



North-South 400kV Interconnection Development



Part Funded by the
EU-TEN-E Initiative

Public and
Landowner
Consultation
Report

2B
VOLUME

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- Appendix B** Community Update Brochure (May 2011)
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 This *Public and Landowner Consultation Report* has been prepared to accompany an application for planning approval made by EirGrid plc. (hereinafter referred to as EirGrid) to An Bord Pleanála (the Board) in respect of that portion of an overall interconnection project (which is termed the 'proposed interconnector') located in Ireland (i.e. in counties Monaghan, Cavan and Meath). The application is titled the 'North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development' or 'the proposed development' or the 'EirGrid Proposal' for the purposes of this application for planning approval.
- 2 The purpose of this report is to document the extent and nature of public consultation and participation that has taken place from 2007 to the withdrawal of the previous planning application and between 2011, when a re-evaluation of the previous development proposal (the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development), commenced and the submission of this application for planning approval.
- 3 The purpose of the report is also to illustrate that EirGrid has endeavoured to ensure the widest possible access by the public and landowners to information in respect of the project at all stages of its pre-planning development. In this regard, it is considered that the consultation undertaken in respect of the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development, both on its own and also in conjunction with the consultation undertaken prior to the submission of the previous Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development proposal, fully meets the requirements of the Aarhus Convention, Codified EIA Directive and Irish national legislation.

1.2 STRUCTURE OF REPORT

- 4 This report should be read in conjunction with Chapter 3 **Volume 3B** of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) entitled 'Scoping the EIS' which outlines how the information gathered during the landowner consultation and public participation process has informed the proposed development, the EIS and the planning application.
- 5 The focus of this report is on the public and landowner consultation process and the report contents are outlined in brief hereunder.

Chapter 1: Outlines the purpose of the report, its structure and provides a glossary of the common terms used.

Chapter 2: Outlines the obligations of EirGrid to consult with the public having regard to *inter alia* the Aarhus Convention, the Consolidated EIA Directive and Project of Common Interest (PCI) requirements. It also details the concepts and principles of public consultation adopted by EirGrid and the project development roadmaps devised by EirGrid.

Chapter 3: Provides an overview of the various consultation phases and activities that occurred since 2007. It also provides a summary of the various methods of communication with the public (including *inter alia* brochures, open days, meetings, etc.) including those focused specifically on landowners. The chapter concludes with a timeline summarising all consultation phases and key activities associated with the project.

Difficulties encountered by EirGrid during the public participation and landowner consultation processes undertaken between 2007 and the submission of this application for planning approval to the Board is also addressed in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Outlines the process of public consultation undertaken during the course of the previous application, the key issues raised and the process by which feedback received was incorporated into the proposal. This chapter also presents information on the key issues raised during the consultation period prescribed by the Board on the previous application for planning approval, the key issues raised at the subsequent oral hearing held in 2010, and the process by which these issues were considered by EirGrid and the project team in respect of the current application.

Chapter 5: Outlines the rationale for the re-evaluation of the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development project following the withdrawal of the previous application for planning approval, the objectives of the consultation process undertaken with the public, the process by which this was undertaken, along with details as to how the feedback received was captured and considered by the project team prior to the publication of the *Final Re-evaluation Report* in April 2013.

Chapter 6: Presents the details of the public and landowner consultation undertaken following the publication of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* in July 2013, the key issues raised along with a description of how these issues were captured and considered by the project team.

Chapter 7: Outlines the separate and parallel process of consultation undertaken with landowners potentially affected by the proposal, details of engagement activities undertaken, feedback received and the means by which this feedback was managed and considered by the project team.

Chapter 8: Outlines the activity that took place following the period of consultation on the *Preferred Project Solution Report* on the 9th September 2013, the publication of the final line route in December 2013, the publication of the revised final line route in March 2015 and the engagement with the public and landowners between March 2015 up to submission of this application

Chapter 9: Presents a conclusion on the public and landowner consultation that has taken place between 2007 and prior to the lodgement of the planning application.

1.3 DEFINITIONS

6 For the purposes of clarity, the following terms and synonyms referred to within this report are defined within **Table 1.1**:

Table 1.1: List of Terms and Synonyms referred to within this Report

Term / Synonym	Meaning
Affected Party	Refers to the Contracting Party or Parties, in the context of the Espoo Convention, that are likely to be affected by the transboundary impact of a proposed activity (Convention, Art. 1(iii)) or a Party or Parties to this Protocol likely to be affected by the transboundary environmental, including health, effects of a plan or programme (Protocol, Art. 2.4).
Consultation¹	The dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon a genuine exchange of views, with the clear objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action.
Consultee	The individual or organisation that responds to a consultation or participates in consultation exercises.
Community	1. People living in a defined geographical area, or who share similar interests and concerns.

¹ Jones, Rhion and Gammell, Elizabeth (2009). *The Art of Consultation – Public Dialogues in a Noisy World*.

Term / Synonym	Meaning
	2. A community is a specific group of people who all hold something in common. Community has tended to be associated with two key aspects: firstly people who share locality or geographical place; secondly people who share a common interest.
Engagement and Community Engagement	The process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the wellbeing of those people.
Landowner	Owners of landholdings on, or over, which the proposal is located. Prior to the identification of the preferred route will also include the owners of landholdings which although not directly impacted by the current proposal have a property boundary located within 50 metres of the centreline of the indicative line route.
Landowner Agent	Is the person who primarily deals with engagement with landowners.
Participation	Participation is the proactive facilitation of an environment that is conducive to consultation and refers to the involvement of stakeholders within the consultation and / or engagement processes. Public participation for the project was also formulated by EirGrid having regard to the UNECE <i>Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters</i> . ²
Public Concerned	The public concerned in the context of the Aarhus Convention are those persons or organisations affected or interested in environmental decision-making.
Stakeholder	An individual, group or party that either affects or is affected by an organisation, policy, programme or decision. In the case of this report, it refers to those individuals, groups or parties that are affected by the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development.
Statutory Consultation	Statutory consultation is run in accordance with legal requirements and by the relevant authorities in advance of them making decisions for the project to proceed.
Terms of Reference	This refers to the parameters within which the scope of consultation / engagement is defined. These are clearly set out at the start of any period of focused public engagement and consultation so that stakeholders clearly

² Available at <http://www.unece.org>

Term / Synonym	Meaning
	understand what input they can have and how they can participate within the process of consultation / engagement.
Transboundary Consultation	Refers to the process of consultation with cross border countries in the context of Member States with projects that are common to one or more countries. In the context of this project, transboundary consultation refers to consultation that has been undertaken / will be undertaken with Northern Ireland, United Kingdom e.g. the Northern Ireland Department of the Environment (DOENI).
Transparency	<p>Ensuring that all aspects of a consultation, from the information given, to the reporting of the conclusions and their effects, are clearly accessible to all stakeholders.</p> <p>Transparency is assisted with the provision of clear, documented Terms of Reference for the consultation or engagement, as was the practice implemented by EirGrid on its consultation for the project to date.</p>

2 CONTEXT OF PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

1 In making an application for planning approval for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development, EirGrid is obliged to consult and has consulted with members of the public and the public concerned in accordance with the following legislative, best practice and planning practice requirements:

- Aarhus Convention requirements;
- Consolidated EIA Directive requirements;
- Irish legislation requirements; and
- Project of Common Interest (PCI) requirements.

2 EirGrid is also committed to providing accessible, meaningful and accountable consultation as part of its project development process.

3 This legislative, best practice and planning practice context for public and stakeholder engagement for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development is discussed in the following sections.

2.1.1 The Aarhus Convention

4 The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) *Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters*, commonly referred to as the 'Aarhus Convention', was signed in Aarhus, Denmark in June 1998 and came into force in October 2001. A guide to the requirements of the Convention was published by UNECE in 2000 entitled *The Aarhus Convention: An Implementation Guide*.

5 The Aarhus Convention sets down basic rules to promote the involvement of the public in environmental matters and to improve the enforcement of environmental law. The European Union has been a party to the Aarhus Convention since May 2005 and the Aarhus Convention is now an integral part of the EU legal order. Ireland ratified the Aarhus Convention in June 2012.

6 The provisions of the Aarhus Convention are divided into three pillars as follows:

1. **Access to Information:** the right of members of the public to request environmental information that is held by public bodies and these bodies are obliged to maintain this information.

The Access to Information pillar has been implemented in EU Directive 2003/4/EC on *Public Access to Environmental Information and in Ireland by the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007-2011*.

2. **Public Participation in Environmental Decision-Making:** the right of the public to participate in decision-making in environmental matters and for public authorities to enable the public to comment on proposals which affect the environment. Article 6 of the Aarhus Convention establishes the right of “*the public concerned*” to participate in environmental decision-making procedures, and sets out detailed rules governing public participation in decision-making involving the activities listed in Annex I to the Convention and activities that are not listed in the Annex but may have a significant effect on the environment.

In the European Union, this part of the Aarhus Convention has been implemented by Directive 2003/35/EC on public participation (‘the Public Participation Directive’), which is now incorporated into *inter alia* the Consolidated EIA Directive 2011/92/EU.

The requirements of the Public Participation Directive have been transposed into Irish law, including the integration of its requirements into the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as amended.

3. **Access to Justice:** the right of members of the public to review procedures to challenge decisions relating to the environment, made by public bodies or private persons that have been made without regard to the two aforementioned pillars of the Convention.

7 The UNECE document, *The Aarhus Convention: An Implementation Guide* (2013) represents best practice in respect of how to consult with members of the public on major projects. A draft version of this document was available in 2011 and regard was had to same in respect of communications activities for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development.

8 The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government prepared a preliminary *Draft National Implementation Report* to outline the implementation of the Aarhus Convention in Ireland to date. The report was the subject of public consultation during which comments were invited from stakeholders, members of the public and other interested

parties, including EirGrid. As part of this consultation, EirGrid issued a written response, dated 8th August 2013, which set out:

- EirGrid's role as the Transmission System Operator (TSO) for Ireland;
- The Grid25 Strategy and other relevant EirGrid Publications (including those which relate to the environment); and
- EirGrid's provision of opportunities for the public to participate in EirGrid's proposals and its approach to developing large transmission projects.

9 On 31st December 2013, Ireland submitted its *National Implementation Report*³ to the secretariat of the Aarhus Convention. An amendment was made to the document and submitted to the secretariat on 18th February 2014.

2.1.2 Consolidated EIA Directive

10 A number of amendments have been introduced to the text of the EIA Directive to reflect the Aarhus Convention public participation requirements. For example, the definitions of 'the public' and 'the public concerned' as set out in Articles 2(4) and 2(5) of the Aarhus Convention are incorporated into the Consolidated EIA Directive by Articles 1(2)(d) and (e), respectively. In addition, amendments made to Article 6 of the EIA Directive set out the minimum requirements for effective public participation. The aim of Articles 6(2) and 6(3) of the Consolidated EIA Directive is to ensure that the public shall be informed of matters early in the environmental decision-making procedure, and that the relevant information and documents are made available to the public concerned. The substantive provisions ensure that the public concerned shall be given "early and effective opportunities to participate" in environmental decision-making procedures for consent to projects and, for that purpose, the public concerned is entitled to express comments and opinions when all options are open to the competent authority before the decision on the request for development consent is taken.

2.1.3 Requirements of National Law

11 The pre-application consultation procedures for strategic infrastructure development with the Board in respect of proposed electricity transmission development are provided for in section 182(E) of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended). Prior to the making of an application to the Board, a 'prospective applicant' must enter into consultations with the Board in relation to the proposed development.

