

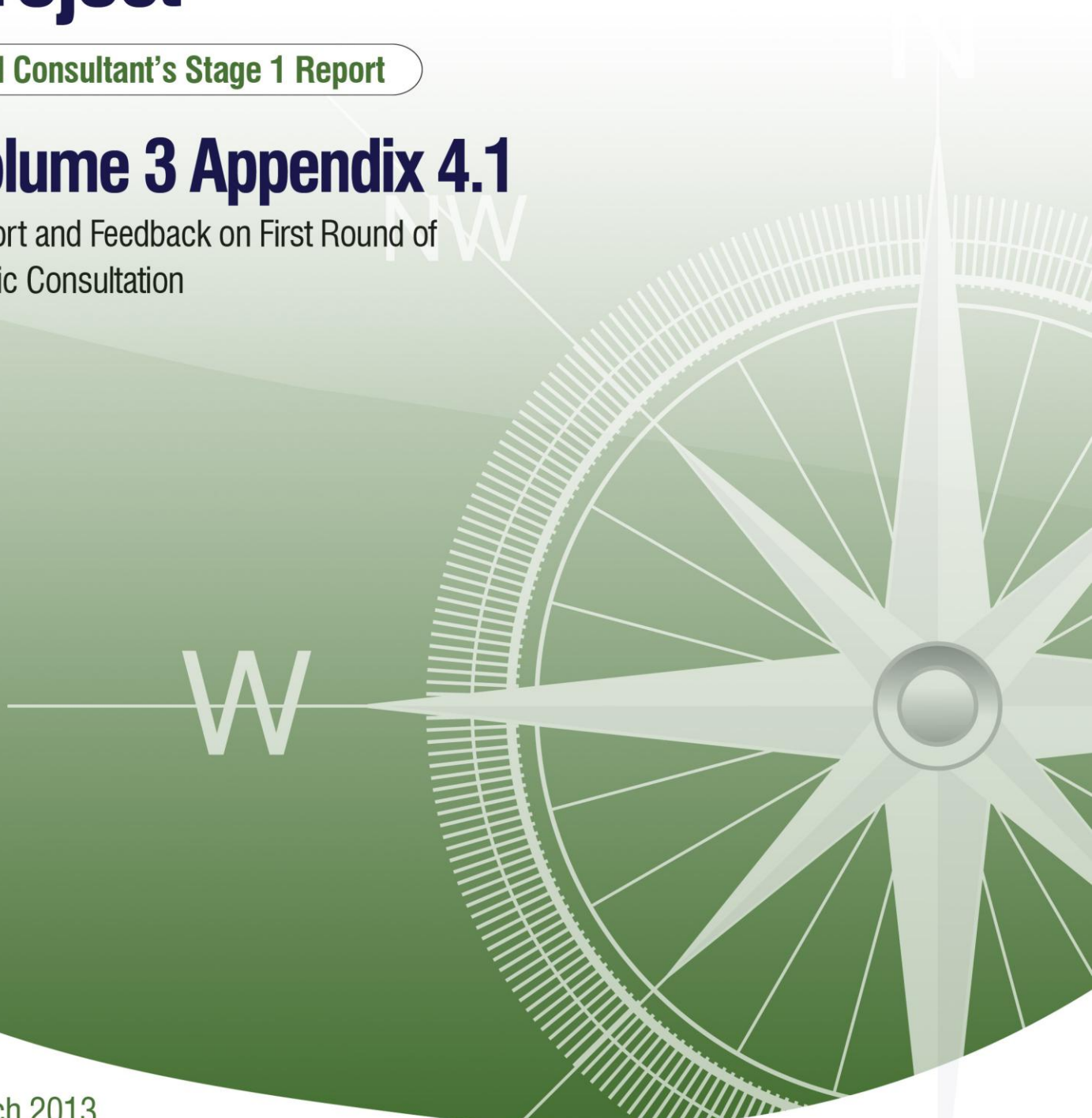
The Grid West Project



Lead Consultant's Stage 1 Report

Volume 3 Appendix 4.1

Report and Feedback on First Round of Public Consultation



March 2013



REPORT

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Grid West Project

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	LAUNCH OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION	1
2	WEBSITE AND LO-CALL NUMBER	3
3	PUBLIC ADVERTISEMENTS	4
4	CASTLEBAR INFORMATION CENTRE	5
5	OPEN DAYS	6
5.1	ADVERTISEMENTS/PROMOTION OF OPEN DAYS	6
6	ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS	8
6.1	OIREACHTAS MEMBERS	8
6.2	MEETINGS WITH LOCAL AUTHORITITES.....	9
6.3	OTHER STAKEHOLDERS	10
6.4	COMMUNITY GROUPS	10
7	FEEDBACK	11
7.1	OVERVIEW	11
7.2	FEEDBACK	11



TABLES & FIGURES

TABLES

Table 6-1:	Stakeholder Engagement – Oireachtas representatives	8
Table 6-2:	Stakeholder Engagement – Local Authorities.....	9
Table 6-3:	Stakeholder Engagement – Other Stakeholders	10

FIGURES

Figure 7-1	Consultation Feedback.....	12
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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1.1	Press Release for Project Launch 4 May 2012
ANNEX 1.2	Project Information Brochure
ANNEX 3.1	Public Consultation Advertisement
ANNEX 4.1	Press Release Announcing Opening of Information Centre
ANNEX 5.1	Press Release Announcing Open Days
ANNEX 5.2	Advertisement Promoting Open Days



1 LAUNCH OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The first phase of public consultation on the Grid West project was launched on 4 May 2012 at the National Museum of Ireland – Country Life, Turlough Park, County Mayo. A press release was issued to local and national media (Annex 1.1) and an information brochure (No. 1) was published and made available to the general public (Annex 1.2).

This approach was in line with the projects Communications Strategy and specifically with the objective of communicating the need, rationale and benefit of the project clearly and consistently to all stakeholders and key audiences.

The event was opened by the Mayor of Mayo; Austin O'Malley. Speakers included Bernie Gray, Chairperson of EirGrid, An Taoiseach; Mr Enda Kenny TD and the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources; Mr Pat Rabbitte TD. In addition, a presentation on the project was made by Alan McHugh, Project Manager for the Grid West project. The presentation outlined details of EirGrid's Consultation Roadmap.

The event was well attended with good representation from stakeholders, national and local representatives – 53 in total. All attendees were sent an acknowledgement email after the event. Those invited, who did not attend, were emailed with links to the project website and information on how to contact the project team.

Photography from the event was issued to national and local media.

