGrid has now published its proposed final line route, as detailed in the Community Update Newsletter - December 2013

July 2013

EirGrid is seeking feedback on a key new report on the proposed north south interconnector.

The Preferred Project Solution Report documents EirGrid's design process and provides detailed information on the proposed line route.

An eight-week public consultation on the report is underway from Tuesday 16th July to Monday 9th September 2013. This is the final formal consultation period prior to the submission of an application for planning approval to An Bord Pleanála.

The preferred project solution is a 400kV overhead power line.

The report provides detailed information on the line route, including maps, information on siting and construction of towers; and an outline of the environmental issues to be addressed in an Environmental Impact Statement.

The report follows the publication of a Final Re-evaluation Report on the North South 400kV Interconnection Development in April. That report found that there remains an urgent strategic need for the project and recommended that the new interconnector take the form of a single circuit 400kV alternating current overhead line.

Final Re-evaluation Report

April 2013

EirGrid has published a Re-evaluation Report on the North South 400kV Interconnection Development. Please view frequently asked questions

What has happened so far?

This project was first launched in autumn 2007 and an application for planning approval was submitted to An Bord Pleanála in December 2009. This application was withdrawn in July 2010. Since the withdrawal of the application, EirGrid has been engaged in the process of undertaking a comprehensive re-evaluation of the project. This involved, among other things, a thorough re-examination of the previous application, including issues raised during the previous application process.

In May 2011, EirGrid published its interim findings as set out in a Preliminary Evaluation Report, which was subject to consultation. The consultation requested feedback on the content and findings of the Preliminary Re-evaluation Report and included engagement with the public and landowners on the indicative line route.

The consultation on the Preliminary Re-evaluation Report included:

- The strategic need for the project.
- Technology options for the project.
- Project study area.
- Environmental and other constraints.
- Identification of corridor options.
- Identification of the preferred corridor.
- Identification of an indicative line route within the preferred corridor.

Government Review

A separate review process was undertaken by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR), whereby an International Expert Commission (IEC) reported on the case for, and cost of, undergrounding the North-South 400kV Interconnection Development.

This Report was published in January 2012 and recommended that the interconnector should not be underground using Alternating Current (AC) cable. However, this report also stated that if undergrounding is to be used, the best technology option currently available is Direct Current (DC). The report estimated that using this technology would cost up to three times more than the standard overhead line solution.

Following a period of consultation, a Government Policy Statement on the Strategic Importance of Transmission and Other Energy Infrastructure was published in July 2012. This Policy statement recognised this project as one of a group of projects that are "vital developments for the regions and for the economy and society as a whole". It also emphasised the importance of early and ongoing consultation to help identify appropriate mitigation measures such as the reconfiguring or rationalising of existing networks, and the development of a community gain programme.

Conclusion of EirGrid's project

re-evaluation

EirGrid has completed its re-evaluation process and published the Final Re-evaluation Report. The re-evaluation process has considered and responded to the following:

- Stakeholder feedback from the previous planning application
- Stakeholder feedback from the Preliminary Re-evaluation Report consultation.
- The outcome of the Government Review.

The key findings of the project re-evaluation are, that there remains an urgent strategic need for the project. Following EirGrid's consideration of the findings in the IEC report, using DC technology would be technically inferior for this project compared to a standard AC overhead line solution and EirGrid agrees with the IEC that this option would be vastly more expensive.

On this basis EirGrid is proposing that the new Interconnector circuit will generally take the form of a single circuit 400kV AC overhead line. The indicative line route for this overhead line is broadly similar to the previously proposed line route, but incorporates localised modifications as follows:

- Modifications to the line route in order to take account of the construction and granting of permission for new houses occurring since the preparation and submission of the previous application in December 2009.
- Modification arising as a result of the decision not to proceed with an intermediate substation (in the area to the west of Kingscourt) as part of this forthcoming application for approval of the Interconnection Development.
- Modifications arising from technical and environmental considerations during the re-evaluation process.

EirGrid welcomes your views

EirGrid is fully committed to engaging extensively with landowners, members of the public and other interested parties on all aspects of the project at any time. It is vital that everyone has an opportunity to provide feedback on the information presented and decisions that are made as the project progresses towards a planning application.

We encourage you to participate by writing to us, calling us, dropping into one of our information centres or attending a project open day in Meath, Cavan or Monaghan. We welcome your comments on the Final Re-evaluation Report and your views on whether all issues have been considered as part of the re-evaluation process. If not, what other issues do you think EirGrid should consider?

All feedback and submissions will be reviewed and considered by the project team and where appropriate will be incorporated into later stages of the project. To enable this, all feedback should be received by Monday, May 27th 2013. EirGrid is also seeking your feedback on how best to adopt community gain within transmission project developments and the Grid25 programme in general. You can give your views on community gain by contacting the project information service or using the dedicated feedback form which is attached to the NSIC Re-evaluation Community Brochure April 2013 .

What happens next?

Following the completion of this period of consultation, EirGrid will consider all feedback received before finalising its preferred project solution. The preferred project solution will be published in the coming months, which will be the subject of a further period of public consultation.

This consultation will focus on the:

- Preferred line design, this will include the line route, preferred structure and tower locations.
- Methodology for siting and construction of towers.
- Environmental issues to be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).