³ Available at www.DCENR.ie

- 12 In accordance with section 182(E) of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended) a series of pre-application discussions were held between EirGrid's representatives and members of staff of the Board. The key issues arising from these meetings which are relevant to the EIS are summarised in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Details of the Pre-application Consultation Procedure with the Board for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development

Date of Meeting	Key Issues Raised
Previous Application for Statutory Approval	<p>Relevant issues raised during the course of pre-application meetings in respect of the previous application included <i>inter alia</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternatives (including underground cables (UGC) versus overhead line (OHL); route corridor options – including to the east of Navan; • Transboundary impacts; and • Route selection process in relation to houses, archaeology and cultural heritage.
2 nd December 2010	<p>The purpose of this meeting was to outline activities post withdrawal of the previous application (i.e. the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development).</p>
31 st July 2013	<p>The focus of this meeting was to update the Board on activities since the previous meeting including <i>inter alia</i> the findings of the International Expert Commission Review (on the case for, and cost of, undergrounding all or part of the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development), the Government Policy Statement on <i>Strategic Importance of Transmission and Other Energy Infrastructure</i>, The <i>Final Re-evaluation Report</i>, and activities relating to the publication on 16th July of the <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i>.</p> <p>Issues arising of relevance to the EIS included: the implications (if any) of no longer seeking approval for the substation at Moyhill and whether the line could be located further to the east; the route selection process in relation to houses, ecology and historic landscapes; and tower alternatives.</p>
20 th August 2013	<p>EirGrid requested a scoping opinion from the Board.</p>

Date of Meeting	Key Issues Raised
15 th October 2013	The focus of this meeting was to update the Board on activities since the publication of the <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i> , including landowner engagement, modifications to the indicative line design and issues arising. Discussions were also focused on procedures in relation to the potential transboundary environmental impacts of the proposed development on the environment of an area of a member state.
11 th December 2013	The Board issued its scoping opinion on the information to be contained in the EIS.
18 th December 2013	The focus of this meeting was to update the Board on the drafting of the EIS and application particulars and to discuss the Board's scoping opinion. Other relevant matters included transboundary issues and procedures, the <i>Joint Environmental Report</i> (see Volume 4 of the application documentation) and difficulties encountered.
23 rd December 2013	This was a follow up meeting to clarify particular issues arising from the meeting of 18th December including the level of detail to be included in an outline <i>Construction and Environmental Management Plan</i> to be included as an Appendix to the EIS.

- 13 Further information in respect of the statutory pre-consultation procedures with the Board is addressed in Chapter 3, **Volume 3B** of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and in the Planning Report, **Volume 2A** which accompany the planning application for approval.
- 14 The requirements of the *Public Participation Directive* in relation to applications for development consent for proposed electricity transmission projects are reflected in Irish law by, *inter alia*, section 182A(4) of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000*, as inserted, and article 212 of the *Planning and Development Regulations, 2001* (as amended). These provisions require a notice of the nature and location of the proposed development to be published and prescribe the contents of such notice, which include an invitation for submissions and observations to be made to the Board relating to:
- The implications of the proposed development for proper planning and sustainable development in the area or areas concerned; and

- The likely effects on the environment or adverse effects on the integrity of a European site, as the case may be, of the proposed development.

2.1.4 Best Practice

- 15 Section 182A(4)(b) of the *Planning and Development Act 2001* (as amended), requires an applicant, before submitting an application for strategic transmission infrastructure development to the Board, to send a copy of the application, EIS and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) to the local authority or authorities concerned and to the prescribed authorities. It is good practice to consult with these prescribed authorities in the course of project development and EIS preparation, in advance of the finalisation of the application.

2.1.5 Project of Common Interest

- 16 Regulation (EU) No. 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (*Guidelines for Trans-European Energy Infrastructure*) was adopted on 21st March 2013 and entered into force on 1st June 2013. Under Article 3(4) of the Regulation, the European Commission was empowered to adopt delegated acts to establish the union list of projects of common interest (PCI's) which list forms an Annex to the Regulation. In this regard, Commission Delegated Regulation 1391/2013, issued on the 14th October 2013, identified the projects forming part of the first union list of PCI's. The Annex to the Delegated Regulation under the heading "2. Priority corridor North-South electricity interconnections in Western Europe ("NSI West Electricity")" lists at no. 2.13:

"2.13.1. Ireland – United Kingdom interconnection between Woodland (IE) and Turleenan (UK – Northern Ireland)"

- 17 Article 9(2) of the Regulation states that without prejudice to any requirements under the Aarhus and Espoo Conventions and relevant Union law, all parties involved in the permit granting process shall follow the principles for public participation set out in the Guidelines in Annex VI(3).
- 18 The requirements of Regulation 347/2013 are addressed as part of a permit granting process for PCI projects. This is described in the Planning Report (see **Volume 2A** of the application documentation). Under this Regulation *inter alia*, EirGrid was required to submit a *Concept for Public Participation* (CPP) to the Board (as competent authority for PCI in Ireland) and this was done on 31st July 2014. The Board then had three months within which it could either approve or request modifications to the concept outlined. On 10th September 2014, the Board modified the CPP setting out a requirement to publish an information leaflet.

19 EirGrid subsequently published the CPP and the correspondence received from the Board on its website on 25th September 2014, in accordance with the Board's requirements as set out in its *Project of Common Interest Manual of Permit Granting Process Procedures* (2014).

20 Article 9.4 of Regulation (EU) No. 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (Guidelines for Trans-European Energy Infrastructure) sets out:

“The project promoter shall prepare a report summarising the results of activities related to the participation of the public prior to the submission of the application file, including those activities that took place before the start of the permit granting process. The project promoter shall submit that report together with the application file to the competent authority. Due account shall be taken of these results in a comprehensive decision”.

21 In accordance with this requirement, EirGrid will submit a report to the Board together with the planning application and this will be made available for viewing / download for landowners, the public and project stakeholders on EirGrid's project website.

22 Other relevant PCI requirements are discussed in the Planning Report, **Volume 2A** of the application documentation, and in **Chapter 8** of this report.

2.2 EIRGRID'S APPROACH TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

2.2.1 Concepts and Principles of Public Consultation Adopted

23 EirGrid's underlying pillars for consultation for the project are compatible with the requirements of the Aarhus Convention and industry best practice. All of the consultation activities to date were drawn up to adhere to each of the three pillar concepts and aimed to ensure that the public participation activities devised for the project were:

- Accessible;
- Meaningful; and
- Accountable.

24 What is meant by each of these terms and a brief overview of the mechanisms by which they have been achieved, by EirGrid, is provided in the following paragraphs.

2.2.1.1 Principle 1: Accessible Consultation

25 In the context of the project, accessible consultation aims to provide and make project information and key project messages available to the public, public concerned, landowners and other stakeholders.

26 Accessibility in any consultation is key to its success. With the implementation of the methods devised for this project, the accessibility of the consultation process can be described and evaluated in terms of:

- The level of awareness about the project and the project information that can be accessed;
- Utilisation of multiple communications tools to ensure that all stakeholders have an opportunity to access information, irrespective of where they live and what their level of literacy or online capabilities are;
- Materials are accessible and information is presented in a way that is clear and meaningful, but uncomplicated; and
- Physical accessibility (i.e. appropriate access to all venues used by EirGrid including geographic locations and access for wheelchair users).

2.2.1.2 Principle 2: Meaningful Consultation

27 Meaningful consultation means providing clarity to members of the public on what aspects of the project are open for consultation, what was / may be subject to change, and what decisions have already been taken. Being clear with what “*is on the table*” allows stakeholders to understand the level and type of input they can realistically have in the project as it develops.

28 Consultation was devised and implemented by EirGrid to be meaningful at key junctures within the project’s timeline. At each stage of the engagement and consultation process (and especially after 2011 following feedback from stakeholders), EirGrid devised terms of reference to inform the public and landowners about what aspects of the project were open for consultation, what was subject to change, and what decisions had already been taken. Being clear with what “*is on the table*” allows stakeholders to understand their role in the project as the project develops and to manage their expectations. Meaningful consultation also requires that the submissions and views of stakeholders are taken into account and this has been the case with the public consultation held to date.

- 29 Therefore, terms of reference, along with a project roadmap (described later in this chapter), were provided to help guide the consultation process and to show how it feeds into the technical development of the project. The terms of reference were widely available so that at all stages members of the public were kept fully aware of what stage the project was at.
- 30 Furthermore, the consultation undertaken for the project has always comprised two separate but parallel strands, albeit that the approach was clearer after 2011 following feedback from stakeholders:
- 1: Consultation focussed on the public, project stakeholders, media and elected representatives and community groups; and
 - 2: Consultation focussed on landowners potentially affected by the proposals and methods designed to encourage them to participate in the process and take part in the dialogue on the design, given EirGrid's stated intention to minimise potential impact on agriculture, land holdings and farm management practices (described in more detail in **Chapter 7**).

2.2.1.3 Principle 3: Accountable Consultation

- 31 Accountable project decision making ensures that the project has taken on board issues, as appropriate, and the project only moves forward once each phase has been appropriately dealt with.
- 32 Consultation for the project was defined within three distinct strands that aimed to maximise the awareness and subsequent participation of the public and landowners in the process and this is presented graphically in **Figure 2.1**.
- 33 Feedback provided by stakeholders during each phase of public consultation was captured and recorded by the project team. This information was reviewed to ensure that it was considered by the project team as part of the decision making process.

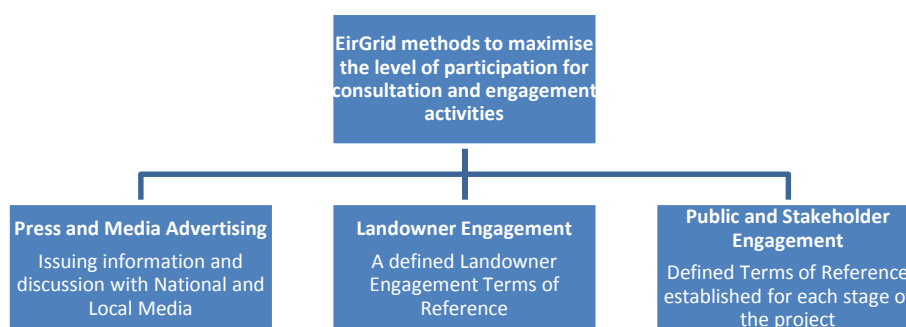


Figure 2.1: EirGrid's Distinct Strands for Consultation and Engagement for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development

- 34 The EirGrid project team, therefore, was able to account for the information received from the public and project stakeholders at each consultation phase and demonstrate how it was reviewed and considered. This provided for clear and accountable consultation throughout.

2.2.2 EirGrid's Approach to Consultation in Project Development

- 35 In the rollout of projects under the Grid25 strategy, EirGrid has consistently used graphical roadmaps to present the timeline of the project to the public and other stakeholders in a simplified and accessible manner. Publishing roadmaps ensures transparency insofar as members of the public and stakeholders have a clear idea of the proposed stages of the process for the project from inception to completion. The use of roadmaps within the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development project has been iterative - in this respect refer to **Figures 2.2 - 2.6**, which provide details of how the timeline has been visually communicated over the duration of the project to date:

Table 2.2: Project Roadmap

Figure	Roadmap Iteration
Figure 2.2	The roadmap image as published in the <i>Community Update Brochure</i> in April 2009
Figure 2.3	The roadmap image published for the preliminary re-evaluation phase (May 2011)
Figure 2.4	The image used in the brochure for the final re-evaluation phase (April 2013)
Figure 2.5	The roadmap published in the preferred project solution phase brochure (July 2013)
Figure 2.6	The roadmap published in the <i>Community Update Brochure</i> in July 2014
Figure 2.7	The roadmap published in the PCI <i>Public Information Leaflet</i> (May 2015)

- 36 These figures demonstrate how throughout the project lifecycle, at each phase of consultation clarification was provided to stakeholders on how the specific stage of consultation related to the overall timeline.