The launch was attended by media from:

- RTÉ – Ciaran Mullooly
- TG4 – Caoimhe Ní Chonchoille
- Today FM – Feargal O'Brien
- Irish Times – Tom Shiel
- Western People – Keith Burke
- Connaught Telegraph – Tom Shiel

Alan McHugh, Grid West Project Manager, was interviewed and the project featured on:

Broadcast

- RTÉ television – One News
- Today FM
- TG4 – Nuacht
- Mid-West Radio
- Ocean FM
- Galway Bay FM
- Newstalk
- Shannonside FM

Print

- Irish Independent
- Irish Times
- Mayo Advertiser
- Tuam Herald
- Galway Advertiser
- Connaught Telegraph
- Western People
- Mayo News
- Leitrim Observer

Internet

- EirGrid websites
- Mayotoday.ie
- Breakingnews.ie
- Politics.ie
- Boards.ie



2 WEBSITE AND LO-CALL NUMBER

On 4 May 2012, the project's dedicated website www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest went live. An email address, gridwest@eirgrid.com and a lo-call information line, 1890 94 08 02 were put in place to provide channels through which the public can get more information and provide feedback. This is in line the project's communications strategy of using a wide range of channels to communicate and consult with the public.



3 PUBLIC ADVERTISEMENTS

Following the launch of the project, advertisements (Annex 3.1) were placed in the following print media in the week commencing 7 May:

- Connacht Tribune
- Connacht Sentinel
- Connaught Telegraph
- Mayo News
- Leitrim Observer
- Roscommon Herald
- Sligo Champion
- Tuam Herald
- Western People



4 CASTLEBAR INFORMATION CENTRE

As part of the project's commitment to providing a range of channels to facilitate communication and consultation on the Grid West project, a project Information Centre was opened on Monday 11 June at Linenhall Street, Castlebar, County Mayo. The office is open on Mondays and Tuesdays from 9am to 5pm and is attended by two members of the project team, Ronan O'Keeffe (Drury) and Dr Emma Sweeney Butler (TOBIN Consulting Engineers). A press release was issued to local media informing them of the opening of the site office (Annex 4.1).

The office has a phone line (the project lo-call number is re-directed here on Mondays and Tuesdays), internet access and stock including project information brochures, EMF brochures and the following posters:

- National Transmission system
- Project development and consultation road map
- Grid West project key messages
- Grid West Study Area map.



5 OPEN DAYS

The EirGrid Consultation Roadmap seeks to ensure that the views of the public and other stakeholders interested in the project will be heard. To this end, open days were held in the following venues

Thursday, 6 June	Kiltane GAA Club, Bangor Erris, County Mayo
Friday, 7 June	Downhill Hotel, Ballina, County Mayo
Thursday, 14 June	Corralea Court Hotel, Tuam, County Galway
Friday, 15 June	Border Midland Western Regional Assembly, Ballaghaderreen, County Roscommon

The main objectives of the open days were to:

- Provide the general public with information about the project,
- Offer members of the public a place to ask questions,
- Clarify queries of members of the public,
- Allow stakeholders to provide feedback for consideration by the project team.

Each Open Day ran from 1pm until 8pm.

Each location was set up on a consistent basis allowing the team to explain the rationale and need for the project with A0 sized displays of the Transmission Network, High Level Grid West messages, the Consultation Roadmap and the Study Area.

Members from the Grid West project team spoke to people about the project and addressed questions or concerns raised. Project team members worked in pairs and a consultation report was completed for each visitor or group and the issues discussed have been transcribed into the Grid West CSCS. 62 consultation reports were completed and representatives of approximately 80 individual households attended.

5.1 ADVERTISEMENTS/PROMOTION OF OPEN DAYS

Prior to the series of Open Days a press release was issued to local media (Annex 5.1) and advertisements were placed in local print media and local broadcast media (Annex 5.2) from 1 June 2012.



Print Media

- Connacht Tribune
- Connacht Sentinel
- Connaught Telegraph
- Mayo News
- Leitrim Observer
- Roscommon Herald
- Sligo Champion
- Tuam Herald
- Western People

Broadcast Media

- Galway Bay FM
- MidWest Radio
- Ocean FM
- Shannonside FM

Posters on the open days were also provided to Country Librarians in Mayo, Galway, Sligo and Roscommon for distribution to local libraries.

Local public representatives were contacted by email or phone in advance of the open days.

The project manager gave interviews to the Tuam Herald and the Leitrim Observer at the open days in Tuam and Ballaghaderreen respectively. Articles about the open days appeared in the Roscommon Herald, the Tuam Herald and the Leitrim Observer.



6 ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The project communications strategy identifies a range of audiences which it is anticipated will have an interest in the Grid West project. Both prior to the launch of the consultation on the Grid West project and since 4 May 2012, the project team has engaged with a wide variety of these stakeholders.

6.1 OIREACHTAS MEMBERS

The Project Team has met with a number of Oireachtas representatives:

Table 6-1: Stakeholder Engagement – Oireachtas representatives

TDs
An Taoiseach Enda Kenny
Minister of State Ring
Minister of State Perry
Minister of State Cannon
Leas Cheann Comhairle Michael Kitt
Deputy Calleary
Deputy Mulherin
Deputy O'Mahony
Deputy Colreavy
Deputy McLoughlin
Deputy Naughten
Deputy Feighan
Deputy Flanagan
Deputy Connaughton
Senators
Senator Burke
Senator Comiskey
Senator Mooney
Senator MacSharry
Senator Kelly
Senator Leyden

Meetings with the remaining Oireachtas members from the region have been sought and are expected shortly, subject to diary commitments.



6.2 MEETINGS WITH LOCAL AUTHORITITES

The following meetings have been held with local authorities:

Table 6-2: Stakeholder Engagement – Local Authorities

Mayo County Council
County Manager and Director of Services
Cllr Eugene McCormack
Cllr Peter Flynn
Cllr Rose Conway-Walsh
Presentation to SPC on Planning & Development
Community & Enterprise Department
County Manager
Presentation to SPC on Environment
Presentation to the members of Mayo County Council
Planning department
Galway County Council
County Manager and Director of Services
Presentation to members of Galway County Council
Sligo County Council
Council officials across various departments
Presentation to members of Sligo County Council
Roscommon County Council
Planning officials
Presentation to members of Roscommon County Council



6.3 OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

The following meetings have been held with other stakeholders:

Table 6-3: Stakeholder Engagement – Other Stakeholders

Other stakeholders in the region have also been met
EirGrid Regional Stakeholder Workshop
Atlantic Coastal Energy Co-Op
Bellacorick windfarm sub-group
National Grid UK
ESB Networks & ESB Power Generation
CEO Galway Chamber
Coillte
Castlebar Chamber
Atlantic Offshore Energy Alliance
Mayo County Development Board
Shell E&P Irl Ltd.
IFA (National Committee)
Chambers Ireland
Mayo Co Community Forum (Chair + two members)
IBEC National
Mayo Industries Group
IBEC western regional committee
Fáilte Ireland [ongoing liaison]
IDA Ireland [ongoing liaison]

6.4 COMMUNITY GROUPS

Letters were issued to over 700 hundred voluntary and community organisations registered with Mayo County Council and to 690 groups through the Galway County Community Forum.

Presentations have been scheduled to take place before Ballyhaunis Chamber of Commerce and Claremorris Chamber of Commerce.

