

# Powering Up the North West

## Frequently Asked Questions



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## **1. What is Powering Up the North West?**

Powering Up the North West is a proposed programme of works, consisting of two projects, to accommodate the growing demand for electricity in the North West region.

It will facilitate the integration of increased renewables onto the grid and help to generate social and economic growth and development for the region.

The programme will consist of two new 220 kV circuits in counties Roscommon, Leitrim, Sligo and Donegal.

One route will run from Flagford substation in Roscommon to Srananagh substation in Sligo and another between Srananagh and Clogher in Donegal.

## **2. Why are the projects needed?**

The existing electricity transmission infrastructure in the North West is at risk of reaching its capacity limit. To address this need, new infrastructure is required to ensure a reliable, sustainable electricity supply to communities, residents, schools, farms and businesses in the area.

The region is characterised by a strong renewable energy resource that is made up primarily of wind. There is potential for more but the current level of generation is greater than the current capacity of the existing network in the region so we need to build out the grid.

## **3. How will it benefit the North West region?**

Powering Up the North West will benefit the people of the North West by increasing the capacity of the electricity network in the region, which as well as making the grid more resilient, will help to attract inward investment and employment.

Additionally, a dedicated Community Benefit Fund will be made available to provide direct benefits to communities who are closest to the proposed infrastructure.

## **4. What is the current status of the programme?**

The development of this project follows EirGrid's 6-Step approach to Grid Development, which sets out the steps to be taken to identify and implement the best performing solution that meets the identified needs.

Powering Up the North West is currently in Step 4, during which the project team will determine the specific routes these projects will take. This stage follows the completion of last year's Step 3 Consultation, which gathered feedback on potential constraints affecting project delivery. As part of Step 4, a further consultation will be held to seek views on the possible route corridors for these projects.

## **5. Do the projects need landowners' consent to proceed?**

EirGrid has a dedicated landowner engagement team who liaise with landowners who are impacted by these projects. As outlined, the Flagford to Srananagh is along an existing route, so EirGrid has started to engage with landowners on this project outlining our plans, and we will begin engagement on the Srananagh-Clogher project in 2026. EirGrid always endeavours to obtain as many voluntary agreements as possible pre-construction of the project and is committed to working closely with all landowners.

## **6. Why can't the projects go underground?**

### **Flagford-Srananagh Project**

In assessing potential technology solutions for this project, EirGrid considered all practical options. An underground option was considered for this project, in which a new underground 220 kV line would be constructed between Flagford substation and Srananagh substation, however, this option would add significant risk to the reliability of the grid in this region. This is because the existing grid in the North West is not as robust as other parts of the country. A 220 kV underground cable would introduce serious challenges for how the grid operates in this region.

EirGrid will only underground projects where it is technically feasible and achievable, see more at <https://www.eirgrid.ie/grid/how-grid-works/underground-vs-overhead>

### **Srananagh-Clogher Project**

The existing grid in Sligo, Leitrim, and Donegal is not robust enough for the construction of a 220 kV underground cable. Doing so would introduce a range of complexities that could result in significant damage to the national grid and would be a significant health and safety risk. This is because the existing grid in the North West is not as robust as other parts of the country and a 220 kV underground cable would bring instability to this part of the grid.

In assessing technology options, a hybrid underground option was considered and studies were performed to determine its viability. This option also considered the possibility of placing a portion of the cable on the seabed off the coast of Sligo and Donegal. Following a multi criteria assessment, this option was determined as undeliverable. More information can be found in the technical documents at [eirgrid.ie/northwest](http://eirgrid.ie/northwest).

## **7. How are project routes and technology options chosen?**

EirGrid identifies a broad study area for the projects. Our teams then perform extensive studies to determine the options available to meet the needs of these projects, both in terms of technology and viable routes for the delivery of these circuits.

## **8. What are composite poles and why are they the preferred option?**

Composite pole technology has been identified as the preferred solution for carrying these overhead lines. Composite pole sets are more durable, lightweight and easier to install than traditional steel structures. While this is the first time the technology will be used at this scale in Ireland, composite poles are well-established internationally. EirGrid and ESB have rigorously tested the technology in Ireland before proposing it for these projects.

A key advantage of composite poles is their ability to perform well in challenging weather. They are engineered to withstand strong winds and adverse conditions, which helps protect the line during storms. As the project progresses, weather resilience will also be built into other decisions. For example, during Step 4 the project team will carefully assess and refine route options to minimise unnecessary exposure to weather-related risks. In Step 5, vegetation management will be fully considered in line with EirGrid best practice. Together, these measures help protect the infrastructure from hazards such as falling trees, particularly during storm events, and support the long-term resilience of the network.

## **9. Will energy generated in the North West be exported to other parts of the country?**

The projects are primarily being carried out to address the need for greater capacity on the electricity grid and to meet growing demand in the region.

However, with strong existing renewable energy sources (primarily wind), the North West could generate more energy than can be consumed in the region itself.

The upgrade to the grid will allow for additional energy generated to be transferred when and if required to other parts of the country.

#### **10. Are there environmental and ecological concerns with the project?**

Respect for the environment is central to EirGrid's work. We aim to mitigate negative environmental and ecological impact on all our projects and we work to create and enhance habitats.

EirGrid also has a statutory obligation to ensure that the operation, maintenance and development of the national transmission system has due regard for the environment.

The Powering Up the North West programme will, to greater or lesser extents, be in close proximity to areas of high biodiversity value including designated Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHA).

The chosen routes of the infrastructure, mitigation design, and any monitoring requirements will give due consideration to these protected sites.

#### **11. Are there health considerations in relation to electric magnetic fields (EMFs)?**

The World Health Organization states that there is no evidence to suggest that low-level electric and magnetic fields, such as those within our infrastructure, are harmful to human health.

Much like radio waves and TV signals, EMFs from the electricity grid are non-ionising, meaning they do not have enough energy to cause damage to human or animal cells in the same way ionising elements do.

We operate the transmission grid in accordance with stringent safety recommendations from national and international agencies.

More information on EMFs here: [Electric and Magnetic Fields \(EMFs\)](#)

#### **12. How does EirGrid engage with the wider community in the region?**

EirGrid's Community Liaison Officers are readily available to provide information and answer any questions. Community Forums will be established along the project route and will bring together people and organisations from across the project area so that stakeholder and community views can be discussed, understood, and properly considered prior to and during project delivery.

If you have any queries, please contact Connell McLoone at [connell.mcloone@eirgrid.com](mailto:connell.mcloone@eirgrid.com) or +353 87 068 9410