2.2.2.1 EirGrid's Project Development and Consultation Roadmap

- 37 Building on the various roadmaps for this project in 2012 EirGrid published a Project Development and Consultation Roadmap (**Figure 2.5**) as a general framework for the development of its larger projects. The essential purpose of this roadmap is that the development of a project occurs within a clear and structured process, with public and stakeholder consultation occurring from its earliest stage of information gathering. The roadmap is outlined in more detail in EirGrid's document *Approach to the Development of Electricity Transmission Infrastructure* available at www.eirgridprojects.com. In a typical scenario of project development, with reference to EirGrid's Roadmap, the following occurs:

- **Stage One** focuses on the process of gathering technical, environmental and other information to inform the shape of the project. It includes identification of a study area to meet the needs of that particular project; the identification of environmental and other constraints within that study area; and the identification of potential route corridors which seek to avoid those identified constraints to the greatest extent practicable or feasible. It also generally includes, what in the opinion of the technical and environmental consultants, comprises the least constrained route corridor option. The progression of Stage One, and its conclusions – an identified emerging preferred project solution, is captured in a Stage One Report. This forms the basis for public consultation and engagement. Earlier consultation in respect of various aspects of Stage One may also have occurred.
- **Stage Two** involves consideration of feedback arising in respect of the Stage One Report consultation, further review of previous options, further evaluation and endorsement of a preferred (taken to mean ‘best fit’) route corridor, and identification of a potentially feasible indicative line route within that preferred route corridor. These elements are generally captured in a Stage Two Report, which is subject to another round of public and stakeholder consultation. Stage Two includes the commencement of landowner engagement along the identified preferred indicative line route.
- The latter stages of the roadmap (**Stages Three and Four**) are primarily concerned with confirmation of the final line route, and associated preparation of technical and environmental studies. This includes consideration of feedback arising in respect of consultation on the Stage Two Report as well as ongoing engagement with landowners, seeking agreement where possible for the location of structures on landholdings. The final proposal is then submitted to the appropriate authority (generally the Board) for development consent.

38 The *Approach to the Development of Electricity Transmission Infrastructure* states:

“While this overview is intended to give general guidance to our stakeholders in relation to the development of transmission projects, it must be understood that all projects are different and there is no “one size fits all” process.

As such, while we always seek to develop large-scale projects in line with this approach, in some instances, because of the nature and size of the project, there may be a requirement to deviate from this process. In such circumstances we will explain the reasons for any deviation.”

- 39 The context for the preparation of the current application for approval is somewhat different to that of other transmission development projects. In this regard, EirGrid is in a position to bring forward a proposal that has the benefit of the previous planning application preparation processes (including a significant number of submissions from Prescribed Bodies and the general public), pre-application consultation procedures and feedback, and the framework of the project specific indicative roadmaps (as described above).
- 40 Notwithstanding the fact that EirGrid's Roadmap was published in 2012 i.e. after the initial application for development consent, the current development process is consistent with the framework and structured progression of the Roadmap. In this regard, it is the case that the detailed re-evaluation process undertaken between 2010 and 2013 (refer to **Chapter 4** of this report for details) effectively constitute Stages One and Two (in part) of EirGrid's Roadmap (resulting in the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* (2011) and *Final Re-evaluation Report* (2013) – included as Appendix 1.1 and Appendix 1.2 in **Volume 3B Appendices** of the EIS).
- 41 The *Preferred Project Solution Report*, which was published in July 2013 (included as Appendix 1.3 in **Volume 3B Appendices** of the EIS), was the subject of public and stakeholder consultation (refer to **Chapter 6** of this report for details). This report provides details regarding the 'Preferred Line Design' for the proposed development. This thereby effectively constitutes the process and key deliverable of 'Stage 2 – Evaluate Options' of the Roadmap.
- 42 The process of landowner engagement as well as environmental survey, design and assessment, in consultation with prescribed authorities and other stakeholders in respect of the preferred project solution, corresponds with 'Stage 3 – Confirm Design' of EirGrid's Roadmap (refer to **Chapter 7** for details).
- 43 The subject of this application for planning approval of the proposed development is the ultimate output of the line design process and the main deliverable of 'Stage 4 – Prepare Planning Application' of EirGrid's Roadmap.
- 44 Given the extent of opportunity for public participation for this project in all aspects of the previous planning process (including the making of written and oral submissions to the Board), and that which has occurred through the re-evaluation process, and subsequent process leading to this proposed development, it is considered that the principles of the 2012 roadmap for integration of public participation with project development have been achieved in this instance.

-
- 45 In December 2014, EirGrid published a document “*Reviewing and Improving our Public Consultation Process*”. This included a review of EirGrid’s approach to project development as per the Roadmap, looking at how the process could be enhanced to provide further opportunities for public participation.
- 46 This review concludes with a stated Commitment (No. 2) concerning “Process for Consultation in Project Development”, which is envisaged as updating the current Roadmap with a focus on enhancing opportunity for community, landowner and stakeholder participation in the development of new projects. This identifies three key areas – based on an approach which facilitates earlier engagement with stakeholders – which are explaining the need for a project, identifying feasible technical options to meet that need, and seeking input as to how local engagement should be carried out.
- 47 It is envisaged that the approach will retain a structured process for project development, with clearly identified opportunities for stakeholder participation and engagement, as is the fundamental basis of the current roadmap.
- 48 As part of this updated approach, EirGrid opened its project information centres to the public to coincide with the publication of the final proposed line design for the North-South 400kV Interconnection Development. EirGrid had undertaken a review of the December 2013 line design and this resulted in some of the tower locations being re-positioned along the alignment. The alignment itself did not change. Refer to **Chapter 8** of this report for further information on communications activities undertaken between March 2015 until the submission of the application to An Bord Pleanála.

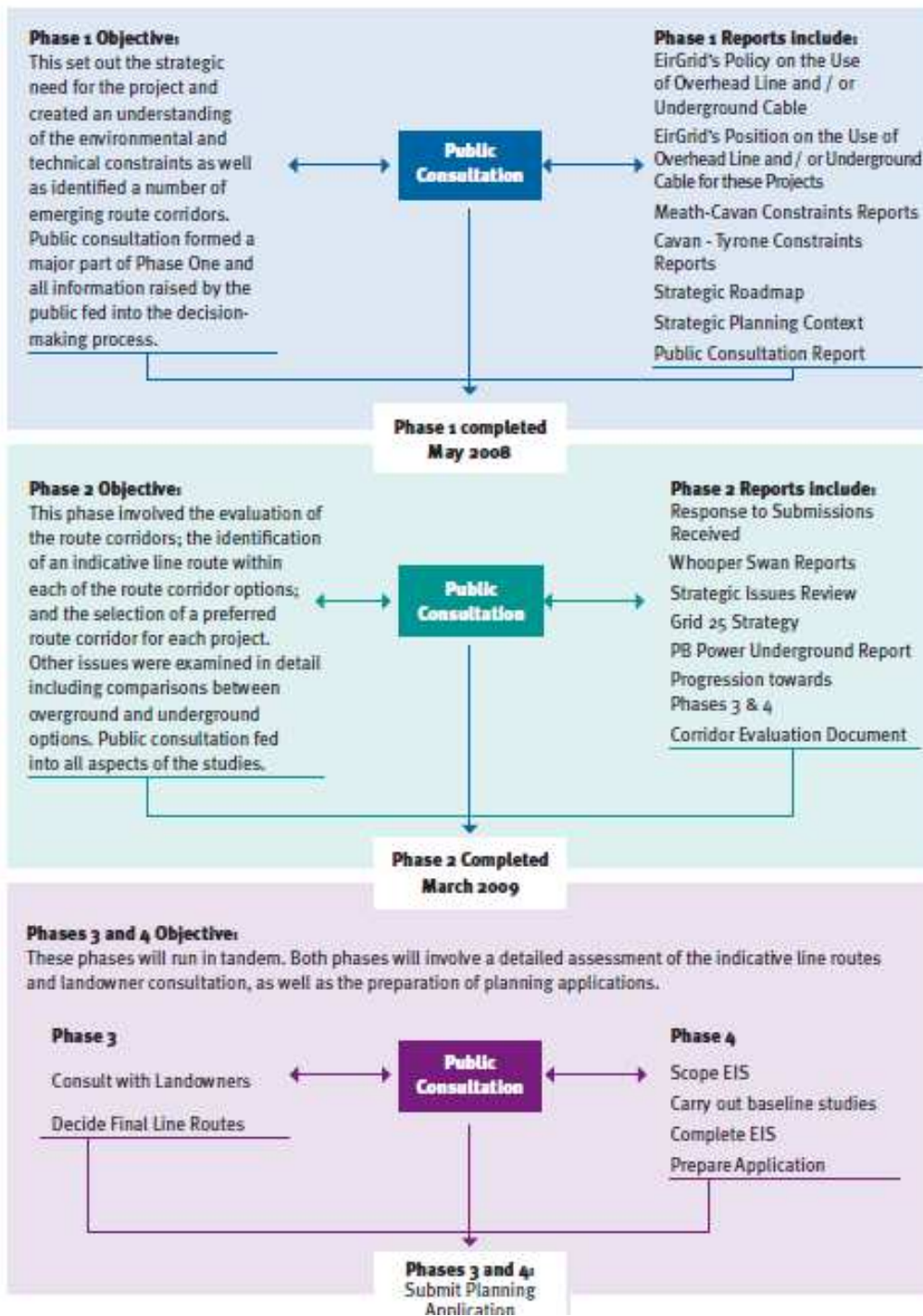


Figure 2.2: Indicative Roadmap Image published in the Community Update Brochure (April 2009)