7 FEEDBACK

7.1 OVERVIEW

In the period up to 6th July 2012, the Grid West project team has engaged with hundreds of individuals and organisations about the project. This engagement took a variety of forms:– scheduled meetings with groups or individuals to brief them on Grid West; invitations to and attendance at the launch of the project on 4th May, face to face meetings with groups, individuals or visitors to our four open days or to the project information centre in Castlebar; and callers to the project’s 1890 940 802 helpline and those who have emailed the project (see separate report for communications and consultation activities).

The project’s primary objectives in this phase of consultation were to:

Communicate the need, rationale and benefit accruing from the project, clearly and consistently to all stakeholders and key audiences.

Consistent with these objectives and reflecting the early stage of the project, much of the team’s interaction with stakeholders has focused on the communication of the need, rationale and benefit accruing from Grid West and a general awareness of the development. It is appropriate to note at this stage that this information has been met with widespread welcome and there has been significant recognition of the need for infrastructural development to exploit the western region’s natural resources and to sustain and facilitate job creation.

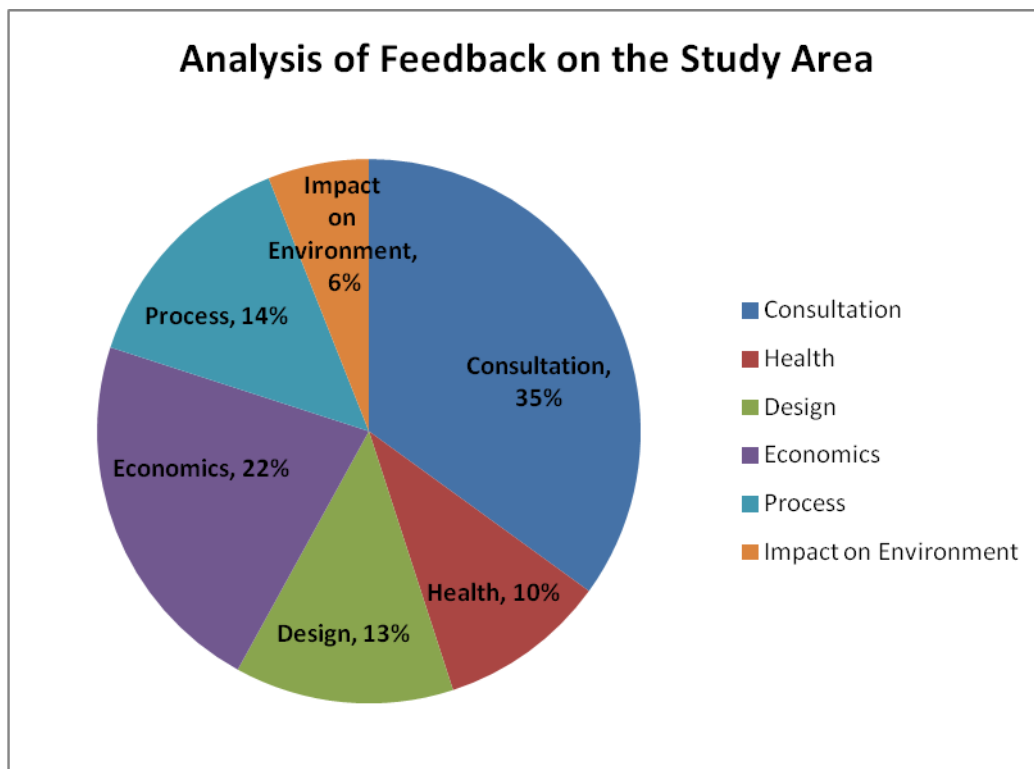
7.2 FEEDBACK

The Grid West team actively sought feedback from stakeholders and this report reflects an analysis of the feedback received and the actions already in place or proposed to address the observations raised. Some 105 stakeholders have provided feedback in the form of comments, observations and queries on specific issues and these can be categorised under six broad themes:

- The need for early, on-going and broadly based consultation
- Queries related to the perceived or reported health effects of electricity transmission lines
- Design – underground/overground, structural design
- The economic context of the project – jobs, renewable development, investment and industry
- The processes and timelines which are to be followed
- Queries about the potential impact of the project on the environment, ecology and heritage

This chart reflects the frequency which each theme arose in engagements with stakeholders.

Figure 7-1 Consultation Feedback



7.2.1 *The need for early, on-going and broadly based consultation*


This theme was the most recurring having been identified in some 35% of stakeholders' feedback. While EirGrid's early consultation process was welcomed (by 21% of those who raised this theme), the most frequent points expressed were that:

- On-going consultation is essential, with communities in general and, in particular, with landowners and their representatives, e.g. IFA, (43% of those who raised the theme);
- Information should be available on how landowner compensation would be determined (15%).

17% of stakeholders who raised consultation cited other infrastructure projects in the west as examples of the use of effective or ineffective consultation processes, reflecting a keen interest in, and knowledge of, previous consultation exercises in the region. A common comment was that a lack of or inadequate early consultation had severely hampered other infrastructural projects.

a. Other comments, observations and queries raised under this theme included:

- The project team should seek to engage with local schools;
- EirGrid should consider innovative forms of community gain which, with the delivery of the project, would benefit individuals and communities affected;
- Mayo County Council is developing a policy in which the implementation of community gain would be provided by infrastructure projects;

-
- 
- There are significant ‘legacy’ issues especially around the Flagford area from previous line developments;
 - County Community Forums provide a good facility for engaging with community groups;
 - While early consultation is desirable, EirGrid may find that in-depth engagement only occurs after potential corridors/routes are published.

b. Actions

The Grid West project team already draws on a range of communications and consultation methods including:

- A dedicated Grid West website;
- A telephone hotline with a lo call number(1890 94 08 02);
- An Information Office in Castlebar – currently opening every Monday and Tuesday (excl. public holidays);
- An information brochure which is made available at all Grid West events and which was also sent to local libraries;
- An initial series of open days which were held in Bangor Erris, Ballina, Tuam and Ballaghaderreen;
- Advertisements in local newspapers regarding the launch of the consultation phase;
- Advertisements on local radio regarding the open days;
- Interviews with the Project Manager for the launch of the project which were widely covered in local newspapers and on local radio;
- Engagement with a range of groups and individuals, through meetings and group presentations, by the project team.

It is proposed that all of these activities will be continued over the course of the project.

The following specific additional actions will be taken:

- The website will be frequently updated to reflect the progress of the project - uploading press releases, photos, and information on the Castlebar office opening hours.
- The project team will seek to develop with County Community Forums a specific process for the purpose of communicating information on the project to local community groups and seeking feedback through the same channels.

7.2.2 Queries related to the perceived or reported health effects of electricity transmission lines

This was a consistent theme with 10% of all stakeholders’ feedback raising the matter.

64% of those who raised this matter made specific mention of the perceived health impact of pylons and a further 34% asked about their proximity to schools and houses. While some stakeholders said that they personally did not have concerns, many felt that there was a widespread perception that radiation from pylons created a threat to health.

a. Actions

The existing EirGrid EMF brochure will continue to be available at the Castlebar office and all open days. Additionally, a link to the EMF brochure will be included on the Grid West website.