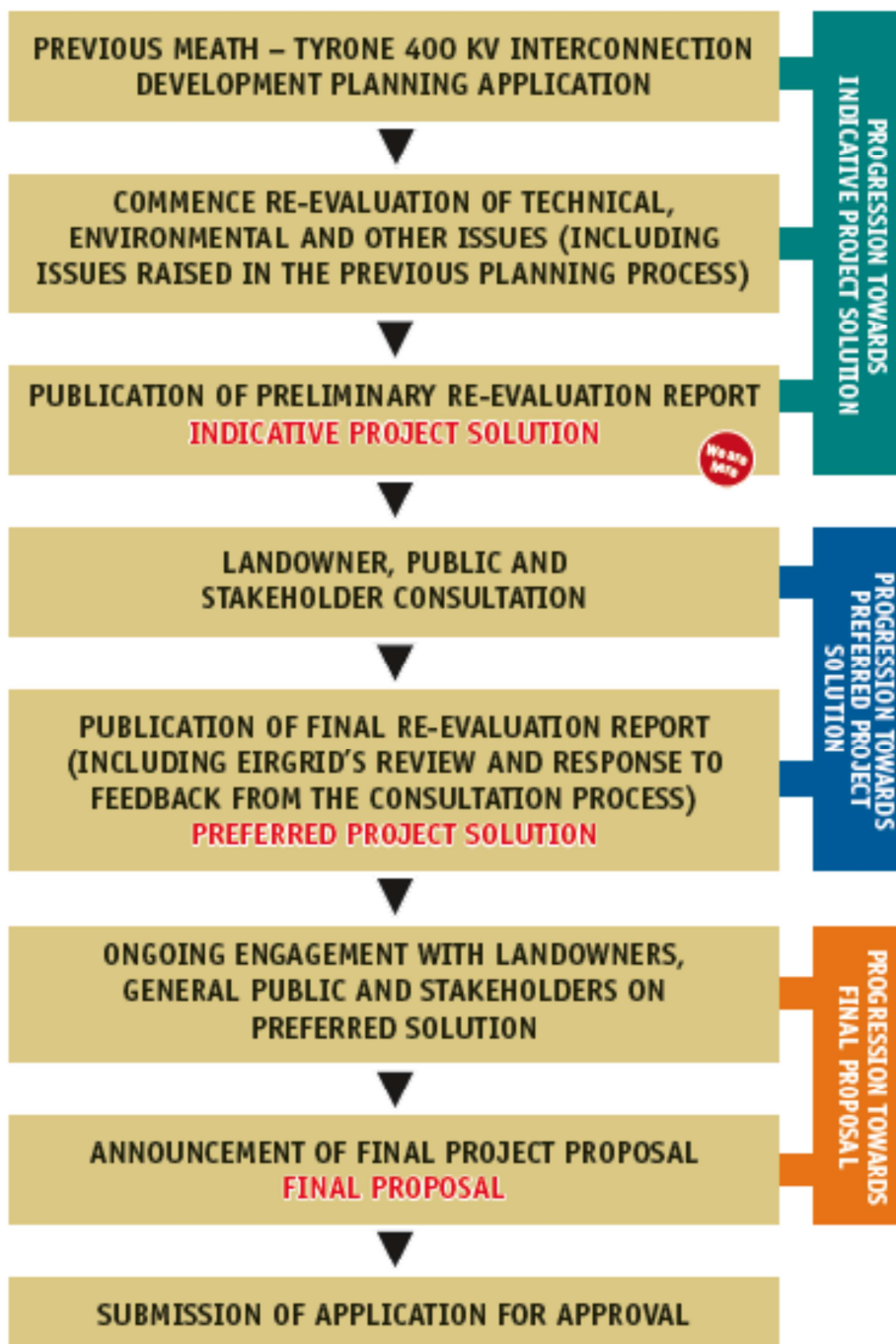


Figure 2.3: Roadmap Image published in the Community Update Brochure for the Preliminary Re-evaluation Phase (May 2011)



Figure 2.4: Roadmap Image published in the Community Update Brochure for the Final Re-evaluation Phase (April 2013)



Figure 2.5: Roadmap Image published in the Preferred Project Solution Community Update Brochure (July 2013)



Figure 2.6: Roadmap image published in the Community Update Brochure (July 2014)



Figure 2.7: Roadmap published in the PCI Public Information Leaflet (May 2015)

2.3 CONTEXT OF LANDOWNER ENGAGEMENT

49 As set out in **Section 2.2.1.2** the consultation approach undertaken for the project has always comprised two separate but parallel strands. One strand focused on landowners potentially affected by the proposal.

2.3.1 Statutory Context

50 Prior to the construction of an electricity line or fixture across or on any land, the provisions of the *Electricity Supply Act, 1927* as amended require that a notice in writing stating the intention to do so must be served on the owner and / or occupier. The notice shall also give a description of the nature of the line or fixture and of the position and manner in which it is intended to be placed or attached. This notice is a requirement prior to construction. Landowner consultation activities and results are addressed in more detail in **Chapter 7** of this report.

2.3.2 EirGrid Best Practice

51 EirGrid is committed to providing accessible, meaningful and accountable consultation to facilitate public participation as part of its project development process, and the process in relation to the proposed North–South Interconnection 400 kV Development has included a separate and parallel strand of engagement specifically focussed on landowners⁴. EirGrid seeks to minimise disturbance to current land use and farm management practice and, as a result, engaged with landowners throughout each stage of the project.

2.4 PROJECT COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

52 The team responsible for project communications, public consultation and landowner and stakeholder engagement for this project is drawn from different members of the overall project team.

⁴ Includes landowners identified by EirGrid to be in proximity (i.e. within 50 metres) to the line for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development.

3 OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT UNDERTAKEN

- 1 In the period since 2007, EirGrid has undertaken a process of public engagement, consultation, information gathering and dissemination in respect of the proposed development. The consultation process has involved members of the public, the public concerned, strategic stakeholders, prescribed authorities, elected representatives, action groups and all interested parties. Engagement with individual landowners in respect of the project occurred in parallel. Thus, the consultation process comprised two strands:
 - **Strand 1:** Focussed on the public and public concerned and all interested stakeholders, including prescribed authorities; and
 - **Strand 2:** Specifically focussed on potentially affected landowners.
- 2 This chapter provides a general overview of the key consultation phases which were undertaken in respect of the project since 2007 (as summarised in **Table 3.1**). These key phases are then described in greater detail in the following chapters with reference to the objectives of the consultation process, the methods and tools employed and how the feedback received was captured and considered. In addition, **Figure 3.8** (located at the end of the chapter) provides a detailed timeline for the various consultation activities and events that occurred in respect of the project since 2007, including during these key consultation phases.
- 3 This chapter also summarises the various consultation activities and tools employed by EirGrid throughout the project which are then described in greater detail in the following chapters.
- 4 Finally the chapter also addresses the fact that despite EirGrid's efforts to consult and engage with all stakeholders as part of the consultation process undertaken for the project, a number of difficulties were encountered which challenged the purpose and outcomes of the consultation phases.

Table 3.1: Overview of Consultation Phases

	2007 – 2010	2011 - 2014
Strand 1: Structured Phases of Public Consultation and / or Engagement	<p>Phase 1 introduced the public to the project, the Route Corridor Options and how they were decided upon (October 2007 – May 2008).</p> <p>Phase 2 focused on the announcement of the Preferred Route Corridors and indicative line route (March 2009 – July 2009).</p> <p>Phases 3 and 4: These phases ran in tandem and involved on-going consultation in respect of the assessment of the indicative line routes and preparation of the planning application (focusing in particular on landowners). (August 2009 – lodgement of planning application in December 2009).</p> <p>[Also of relevance to public participation activities is the formal statutory consultation which occurred as part of the Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) application for approval process which occurred between December 2009 – June 2010.]</p>	<p>Re-evaluation Process Phase (2011 – 2013)</p> <p>This two phase process corresponded with the publication of the <i>Preliminary Re-evaluation Report</i> and <i>Final Re-evaluation Report</i> and the wider public consultation activities undertaken at this time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The preliminary re-evaluation phase – the formal consultation period was from 9th May 2011 to 1st July 2011. • The final re-evaluation phase – the formal engagement period was from 16th April 2013 to 27th May 2013. <p>The Preferred Project Solution Phase – this phase focused on consultation on the preferred project solution and the <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i>. This consultation period was from 16th July 2013 to 9th September 2013.</p>
Strand 2: Focused Landowner Engagement	<p>The EirGrid project team sought to contact landowners directly and / or visit them further to publication of the Preferred Corridors and Indicative Line Routes (March 2009 – July 2009) and subsequently while undertaking baseline studies and completing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) during preparation of the planning application (August 2009 – December 2009).</p>	<p>Phase 1 – Focused landowner engagement took place following the publication of the Indicative Route (this corresponded with the publication of the <i>Preliminary Re-evaluation Report</i>).</p> <p>Phase 2 – Focused landowner engagement took place following the publication of the <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i> in July 2013.</p> <p>Phase 2 – Following assessment of all the modification requests received, landowners were informed (in writing) of the Final Line Design and tower location that EirGrid was intending to submit to An Bord Pleanála (the Board) for approval (December 2013).</p>

Note: throughout all stages of the project, EirGrid reviewed, and continued to review, all stakeholder submissions and feedback up until the submission of this application for planning approval.

3.1 2007 - 2010

5 Several pre-application consultation and public engagement phases were undertaken to inform the application made to the Board in December 2009. These can generally be described as follows:

- Phase 1 - introduced the public to the proposed project, the proposed route corridor options and how they were decided upon (October 2007 – May 2008);
- Phase 2 – focused on the announcement of the Preferred Route Corridors and Indicative Line Routes (March 2009 – July 2009); and
- Phases 3 and 4 – ran in tandem and involved on-going consultation in respect of the assessment of the Indicative Line Routes and preparation of the planning application (August 2009 – lodgement of planning application in December 2009).

6 These phases of consultation are considered further in **Chapter 4** and the consultation milestones and activities are summarised in **Figure 3.8** (located at the end of the chapter).

3.1.1 Phase 1

7 In October 2007, EirGrid requested the public and public concerned to comment on three 1km wide corridor options which had been developed by the project team. EirGrid and its project team reviewed and considered all feedback that the public provided, particularly with reference to the potential impact of the proposal on a range of issues including landscape, environment and cultural heritage. Using the information obtained during consultation with the public, along with other evaluation criteria, the project team progressed the proposal towards a preferred 1km wide corridor.

8 The responses received from members of the public and the public concerned during this consultation were reviewed by the EirGrid project team and issues were responded to either directly, through FAQs or via specific reports.

3.1.2 Phase 2

9 In April 2009, EirGrid announced preferred 1km wide corridors, including Indicative Line Routes⁵, and sought feedback on these routes to ensure that all issues raised by stakeholders were appropriately addressed. During this time, EirGrid also sought feedback from the public

⁵ The history of the project included two inter related constituent elements (i.e. the Cavan – Tyrone 400 kV Interconnector Project and the Cavan – Meath 400 kV Transmission Circuit Project) hence referred to “preferred 1km wide corridors” and “indicative line routes”

and the public concerned on project alternatives which included underground cables and alternative routes.

3.1.3 Phases 3 and 4

10 A detailed assessment of the indicative line routes of the preferred corridors was carried out and all affected landowners were consulted prior to the completion of an EIS and submission of the application to the Board in December 2009.

3.1.4 The Previous Application for Planning Approval

11 The previous application for planning approval in respect of the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development project (then called the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development) was submitted to the Board (Ref. VA0006) on 18 December 2009. The project as applied for comprised of:

- The continuation of the 400 kV single circuit overhead line (OHL) from the area where the circuit crosses the jurisdictional border in the townland of Lemgare, County Monaghan, to the existing 400 kV substation at Woodland, County Meath, traversing lands in counties Monaghan, Cavan and Meath;
- A new 400 kV substation in the townland of Moyhill, County Meath, in the vicinity of the intersection of the proposed north-south oriented transmission circuit with the existing east-west oriented 220 kV OHL between Flagford and Louth Substations;
- The associated diversion of the existing Flagford-Louth 220 kV OHL into the planned Moyhill Substation, thereby providing a connection between the two transmission circuits; and
- Associated works required in the existing Woodland Substation to accommodate the proposed 400 kV circuit.

12 Volume 1, Chapter 3 of the EIS prepared in respect of that previously proposed development outlined the approach taken to public consultation in the course of project development and application preparation. The methods used to facilitate public consultation sought to ensure that all those who wished to engage with the project team were afforded the opportunity to do so. The key methods of consultation employed prior to the previous application are discussed in **Chapter 4** of this report.

- 13 Pursuant to the relevant statutory provisions, the period for receipt of submissions and observations on the previous application for planning approval took place between January and March 2010, during which the Board invited written submissions from prescribed authorities, other stakeholders, members of the public and all other parties. In May 2010, an oral hearing in respect of the proposed development was convened and continued until the application was withdrawn in late June 2010.