7.2.3 Design – undergrounding/overground, structural design

The design of pylons and their visual impact on the landscape generally was an area of concern for 13% of all stakeholders.

33% of those who raised this matter specifically urged the undergrounding of lines. Even those who accepted that undergrounding was more expensive felt that in the long term it would be worthwhile if it prevented delays. The visual impact of towers on the landscape generally in a part of the country which relies heavily on tourism was specifically raised by a similar number of stakeholders.

Other matters which arose under this theme included:

- Concern about the noise/buzz from pylons;
- Concern about traffic and farming disruption during construction;
- Tourism was particularly important in some areas, e.g. Westport;
- Would properties be devalued if a pylon was built on it?

7.2.4 The economic context of the project jobs, renewable development, investment and industry

Some 22% of stakeholders' feedback related to the economic aspects of the project.

The employment implications of the project were raised by just over half (51%) of those who raised the economic context of the project with the vast majority of those strongly supportive of the capacity of the project to aid job creation in the region through supporting renewable energy developments (construction jobs) and the region's attractiveness to attract new investment. A number of stakeholders enquired about job opportunities associated with the project. A number of these had previously worked for ESB or Bord na Móna in the region.

A quarter (25%) of those who raised economic queries sought information on the implications of Grid West for new (often small scale) wind farm developments or general information about how a connection to the grid can be obtained. A number of stakeholders (especially in North West Mayo) had been approached or were already in negotiation with wind farm developers.

16% of feedback in this area referred to high-profile renewable projects asking about their linkage to Grid West.

Other matters which arose under this theme:

- Parts of the region have been hit hard by the emigration of young people;
- Concern about the long term viability of the wind industry (will we see a NAMA for wind?);
- With lower demand because of the recession do we need this investment?

a. Actions

The need and rationale for the Grid West project and the economic benefits which it will bring have been and will continue to be a centre piece of the project team's communications. The communication tools described at para 2.1.1 and 2.1.2. above will continue to be used to reinforce this message.

b. The following specific additional actions will be taken:

All team members will be briefed on employment opportunities related to the project.

A general note on the process for grid connection will be provided to all members of the team, on the basis that specific queries will be referred to EirGrid's Customer Service Department.

As at para 3.2 above, the project team is actively engaging with County Community Forums with a view to communicating information on the project to local community groups.

7.2.5 The process and timeline which will be followed

This theme was of interest to 14% of stakeholders.

The most consistent matters arising were:

- How will the line route be determined (44% of those who raised this theme). Many stakeholders were of the initial belief that a route had already been chosen.
- Why does the project take so long to come to fruition (21%).
- The process should be expedited to deliver the infrastructure in a shorter timeframe (21%). This would typically be a view expressed by stakeholders with an interest in wind farm development who were concerned that bringing projects on stream could be delayed because of lack of connection.
- 11% sought clarification on the planning process (i.e. ABP v Local Authority).

Other queries which arose under this theme included:

- The two lines should be progressed together to construction as the potential for renewables in the region is so great;
- County Council Renewable Energy Strategies should be considered when developing the routes;
- Existing infrastructure like railways and roads should be used for the new lines;
- Consideration should be given to an undersea connection between Bellacorick and Cashla;
- Could pylons be used to improve the broadband coverage of the region?

a. Actions

EirGrid's Consultation Roadmap features in all brochures and presentations made by the Grid West team and this will continue. A large display of the Roadmap features at all open days and is available for viewing in the Castlebar office and on the dedicated project website.



b. The following specific additional actions will be taken:

The Constraints Report will make reference to the ways in which constraints are identified as well as the legislation that applies to constraints, statutory stakeholders and the required processes to be followed by EirGrid in relation to design, environmental impact assessment, consultation, etc.

7.2.6 Queries about the potential impact of the project on the environment, ecology and heritage

Just 6% of stakeholders' feedback related specifically to concerns about the project's (perceived) negative impact on the diverse ecological, environmental and heritage features within the study area. This is unsurprising given the very early stage of the process, the large area covered by the Study Area and the absence of information of potential corridor or line route. Feedback received displayed knowledge that the area is rich in heritage sites, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.

a. Actions arising from feedback.

This will be a central topic in the next round of stakeholder consultation with the publication of the Constraints Report. User friendly material explaining the Constraints Report will be prepared and distributed. Maps setting out the major constraints in the study area will be available for viewing at a series of open days and experts will be on hand to discuss individual queries. Prior to the publication of the Constraints Report, a specific workshop will be held for all team members to ensure a full understanding of the constraints mapping process and outcome.



ANNEX 1.1

Press Release for Project Launch 4 May 2012

West of Ireland to get 21st century energy Infrastructure

EirGrid Project will connect region's renewable energy and facilitate job creation

Public consultation on Grid West project starts

Friday 4th May 2012 - A plan to bring 21st century energy infrastructure to the West of Ireland was launched by EirGrid today. By connecting the electricity generated by the region's huge renewable energy resources, the Grid West project will facilitate significant job creation and investment as well as contributing to national recovery and growth.

Speaking at the launch, An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD said ““As Ireland fights to regain economic sovereignty and put ourselves back on a path to recovery and growth, it is essential that we maximise the use of our indigenous resources, whether it is our people, our land or our natural resources. The West of Ireland is particularly rich in renewable energy resources and has the potential for much job creation. Harnessing and exploiting this resource for Ireland will require detailed planning involving high levels of engagement between communities and EirGrid that will allow the construction of critical infrastructure for the benefit of the West and for Ireland. This infrastructure will also assist the region to attract inward investment that requires a strong reliable source of power.”

Today marks the start of a public consultation phase on this project and I encourage people across the region to engage with the project team and provide feedback to EirGrid.”

The Grid West project will initially consist of a new high capacity power line linking Bellacorick in County Mayo to a strong point on the transmission grid. Based on the region's huge renewable potential it is envisaged that, in time, the project will involve two high capacity power lines from Bellacorick, County Mayo, to both Cashla in County Galway and Flagford in County Roscommon.

Welcoming the launch of the EirGrid project, the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources Mr Pat Rabbitte, T.D., highlighted the increasing importance of wind power in Ireland's energy future and said that the benefits from this new infrastructure would be significant. “As we move in Ireland and across Europe to a low carbon economy, we will rely on greater use of renewable energy and a well functioning, well interconnected internal energy market. Harnessing the enormous renewable energy potential of the West will enable Ireland to have a more secure and competitive energy supply in the long term”.

Speaking at the launch, Dermot Byrne, EirGrid Chief Executive, referred to Grid25 - EirGrid's plan to develop and upgrade the electricity transmission network from now until 2025. "This major initiative will put in place a safe, secure and affordable electricity supply throughout Ireland. It is a major undertaking which will take several years and represents an investment of €3.2 billion. The Grid West project is the one of the largest single Grid25 projects and the most significant in the west, initially accounting for €240m of the investment earmarked for the region".

According to Alan McHugh, Grid West project manager, developing the project will involve a number of steps over the coming years. "The public will be consulted extensively through a series of consultations to gather information and feedback from the earliest stages of development right through to the completion of the project.

"Right now we are at the start of this project and EirGrid will be following a comprehensive consultation roadmap which will ensure that the views of all stakeholders interested in the project will be heard. The first stage of the Grid West Project is to publish and gather information on the study area, the search area within which the project will be located.

"We have established a dedicated website www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest and a lo-call information line, 1890 94 08 02 where the public can get more information and provide feedback. We will be opening information offices across the study area in the coming weeks and as the project develops we will hold open days in the counties involved. People can also email the project team at Gridwest@eirgrid.com"

A planning application under the Strategic Infrastructure Act is expected for submission to An Bord Pleanála in 2015.

For further information contact

Valerie Hedin (EirGrid) (mob) 087 9516 805

Anne-Marie Curran (Drury) (mob) 087286 4079

Gerry Naughton (Drury) (mob) 086 803 2891

Notes for Editor

EirGrid: Is a state-owned commercial company responsible for the development and operation of that national electricity transmission system.

Renewable energy in the North West: The North West Region in Grid 25 has the largest (35%) expected regional distribution of the renewable generation capacity of Ireland. The Grid West project is critical to connecting this resource to the national grid.

400kV line: Based on assessments to date, EirGrid has determined that the optimum solution is the construction of a 400 kV alternating current (AC) overhead line linking Bellacorick to a strong point on the national grid. EirGrid will review its technology analysis at key stages throughout the project to ensure it remains valid.

Facilitating job creation and investment: By connecting the region's huge renewable energy resources into the national grid, the project will facilitate significant job creation and investment through:

- the construction and maintenance of wind farms and other renewable energy sources
- making the region more attractive for inward investors, particularly those seeking locations with a safe and secure supply of energy
- a significant portion of the €240m investment in Grid West will be made in the western region providing direct and indirect employment

Timeline for project: Today's mark the launch of the first phase of the project and EirGrid will be following a comprehensive consultation roadmap which will ensure that the views of all stakeholders interested in the project will be heard. Assuming no delays in the planning or consultation processes and no significant reductions in the volume of wind development planned in Mayo, the Grid West infrastructure is planned to come on line by late 2019.



ANNEX 1.2



Project Information Brochure



The Grid West Project

Project Information Brochure
(Stage 1: Information Gathering)

Summer 2012





What is the Grid West project?

The Grid West project will deliver 21st century energy infrastructure to the west of Ireland. Grid25 is EirGrid's plan to develop and upgrade the electricity transmission network from now until 2025. The Grid West project is the largest Grid25 project in the west, initially accounting for €240m of the investment earmarked for the region.

By connecting the electricity generated by the region's huge renewable energy resources, the Grid West project will facilitate significant job creation and investment. It will contribute to national recovery and growth while at the same time allowing the region to attract inward investment that requires a strong reliable source of power.

Why is it needed?

Ireland's national goal is to meet 40% of electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020 – these include wind, wave and tidal energy. The existing transmission infrastructure in the region needs substantial investment to accommodate the west's increasing levels of renewable generation.

What are the benefits of the Grid West project?

Connecting renewable energy

The north west region in Grid25 has the largest (35%) expected regional distribution of renewable generated electricity capacity in Ireland. The area is particularly rich in wind and ocean renewable energy resources, as

well as having potential for biomass and other renewable technologies. The current transmission infrastructure is not designed to accommodate the level of renewable energy planned for this region. The Grid West project is critical to connecting this resource to the national grid.

Facilitating job creation and investment

By connecting the region's huge renewable energy resources into the national grid, the Grid West project will facilitate significant job creation and investment through:

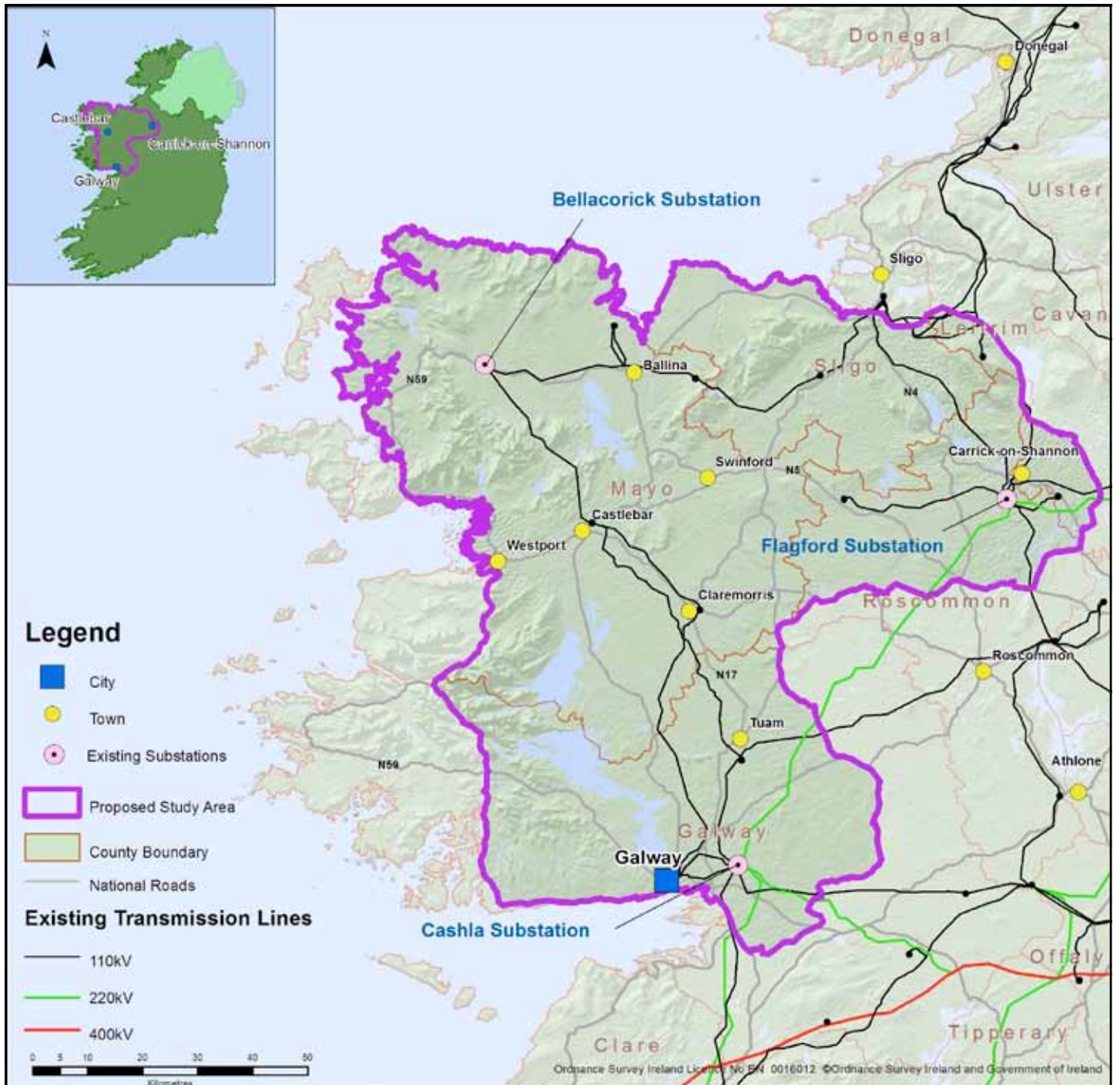
- **the construction and maintenance of wind farms and other renewable energy sources.**
- **making the region more attractive for inward investors, particularly those requiring a secure supply of energy.**
- **a significant portion of the €240m investment in Grid West will be made in the western region providing direct and indirect employment.**