3.2 RE-EVALUATION PROCESS PHASE (2011 – 2013)

- 14 Following the withdrawal of the application in late June 2010, a re-evaluation phase was undertaken, as detailed in **Chapter 5** of this report (to include both a preliminary re-evaluation and final re-evaluation phase). The purpose of the re-evaluation process was to ascertain whether the scope, content, and conclusions on the development proposal which comprised the previous application remained relevant for the purposes of informing and shaping a new application for planning approval. Following the withdrawal of the previous application, it was appropriate to consider any new or additional information which was available to EirGrid and the project team, and which was not available prior to the submission of the previous application in December 2009.
- 15 Firstly, a considerable volume of written and oral submissions on the previous proposal were presented by or on behalf of prescribed authorities, landowners, members of the general public, public concerned and other stakeholders, during the process before the Board, including the oral hearing. These submissions contained information which was useful to EirGrid in undertaking a review of the nature and location of the proposed development. The key issues raised in these submissions are presented in **Chapter 4** of this report.
- 16 Secondly, a number of relevant studies and reports were undertaken and published following the withdrawal of the previous application in June 2010, which were either directly or indirectly relevant to the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development in general, or to particular aspects thereof. EirGrid has considered all information contained in these studies and reports. These reports are described briefly in Section 5.2 of this report. Given the nature of the previous application for planning approval, in respect of the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development, a considerable volume of work undertaken in respect of that application remains relevant. In particular, the information contained in the EIS, and other technical and environmental studies, remained relevant to the process of defining the nature, extent, and location of the current proposed development, and assessing the main effects which any new proposal is likely to have on the environment. This was an important consideration in determining the scope of the re-evaluation process. The EIS, and technical, environmental, planning and other documents associated with the previous application for approval were all publicly available and remain available for public review and reference on EirGrid's website.

17 The re-evaluation process is considered further in **Chapter 5** of this report and the associated consultation milestones and activities are summarised in **Figure 3.8** (located at the end of the chapter).

3.3 PREFERRED PROJECT SOLUTION (2013)

18 Following a review of all feedback received during the re-evaluation periods, EirGrid published a Preferred Project Solution Report in July 2013. It identified the detailed proposals for the project with preferred line route and proposed tower locations included. Details of indicative access routes for construction purposes were also identified.

19 EirGrid held an eight week period of formal public consultation between Tuesday 16th July 2013 and Monday 9th September 2013.

20 During this stage, EirGrid also engaged with landowners and landowner representative groups as appropriate, on the detail of the preferred line route, proposed tower locations and indicative construction access routes.

21 The publication of this report was an important step in the planning and delivery process for the project and EirGrid sought to:

- Consult with members of the public and other stakeholders on the scope of the EIS;
- Consult with members of the public and other stakeholders on the preferred project solution;
- Provide members of the public, landowners, the public concerned and other stakeholders with information on the project, line design and the progression towards a planning application; and
- Ensure that all relevant stakeholders had appropriate access to information and the project decision making process well in advance of the application being submitted to the Board.

22 Further details of the preferred project solution stage of the project are detailed in Chapter 6 of this report and the associated consultation milestones and activities are summarised in Figure 3.8 (located at the end of the chapter).

3.4 FINAL LINE ROUTE TO LODGEMENT (2013 – ONWARDS)

- 23 EirGrid continued to review and consider submissions received from the public, public concerned and landowners between the close of the consultation on the Preferred Project Solution Report (which ended on the 9th September 2013) and the publication of the final line route in December 2013⁶. A Community Update Newsletter was published at this time to publicise this and to advise stakeholders on how they could view and seek information on the details of the final line route. During this time EirGrid continued to operate its project information service and provide project briefings to key stakeholders.
- 24 EirGrid published a further Community Update Brochure in July 2014 to ensure continued awareness of the project prior to the submission of the application. It advised on the findings of the Independent Expert Panel (IEP) and provided information on the Project of Common Interest (PCI) process. During this time EirGrid continued to operate its project information service and provide project briefings to stakeholders.
- 25 Throughout this period and up until the submission of this application, the public, public concerned and all interested parties were able to engage with the project team through the Lo-Call phone line, via e-mail and post and the project information centres. EirGrid reviewed all stakeholder feedback and sought to have their questions answered. As referred to in **Section 2.2.2.1** of this report, in December 2013 EirGrid published a document “Reviewing and Improving our Public Consultation Process”. This review examined EirGrid’s approach to consultation process to enhance its future engagement with the public regarding its projects. As part of the commitments made in this publication in March 2015, EirGrid opened the project information centres in Navan, Carrickmacross and Kingscourt⁷. This engagement with the public and public concerned provided stakeholders with an update on the project, including recent developments and factors that had influenced the timeline for the planning process (including the designation of the project as a Project of Common Interest). This engagement informed the public of the final line design that EirGrid intended to submit to the Board.
- 26 As part of the commitments made by EirGrid in their Consultation Review for projects, published in December 2014, EirGrid placed advertisements for the recruitment of two community liaison officers (CLOs) and three agricultural liaison officers (ALOs). The roles will provide a liaison role to assist with the engagement of stakeholders throughout Ireland (including Meath, Cavan and Monaghan) for EirGrid’s projects. The ALOs will liaise with key agricultural stakeholders and landowners in regard to transmission infrastructure development in all phases of the project

⁶ The final line route was subsequently revised and was published in March 2015.

⁷ Due to the unavailability of the venue in the Dun na Ri House Hotel, Kingscourt, that information centre closed on 1st April 2015 and a search for a replacement venue commenced. The new project information centre, located in the Cavan Enterprise & Technology Centre, Cootehill, Co. Cavan, opened in June 2015.

lifecycle from initiation through to the planning and construction phases. The CLOs will liaise with individuals, representatives of local authorities and relevant stakeholder groups/organisations.

- 27 On 1st May 2015, EirGrid published a *PCI Public Information Leaflet* on the project website (refer to **Appendix L** of this report) that provided updated information on the PCI process and an updated project roadmap, in accordance with the modified Concept for Public Participation (CPP). To coincide with the publication of this leaflet, EirGrid placed notices in two national newspapers (The Irish Times and The Irish Independent) to publicise its publication. Printed copies of the leaflet were available at each of the project information centres and on request via the project information service (e-mail, surface mail and lo-call phone line).
- 28 In addition to the *PCI Public Information Leaflet*, EirGrid intends to publish and issue to stakeholders (and landowners) a *Community Update Brochure* before the submission of the application (refer to **Appendix M** of this report). EirGrid will issue a press release to both national and regional media at this time to notify them of the publication of the brochure. The press release will also include details of how the public can participate in the statutory consultation process that will commence one week following the submission of the planning application to the Board by EirGrid.
- 29 This phase of consultation is considered further in **Chapter 8** of this report and the associated consultation milestones and activities are summarised in **Figure 3.8** (located at the end of the chapter).

3.5 LANDOWNER CONSULTATION

- 30 Focused landowner engagement for this project commenced with the publication of the preferred route corridors and indicative line routes in April 2009 (i.e. prior to the lodgement of the previous application for approval). EirGrid wrote to all landowners / occupiers inviting them to meet with the project team and discuss the proposal and any concerns they may have. In July 2009, EirGrid announced that it would begin focusing on preparing a planning application and urged landowners to get in touch as soon as possible with any queries. Notwithstanding the efforts of the EirGrid project team to contact landowners directly and / or visit them and gain access to survey lands, limited engagement was achieved. Following lodgement of the application for approval for the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development, in December 2009, landowners were active participants in the statutory consultation process.
- 31 After the withdrawal of the previous application for approval and publication of the Preliminary Revaluation Report in May 2011, EirGrid commenced focused engagement with landowners on the indicative line route. As part of that round of engagement, all landowners were issued

letters that enclosed the terms of reference for landowner engagement. The terms of reference set out a three-phased approach and explained the opportunities for landowners to participate in each phase.

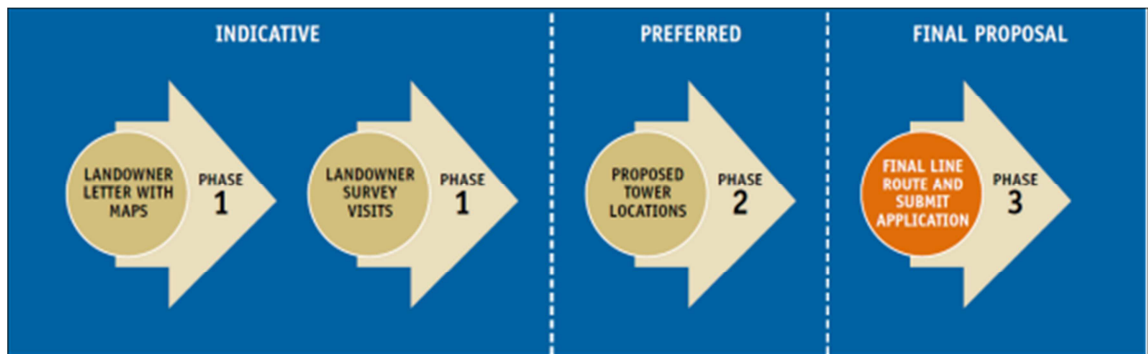


Figure 3.1: EirGrid's Phased Approach to Landowner Engagement for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development

- 32 The key aims of Phase 1 of the landowner engagement were to draw the attention of landowners to the project, to identify landholdings that may be affected by the project, and to gather information in respect of the most up-to-date information on ownership, land use and land management practices in the area potentially affected by the project.
- 33 Phase 2 of landowner consultation focussed on the preferred line route, proposed tower locations and indicative construction access routes. This was a key structured stage of consultation prior to finalisation of the final line route to be included in this application for planning approval to the Board.
- 34 The purpose of the Phase 3 stage of landowner engagement was to disseminate information to landowners on the detailed content of this proposal for which planning approval is being sought from the Board.
- 35 Consultation with landowners, as detailed in **Chapter 7** of this report, involved written correspondence, provision of project maps, visits by landowner agents, Community Update Brochures / information leaflets on specific issues, including a dedicated Landowner Brochure and facilitating change requests to modify the route and tower locations where feasible.
- 36 Further detail on the approach to landowner consultation is described in **Chapter 7** of this report and associated consultation milestones and activities are summarised in **Figure 3.8** (at the end of the chapter).

3.6 COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS EMPLOYED

37 From the initiation of the proposed project, EirGrid's overarching aim was to ensure anyone who wanted to engage with the project team was aware of the process and had the opportunity to do so. This included *inter alia* ensuring the following:

- Interested stakeholders had access to factual information regarding each stage of the project;
- People who will be potentially affected by the project, or consider themselves to be affected by the project, were afforded opportunities to feed into the design process of the project at the earliest opportunity;
- EirGrid had access to the most up-to-date information as part of the preparation of the new planning application; and
- Provision of a forum whereby stakeholders with concerns in respect of the project could discuss and / or submit their queries / concerns/observations and obtain the response of the EirGrid project team.

38 Therefore throughout all consultation phases, strands and activities, EirGrid employed diverse communication methods and tools in order to provide a wide-ranging and highly accessible consultation process. The multiple communications methods also sought to ensure that all stakeholders were provided with an opportunity to engage with the project team in their preferred manner and could access information via traditional methods (via post, hard copy reports and documentation) and online (information website and email).

39 The various communication methods and tools are set out generally below which were in place during the relevant consultation periods. These are in addition to the newspaper notices giving advance notice and inviting submissions in respect of specific stages of public consultation which are described in this report. They are also in addition, to communication tools employed as part of landowner engagement which are also described in **Chapter 7** of this report. Media and advertising is considered further in **Section 3.6.1**. In the following chapters they are described with reference to the various consultation phases.

Brochures:

40 EirGrid published Community Update Brochures on a regular basis in order to highlight key project developments and milestones, to summarise key reports and documents, and to answer questions that had been raised throughout the consultation process. Each brochure invited further consultation and engagement on the project, along with providing the details of how the

project team could be contacted. Additional booklets on key issues that had been identified during earlier consultation, such as EMF were also produced.

Phone Line:

- 41 EirGrid operated a dedicated Lo-Call project phone line (1890 25 26 90) from the commencement of the first phase of consultation where members of the public could request information and / or contact the project team. This has remained open to the public from 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday since 2007.

Email and Postal Address

- 42 EirGrid provided a project email address (northsouth@eirgrid.com) and postal address (c/o EirGrid NS Project Manager, Block 2, Floor 2, West Pier Business Campus, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin). These contact details are provided on all information documentation issued.

Web:

- 43 EirGrid has maintained a project website where all key project materials, including reports and maps, could be accessed, since the commencement of the project. This also has ensured that people could view the project's history as it developed.

Project Information Centres:

- 44 EirGrid opened local project information centres within the project study area where the public and landowners could drop in or set up appointments to meet with the EirGrid project team and to receive project information. The information centres were supported by the Lo-Call phone line, e-mail service, and written service. Initially there were two centres provided, at Navan and Carrickmacross, but a third was added at final re-evaluation engagement and consultation phase in 2013. All information materials including reports and maps were available at the project information centres and staff were on-hand to meet with members of the public and to record their feedback.

Open Days:

- 45 A number of open days and information evenings were held across the study area at project milestones. The main goal of these events was to provide an opportunity for all interested people to ask questions directly about the project and to have their questions answered face-to-face with the EirGrid project team. All meetings had the project information available, such as maps and brochures, for people to view there or to take away and review at home.

Reporting:

- 46 EirGrid kept the public informed about the project through media releases and advertising and radio interviews at key project milestones. Print and radio media were both used extensively. EirGrid reported on the progress of the project through its publications, printed information leaflets on specific topics, such as electromagnetic fields (EMF), landowner engagement and the status of the project as a PCI.

Briefings and One-to-One meetings:

- 47 For interested stakeholders, EirGrid provided technical briefings and presentations to present information on the project. Personal meetings for individuals or small representative groups were also available to stakeholders, so that they could have their questions answered in a more individual manner.

FAQ's:

- 48 FAQ's Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) were compiled, regularly updated, and made available in print and on the project website.

3.6.1 Media and Advertising

- 49 It was recognised that creating awareness of the project was critical to ensure the on-going participation of the public throughout the project development and consultation periods. To this end, media and advertising campaigns were used to support the public consultation process.
- 50 This generated high levels of awareness of the project and information dissemination on how to access information on the project. Press releases were regularly used at each of the key project milestones or developments, whereas advertising was used to highlight new methods of engagement or key deadlines that were forthcoming.
- 51 By way of example, **Figure 3.2** illustrates the level of press and broadcast coverage achieved by the project between April 2011 and the end of September 2013. A breakdown of these figures is provided in **Figure 3.4** and **Figure 3.6**. The regional newspaper titles provided the greatest amount of coverage, accounting for just under 45% of all articles, followed by national titles, which accounted for 37.5% of all coverage. Broadcast coverage accounted for 13% of the coverage received.
- 52 The high levels of awareness of the project generated by this campaign facilitated an effective roll-out of the other key elements of public consultation and landowner engagement undertaken by EirGrid.

53 High levels of public awareness were achieved in relation to how and where information could be obtained, and overall it is considered by EirGrid that there was a successful information and consultation campaign.

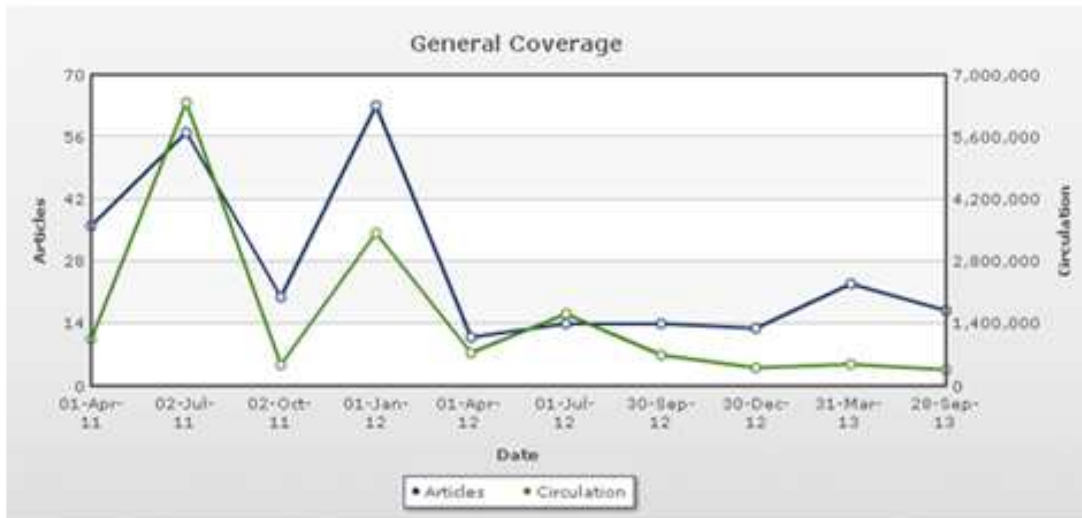


Figure 3.2: General Press and Broadcast Coverage for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development between April 2011 and September 2013 with an Illustration of the Number of Articles Published Alongside the Corresponding Circulation Figures

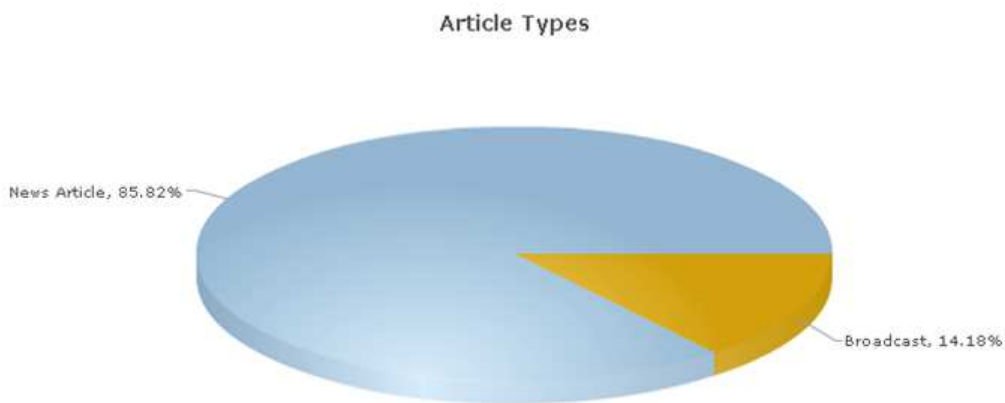


Figure 3.3: Breakdown of Article Types Covered in General Press and Broadcast Media for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development between April 2011 and September 2013

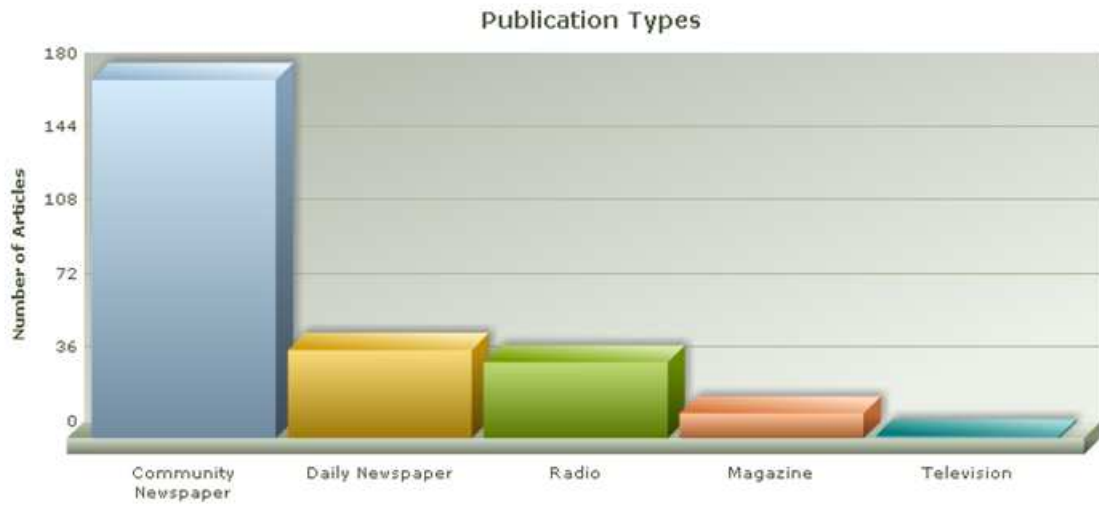


Figure 3.4: Breakdown of Article Publication Types in General Press and Broadcast Media for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development between April 2011 and September 2013

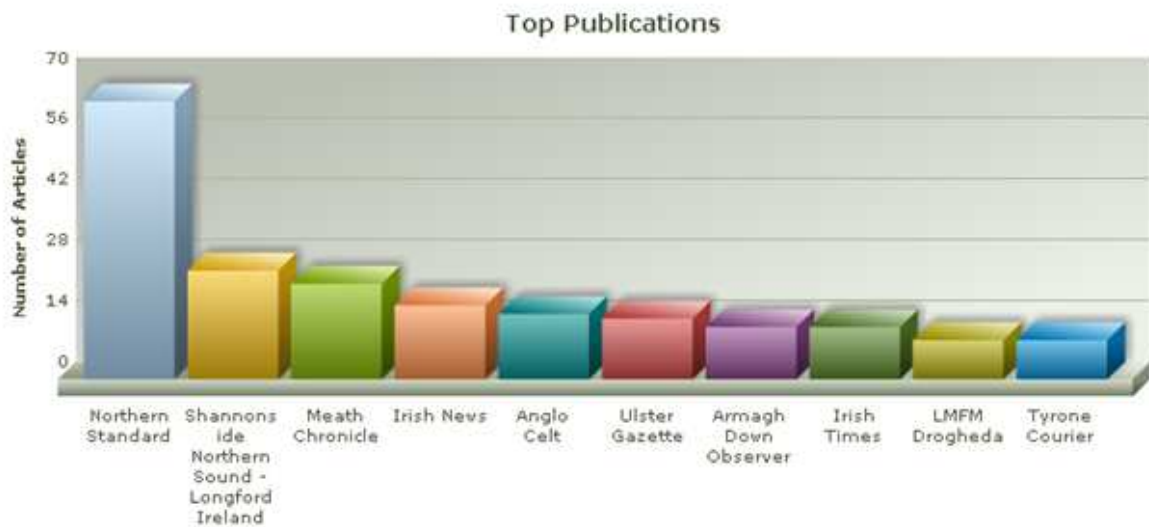


Figure 3.5: Breakdown of Top Article Publication Types in General Press and Broadcast Media for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development between April 2011 and September 2013

3.7 CHALLENGES, ISSUES AND RESPONSES ARISING

54 Despite EirGrid's efforts to consult and engage with all stakeholders as part of the consultation process undertaken for the project, a number of difficulties were encountered which challenged the purpose and outcomes of the consultation stages. These challenges are described in the following sections.

3.7.1.1 Access To Information

55 During the previous application, concerns were raised by stakeholders in respect of the location of the original Navan Information Centre. In response to this, EirGrid sourced and opened a new office in Navan (Kennedy House, 10a Kennedy Road, Navan, Co. Meath) in May 2011. This information centre was centrally located in the town of Navan, close to shopping and other amenities, with access to two car parks.