Contributing to national recovery and growth

The future economic competitiveness of Ireland will require more efficient use of our resources. The growth of the wind energy sector represents an opportunity to reduce our dependence on imported fossil fuels and foster a clean, indigenous, and sustainable energy source while reducing our CO₂ emissions. It also helps prepare Ireland for a future of oil scarcity and significant carbon costs. Electricity from our renewable resources (mainly wind) will produce less carbon waste and help Ireland reach its 40% targets by 2020.



Map of the Region



What is required?

The Grid West project will initially consist of a new high capacity power circuit linking Bellacorick, Co. Mayo to a strong point on the transmission grid. Based on the region's renewable potential it is envisaged that, in time, the project will involve two high capacity power lines from Bellacorick, Co. Mayo to both Cashla in Co. Galway and Flagford in Co. Roscommon.

The pace at which a second line will be installed is dependent on a number of factors including the speed at which further renewable energy generation is developed in the region.

What will it look like?

The electricity transmission network is similar to the road network. High voltage lines act like motorways and dual carriageways allowing electricity to travel from one end of the country to the other. At the end of each line, substations act like road junctions and allow the electricity to be redirected so that different amounts can be transmitted in different directions to allow electricity to flow into the regional and local distribution networks.

The Grid West project will use 400 kV technology as this voltage is best suited to cater for the large amount of renewable electricity which is expected to be generated in the region. At either end, new substation equipment will be put in place to transfer electricity between the existing 110 kV and 220 kV networks to and from the new 400 kV line.

Most lines are constructed overhead and, generally, steel lattice towers (pylons) are used at 400 kV. Where it has not been possible to construct lines overhead some lines have been installed underground over short distances. Over the course of the project, the use of preferred and alternative design options will be considered.

What happens next?

Developing the Grid West project will involve a number of steps over the coming years. The public and other stakeholders will be consulted extensively through a series of consultations to gather information and feedback from the earliest stages of project development right through to the completion of the project.

Right now EirGrid is at the start of this project and we will be following a comprehensive consultation roadmap which will ensure that the views of the public and other stakeholders interested in the project will be heard.

The first stage of the Grid West project is to gather information by publishing the study area (see the map opposite), engaging in a comprehensive programme of public consultation and seeking input from all stakeholders. We will also begin extensive surveying which will allow us to map out the potential environmental and other constraints (constraints are features or designations, such as protected areas, archaeology, mountains etc. that might make an area unsuitable for the project) within the study area. When this work is complete we will publish all our findings and again seek the public's input.

As each stage of environmental and design work nears completion, we will carry out consultation to seek further input and feedback from members of the public and other stakeholders. This feedback will be used in further stages of the project.

A project of this nature requires a significant time frame to provide for a high level of public consultation and to allow the aforementioned studies to take place. A planning application under the Strategic Infrastructure Act is expected for submission to An Bord Pleanála in 2015.

What is a study area?

A study area is the search area within which a project will be located. In the case of the EirGrid project the study area is based on where the new line can connect to the existing grid. The optimum connection points on the grid have been identified as Bellacorick, Co. Mayo to Cashla, Co. Galway and Flagford, Co. Roscommon.

We are now in the process of gathering information which will allow us to carry out site and route selection at later stages.

Members of the public and other stakeholders are now invited to provide comments and observations on the study area.

At this stage in the project, no decisions have been made with regard to selection of routes or new substation locations.

You are Here



You are Here

About EirGrid

EirGrid, a state-owned company, is the national operator of the electricity grid.

The national grid is an interconnected network of high voltage power lines and cables, comparable to the motorways, dual carriage ways and main roads of the national road network. It is operated at three voltage levels; 400 kV, 220 kV and 110 kV and is approximately 6,400km in overall length.

It is the backbone of Ireland's power system and is vital to ensuring that all customers; industrial, commercial and residential from both rural and urban areas to cities, have a safe secure, reliable, economic and efficient electricity supply.

What is Grid25?

Grid25 is a major initiative to put in place a safe, secure and affordable electricity supply throughout Ireland, supporting economic growth and utilising our renewable energy resource to its maximum potential.

Development of the grid is essential to provide a platform for renewed economic growth and regional development, and is vital if we are to effectively tap into our abundant renewable energy resources.

Grid25 will involve upgrading the high voltage system and an overall investment of approximately €3.2 billion in the period up to 2025. This new infrastructure is every bit as essential to the future growth of the country as any investment in road, rail and broadband.

Contact Details

EirGrid is committed to ensuring that all members of the public are fully aware of the project and encourage you to participate in the consultation process. If you would like to discuss the project or to meet with a member of the project team, please contact our website for regular updates.

Tel: 1890 94 08 02
Email: gridwest@eirgrid.com

By post:
Grid West Project Office
EirGrid
PO Box 12226
Dublin 4

Web: www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest

How do I find out more/ provide feedback?

If you want to contact us to get an update on the latest developments or to give us your views or information in relation to the project you can get in touch by:

Tel: 1890 94 08 02
Email: gridwest@eirgrid.com

By post:
Grid West Project Office
EirGrid
PO Box 12226
Dublin 4

Web: www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest



GRID25

DELIVERING IRELAND'S ELECTRICITY FUTURE

www.eirgridprojects.com



ANNEX 3.1

Public Consultation Advertisement



Public Consultation on the EirGrid project for the west of Ireland

The Grid West Project - connecting renewable energy generation in the West to the National Grid

EirGrid is the state-owned independent electricity Transmission System Operator and Market Operator in Ireland.

It is EirGrid's role to develop quality connection, transmission and market services to electricity generators, suppliers and customers utilising the high voltage electricity system.

Proposed Study Area



All modern economies need a good electricity transmission network. Grid25 is EirGrid's plan to develop and upgrade the electricity transmission network from now until 2025. The Grid West project will deliver 21st century energy infrastructure to the west of Ireland and is the largest Grid25 project in the west region.

By connecting the electricity generated by the region's huge renewable energy resources, the Grid West project will facilitate significant job creation and investment. It will contribute to national recovery and growth while at the same time allowing the region to attract inward investment that requires a strong reliable source of power.

The project initially consists of a new high capacity power circuit linking Bellacorrick, Co. Mayo, to a strong point on the transmission grid. Based on the region's huge renewable potential it is envisaged that, in time, the project will involve two high capacity power lines from Bellacorrick, Co. Mayo to both Cashla in Co. Galway and Flagford in Co. Roscommon. The pace at which a second line will be installed is dependent on a number of factors including the speed at which further renewables energy generation is developed in the region.