56 Concerns were raised by stakeholders during the open days in Cavan Town in respect of the Final Re-evaluation Report (23rd April and 24th April 2013) about the location of the open day. Stakeholders considered that the event should have been held in closer proximity to the proposed indicative line route as opposed to Cavan Town. In response to this, EirGrid sourced a venue in Kingscourt in which the open day event for the consultation on the Preferred Project Solution Report was held.

57 During pre-application consultation in respect of the previously proposed development, concerns were raised by stakeholders in respect of the accessibility of information on the EirGrid website, with some stakeholders stating difficulty navigating the website and retrieving information. As part of a review of EirGrid's overall website the project specific pages were amended and improved in an attempt to enhance the user interface as detailed in Chapter 4 of this report.

3.7.1.2 Nature of Public Participation

58 At each stage of consultation, EirGrid set out the terms of reference which informed the general public, stakeholders and landowners of the issues and topics on which it was seeking their feedback.

59 Over the course of the consultation phases, some aspects of feedback received were outside of the terms of reference for the particular consultation stage and related instead to national or global matters, e.g., Government policy.

60 To address this the submissions received by EirGrid during the period of public engagement on the Final Re-evaluation Report from 16th April 2013 to 27th May 2013, including those received

during the additional meetings facilitated by County Monaghan Anti-Pylon Landowners Group / Co. Monaghan Anti-Pylon Limited (CMAPLG), were categorised as follows:

- Submissions on the *Final Re-evaluation Report*;
- Submissions relevant to the *Preferred Project Solution Report*;
- Responses relevant to the Environmental Impact Assessment Process; and
- Feedback on other issues.

61 These submissions were then addressed under those headings in Chapter 2 of the Preferred Project Solution Report that was published on 16th July 2013, and continued to be considered and reviewed by the project team prior to the preparation of this planning application for the project.

3.7.2 Levels of Public Participation and Stakeholder Engagement

62 Despite the wide variety of methods and fora provided since the commencement of the project and outlined above, the number of attendees at some of the open day events and project information centres was lower than anticipated.

63 There are two groups which represent landowners in the study area as follows:

1. North East Pylon Pressure Committee / North East Pylon Campaign Limited (NEPP); and
2. County Monaghan Anti-Pylon Landowners Group / Co. Monaghan Anti-Pylon Limited (CMAPLG).

64 Certain landowners issued forms of authority and instructions to EirGrid to communicate only through their appointed representatives. EirGrid and their agents were thereby precluded from having direct communications with landowners who were represented by these two landowner representative groups. As a consequence of this, EirGrid could only provide statutory or other formal notices relating to their lands directly to these landowners and thus EirGrid was unable to proactively contact landowners represented by these groups during consultation. However, a number of change requests were submitted on behalf of landowners in Monaghan via the legal representatives of CMAPLG.

3.8 WIDER EIRGRID ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES

65 To increase the public's awareness of EirGrid and its role, EirGrid avails of opportunities in Ireland to sponsor national and local events in addition to development and roll out of national and local public awareness campaigns.

66 For example, events that have taken place in the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development study area include those discussed in the following sections.

3.8.1 Sponsorship of the Dunboyne 4 Mile Road Race

67 EirGrid sponsored the Dunboyne, County Meath 4 Mile Road Race and Fun Run, in partnership with Athletics Ireland, and has done so annually since 2011. The most recent event took place on Sunday 29th March 2015 and is a landmark event on the Irish road racing calendar.



Figure 3.6: The 44th Dunboyne 4 Mile Road Race, Sponsored by EirGrid that Took Place in Dunboyne, Co. Meath, on Sunday 24th March 2013.

3.8.2 Sponsorship of the Hay Festival

68 EirGrid sponsored the Hay Festival which took place in Kells County Meath from 28th June 2013 to Sunday 30th June 2013. This was the first time that this major literary festival took place in Ireland. During the festival, a representative of EirGrid participated, on behalf of EirGrid, in the debate 'Meeting Future Energy Needs', which reflected on finding the balance between meeting the growing global energy needs and the broader international environmental agenda.

69 EirGrid sponsored the Hay Festival that took place in Kells from Wednesday 2nd July to Friday 4th July 2014.

3.8.3 Cavan Life of Reilly Festival

70 EirGrid supported the inaugural 'Life of Reilly Festival' in Cavan to 'Live the Life of Reilly' which ran from 19th August 2013 to 25th August 2013. It is a festival celebrating traditional Irish music, country and western, drama, dance, arts and family fun.

3.8.4 EirGrid Schools Science Programme

71 The EirGrid Schools Science Programme is aimed at students of science for the Junior Certificate examination and is comprised of a series of live interactive shows hosted in regional centres around Ireland. The show, which is based on the current Junior Certificate cycle science curriculum, is interactive with an emphasis on practical experience and is intended to help students develop an appreciation of the impact that electricity has on our lives and environment. The first event for the 2013-2014 academic year hosted by EirGrid took place as part of 'Maths Week' at the Garage Theatre in County Monaghan in October 2013. This event was attended by over 600 students.

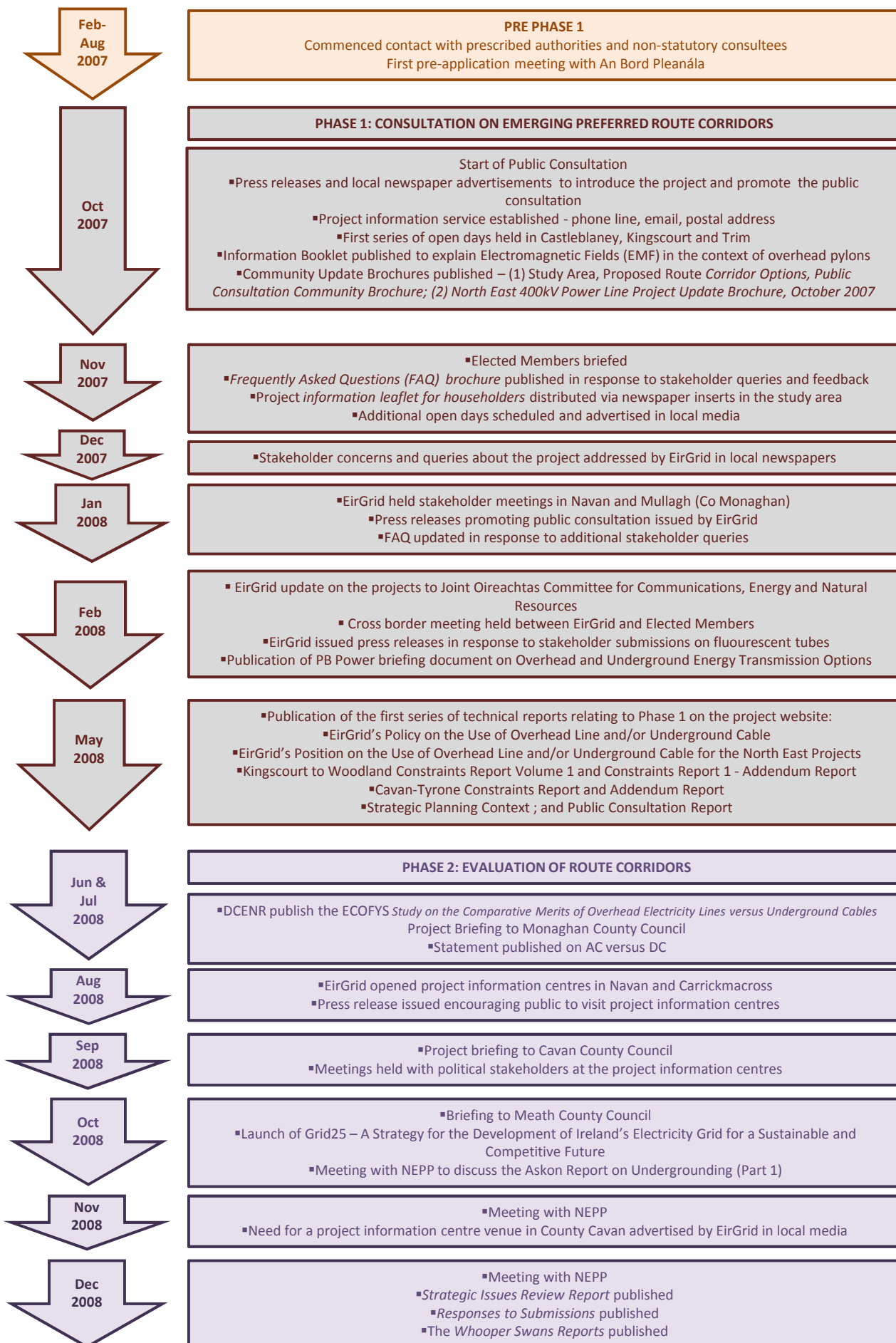
3.8.5 Engineering Technology Teachers Association Conference for Monaghan

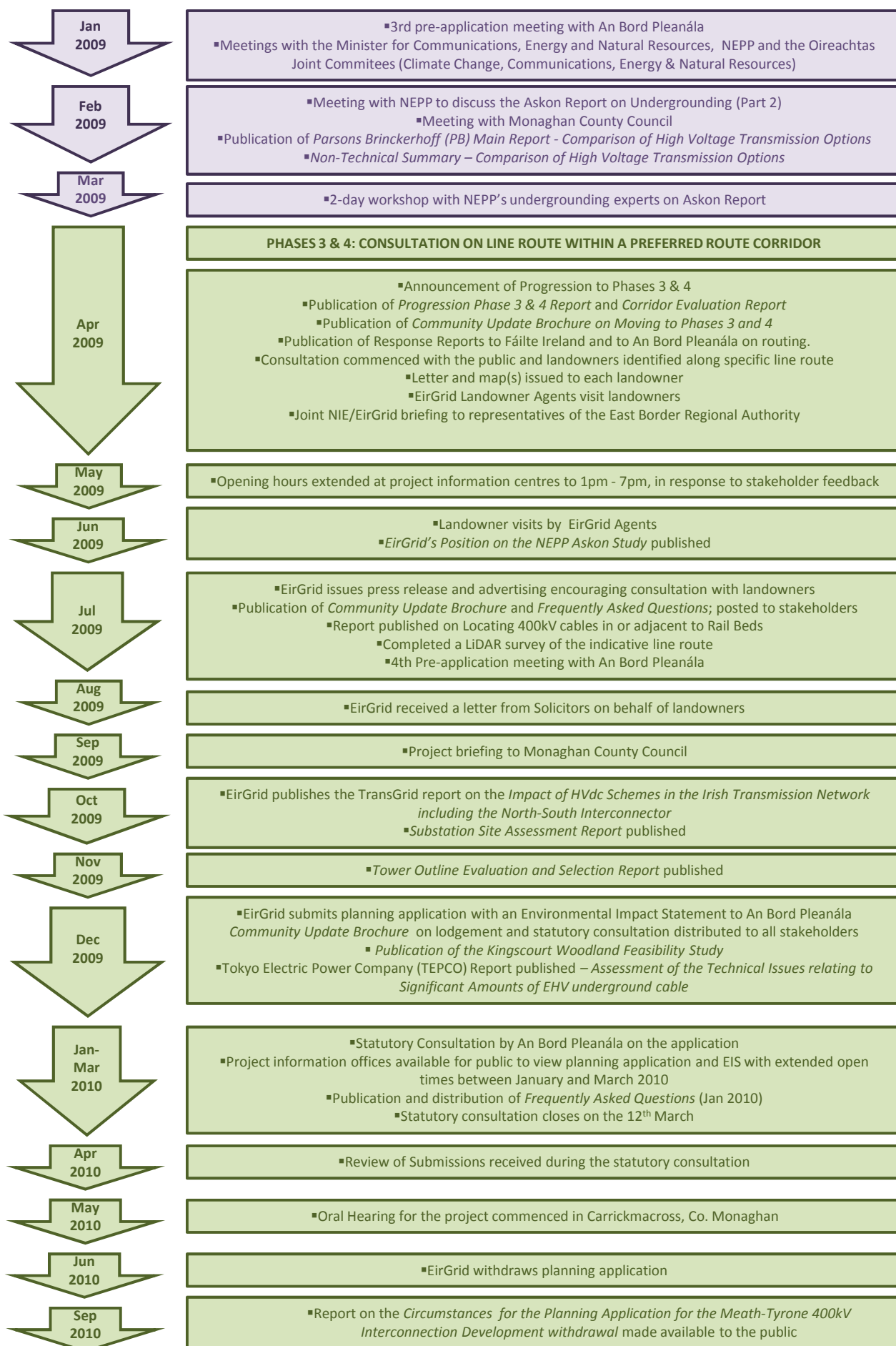
72 In October 2013, EirGrid teamed up with the Engineering Technology Teachers Association (ETTA) to celebrate excellence in engineering and technology among Junior and Leaving Certificate students. EirGrid sponsored a number of student competitions, the winners of which were announced at the ETTA's National Conference which was held at the Monaghan Institute of Further Education and Training on 15th and 16th November 2013.