It is anticipated that a planning application will be lodged with the relevant planning authority in 2015.

EirGrid will now follow a comprehensive consultation roadmap which will ensure that the views of all stakeholders interested in the project will be heard.

The first stage of this process is focussed on gathering information. If you have any interest in this project, we want to hear your views. The study area map which is published alongside this notice sets out

the search area within which the project will be located. The area includes counties Galway, Mayo, Sligo and Roscommon.

Extensive surveying will now begin which will allow us to map out the potential environmental and other constraints within the Study Area. When this work is complete we will publish our findings and again seek the public's input. No decisions have been made with regard to design of line routes or new substation locations.

This first stage of this public consultation focusses on the proposed study area map and will take place over a period of 8 weeks from **4th May to 6th July 2012**. All interested stakeholders are invited to engage.

An information office will open initially in Castlebar, Co. Mayo and a number of open days will also be held from the week commencing June 4th. Regular updates will be provided through local media and on the dedicated website www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest

You can contact the project team directly by calling a lo-call information line 1890 94 08 02 which will be open Monday-Friday between 9.00am and 5.00pm (excluding bank holidays) or by email to gridwest@eirgrid.com

Telephone: **1890 94 08 02**

Email: **gridwest@eirgrid.com**

Website: **www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest**

By post: **Grid West Project Office, EirGrid,
PO Box 12226, Dublin 4.**



ANNEX 4.1

Press Release Announcing Opening of Information Centre

Grid West Information Centre Opens in Castlebar

Following the recent launch in Castlebar of the Grid West project by An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, a dedicated information centre is opening as part of the first phase of public consultation for the €240 million EirGrid project. The information centre is located on Linenhall Street in Castlebar, Co. Mayo, and will be open every Monday and Tuesday, 9am to 5pm, from June 11th onwards.

The information centre will be staffed at all time by two members of the Grid West Project team. Members of the public are encouraged to call in and provide feedback on the proposed study area map, as well alerting project staff to any regional or local features that they feel may be important as the Grid West project develops.

"During this initial phase of public consultation we encourage people to come in to the Grid West information centre in Castlebar and talk to us about the study area. Local knowledge is invaluable and this is the reason for the information centre, where all information received will inform preparations and plans for proposed route corridors and the line route for the Grid West Project." says Alan McHugh, Project Manager.

The Grid West project is in its initial phase and a comprehensive consultation roadmap is being followed to ensure that all interested parties have their views heard and questions answered. This initial stage is designed to publish and gather information on the study area, the search area within which the project will be located.

The Grid West project will initially consist of a high capacity power line linking Bellacorick in County Mayo to a strong point on the transmission grid. Based on the region's huge renewable potential it is envisaged that, in time, the project will involve two high capacity power lines from Bellacorick, County Mayo, to both Cashla in County Galway and Flagford in County Roscommon.

As well as by calling to the information centre in Castlebar, feedback on this phase of consultation can also be provided by contacting the project team by phone on 1890 940 802, by email to gridwest@eirgrid.com or by post to Grid West Project Office, EirGrid, PO Box 12226, Dublin 4.

Submissions and feedback will be reviewed and considered by the project team and a full consultation report will be produced at the end of this first phase. There will be further consultation opportunities throughout the project to ensure the public's feedback is taken into account.

The Grid West project is part of Grid25, EirGrid's plan to develop and upgrade the country's electricity transmission network from now until 2025. The project is scheduled to take several years to complete, with a planning application expected for submission to An Bord Pleanála in 2015.

ENDS

For further information contact

Valerie Hedin (EirGrid) (mob) 087 9516 805

Anne-Marie Curran (Drury) (mob) 087 286 4079

Ronan O'Keeffe (Drury) (mob) 086 887 9123

Notes for Editor

EirGrid: Is a state-owned commercial company responsible for the development and operation of that national electricity transmission system.

Renewable energy in the North West: The North West Region in Grid 25 has the largest (35%) expected regional distribution of the renewable generation capacity of Ireland. The Grid West project is critical to connecting this resource to the national grid.

400kV line: Based on assessments to date, EirGrid has determined that the optimum solution is the construction of a 400 kV alternating current (AC) overhead line linking Bellacorick to a strong point on the national grid. EirGrid will review its technology analysis at key stages throughout the project to ensure it remains valid.

Facilitating job creation and investment: By connecting the region's huge renewable energy resources into the national grid, the project will facilitate significant job creation and investment through:

- the construction and maintenance of wind farms and other renewable energy sources
- making the region more attractive for inward investors, particularly those seeking locations with a safe and secure supply of energy
- a significant portion of the €240m investment in Grid West will be made in the western region providing direct and indirect employment

Timeline for project: Today's mark the launch of the first phase of the project and EirGrid will be following a comprehensive consultation roadmap which will ensure that the views of all stakeholders interested in the project will be heard. Assuming no delays in the planning or consultation processes and no significant reductions in the volume of wind development planned in Mayo, the Grid West infrastructure is planned to come on line by late 2019.



ANNEX 5.1

Press Release Announcing Open Days

Grid West Open Days commence in the West of Ireland

~ Four open days will take place in Grid West information centres in Mayo, Galway and Roscommon in June 2012 ~

Following the recent launch in Castlebar of the Grid West project by An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, the public consultation stage of the project is now being rolled across the west of Ireland. Four open days are scheduled to take place in venues in Mayo, Galway and Roscommon, enabling those living in the region to speak to members of the Grid West project team, consult the project study area maps and information brochures and gain a better understanding of what the Grid West project will mean for those living in the West.

The Grid West project is now in its initial phase and a comprehensive consultation roadmap is being followed to ensure that all interested parties have their views heard and questions answered. This initial stage is designed to publish and gather information on the study area, the search area within which the project will be located. The Grid West project is one of the largest single Grid25 projects and is the most significant in the west, initially accounting for €240 million of the investment earmarked for the region.

Each open day will take place from **1pm to 8pm** in the following four venues;

- June 7th - Kiltane GAA Club, Bangor-Erris, Co Mayo
- June 8th – Downhill Hotel, Ballina, Co. Mayo
- June 14th – Corralea Court Hotel, Tuam, Co. Galway
- June 15th – Border, Midland, Western Regional Assembly, The Square, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon

The Grid West project will initially consist of a high capacity power line linking Bellacorick in County Mayo to a strong point on the transmission grid. Based on the region's huge renewable potential it is envisaged that, in time, the project will involve two high capacity power lines from Bellacorick, County Mayo, to both Cashla in County Galway and Flagford in County Roscommon.

The Grid West project is part of Grid 25, EirGrid's plan to develop and upgrade the country's electricity transmission network from now until 2025. The project is scheduled to take several years to complete, with a planning application expected for submission to An Bord Pleanála in 2015.

ENDS

For further information contact

Valerie Hedin (EirGrid) (mob) 087 9516 805

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Timeline for project: Today's mark the launch of the first phase of the project and EirGrid will be following a comprehensive consultation roadmap which will ensure that the views of all stakeholders interested in the project will be heard. Assuming no delays in the planning or consultation processes and no significant reductions in the volume of wind development planned in Mayo, the Grid West infrastructure is planned to come on line by late 2019.



ANNEX 5.2

Advertisement Promoting Open Days



The Grid West Project Public Consultation - Stage 1

The Grid West Project - Electricity Transmission Scheme in the West of Ireland

EirGrid is the state-owned independent electricity transmission system operator and market operator in Ireland.

It is EirGrid's role to develop quality connection, transmission and market services to electricity generators, suppliers and customers utilising the high voltage electricity system.

Grid25 is EirGrid's plan to develop and upgrade the electricity transmission network from now until 2025. The Grid West project will deliver 21st century energy infrastructure to the west of Ireland.

By connecting the electricity generated by the region's renewable energy resources, the Grid West project will facilitate significant job creation and investment. It will contribute to national recovery and growth while at the same time allowing the region to attract inward investment that requires a strong reliable source of power.

The project initially consists of a new high capacity power circuit linking Bellacorick, Co. Mayo, to a strong point on the national grid. Based on the region's huge renewable potential it is envisaged that, in time, the project will involve two high capacity power lines from Bellacorick, Co. Mayo to both Cashla in Co. Galway and Flagford in Co. Roscommon. The pace at which a second line will be installed is dependent on a number of factors including the speed at which further renewable energy generation is developed in the region.

It is anticipated that a planning application will be lodged with the relevant planning authority in 2015.

EirGrid is following a comprehensive consultation roadmap which will ensure that the views of the public and other stakeholders are heard over the course of the project. At this first stage of the process we have published the proposed study area for this project and are seeking input from the public in relation to the study area. As part of this process we are holding an initial series of open days which will give members of the public an opportunity to learn more about the project and provide feedback to our project team.

The first stage of public consultation focusing on the proposed study area is taking place over a period of 8 weeks from **4th May to 6th July 2012**.

THE OPEN DAYS WILL BE HELD AS FOLLOWS:

THURSDAY, 7 JUNE

Kiltane GAA Club, Bangor Erris, Co. Mayo, 1pm - 8pm

FRIDAY, 8 JUNE

Downhill Hotel, Ballina, Co. Mayo, 1pm - 8pm

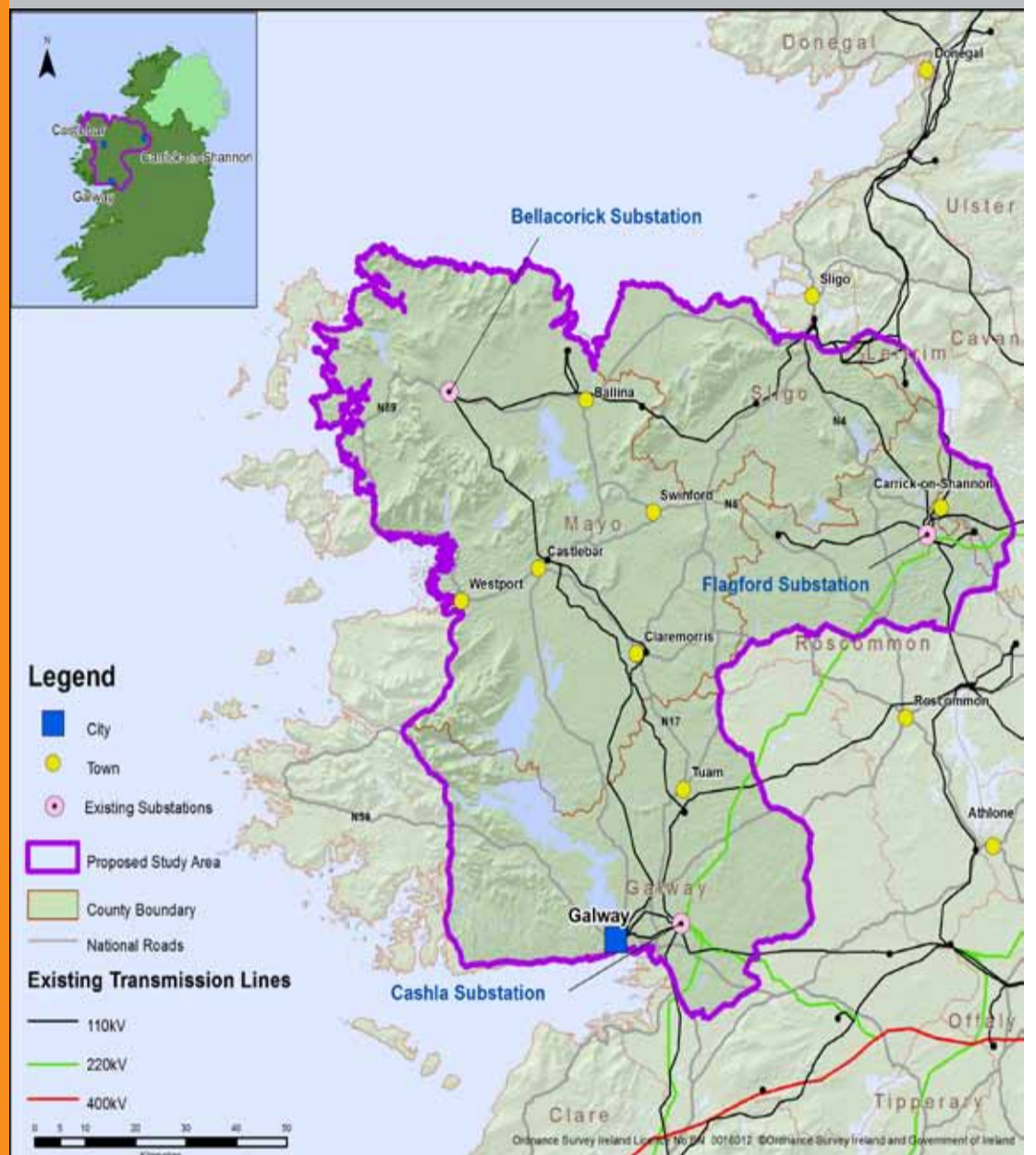
THURSDAY, 14 JUNE

Corrlea Court Hotel, Tuam, Co. Galway, 1pm - 8pm

FRIDAY, 15 JUNE

Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly Office,
The Square, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon, 1pm - 8pm

Proposed Study Area



A Grid West project information office will open shortly in Linenhall Street, Castlebar, Co. Mayo and further open days will be held as the project develops. Regular updates will be provided through local media and on the dedicated website;
www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest

You can contact the project team directly by calling the lo-call information line **1890 94 08 02** which will be open Monday-Friday between 9.00am and 5.00pm (excluding bank holidays) or by email to gridwest@eirgrid.com

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Email: gridwest@eirgrid.com

Website: www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/gridwest

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The Grid West Project

Lead Consultant's Stage 1 Report

March 2013