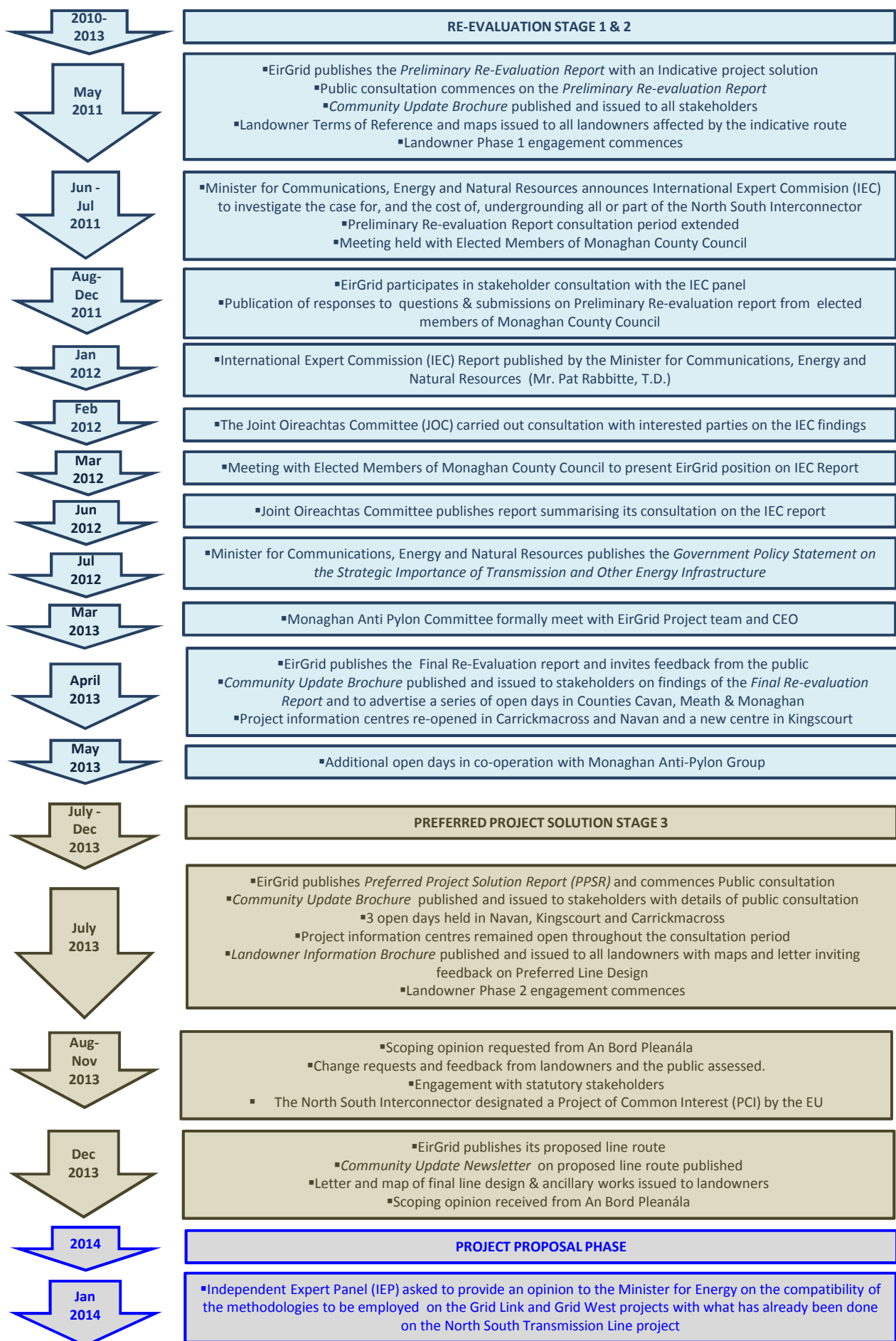
3.9 TIMELINE FOR CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS 2007 – ONWARDS

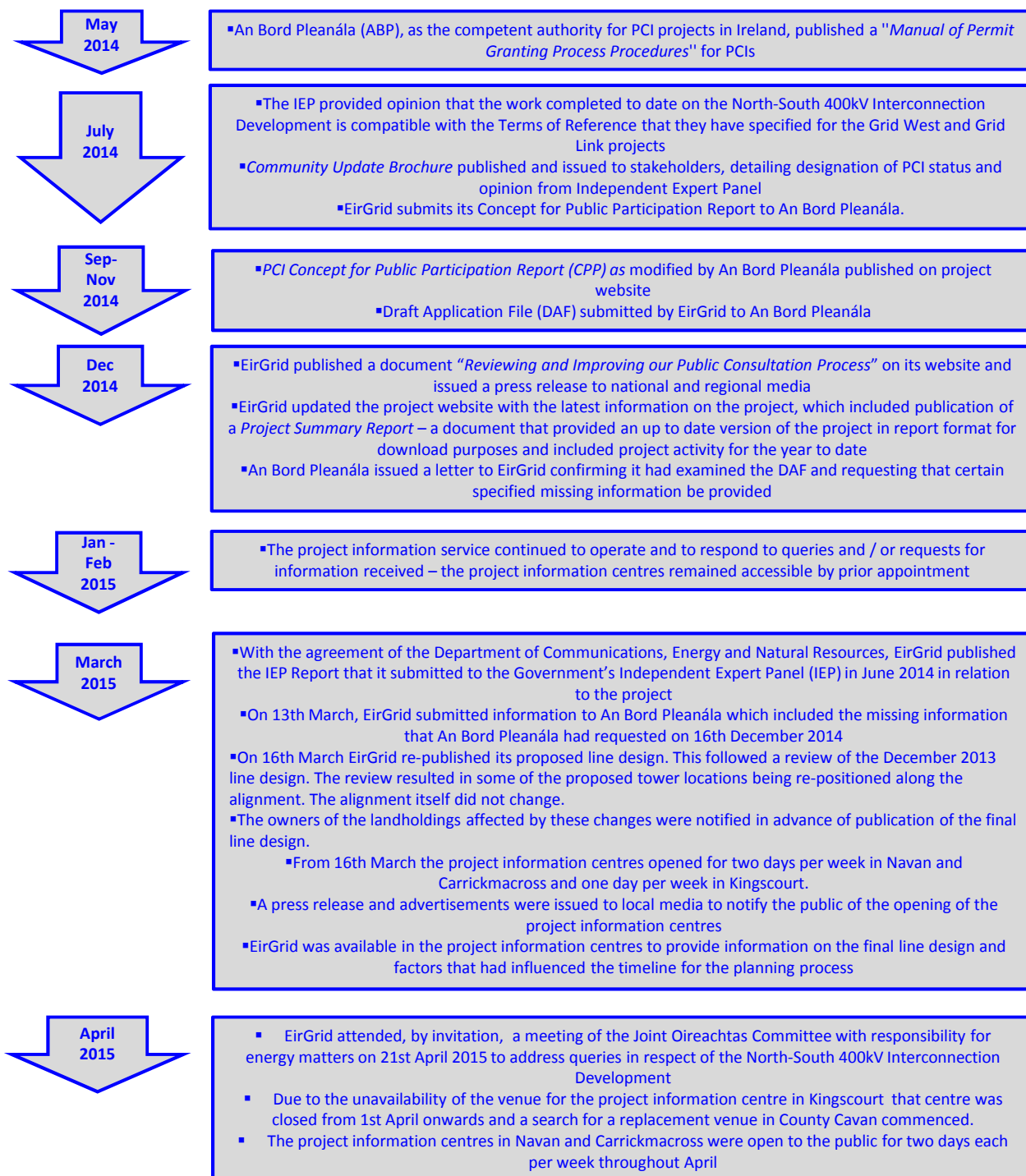
73 As referenced at the beginning of this chapter, a detailed timeline for the various consultation activities and events that occurred in respect of the project since 2007 has been prepared and is presented in **Figure 3.7**.

Figure 3.7: Consultation Milestones and Activities and Events 2007 Onwards (on the following page)









May
2015

- On 1st May, EirGrid published a PCI Public Information Leaflet on its project website and its publication was advertised in two national newspapers. The leaflet explained the project history, the PCI process and the timeline for the planning application. The leaflet was made available at each of the project information centres or on request via the project information service
- As part of its commitment to respond to the concerns of the agriculture, equine and tourism sectors in respect of its major projects EirGrid has published three reports. These are available at www.eirgrid.com/aboutus/publications/gridinitiatives

May/June
2015
Onwards

- EirGrid will open a new project information centre in Cootehill, County Cavan
- EirGrid will publish notice of the application in national and regional newspapers and place site notices
- EirGrid will publish a Community Update Brochure – June 2105 and send a copy to stakeholders along with a copy of the previously published PCI Public Information Leaflet
- Landowners will also be sent the above brochures along with map(s) showing the proposed development on their lands the final line design to be submitted to An Bord Pleanála in the planning application. Landowners will also be issued a copy of the PCI Public Information Leaflet
- The *Community Update Brochure – June 2015* will be published on the project website along with an updated Frequently Asked Questions document
 - EirGrid will submit its planning application with an EIS and NIS to An Bord Pleanála in accordance with the schedule provided by An Bord Pleanála
 - Following submission of the application EirGrid will issue a letter to landowners to notify them that the application has been submitted and will enclose a printed copy of the non-technical summary of the EIS and a digital copy of the complete application and EIS on compact disc
- The ten-week Statutory Public Consultation period will commence one week following the submission of the planning application.
- The application and EIS will be published on a dedicated website which will 'go-live' on commencement of the public consultation period
- The project information centres will open for the duration of the Statutory Public Consultation phase and details of opening hours will be advertised in advance
 - The project website will continue to be accessible and will provide a link to the dedicated planning website for the application

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN DURING THE PERIOD 2007 TO 2010

4.1 INTRODUCTION

1 Various pre-application consultation and public engagement phases were undertaken to inform the application made to An Bord Pleanála (the Board) in December 2009. These were described in detail in Chapter 3 of Volume 1 of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prepared for that previous proposal, the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development. The following sections briefly describe the process of public consultation which was undertaken for that previous application.

2 The phases of consultation during this period can generally be described as follows:

- Phase 1 - Route Corridor Options¹ (October 2007 – May 2008);
- Phase 2 – Preferred Route Corridors and Indicative Line Route (March 2009 – July 2009); and
- Phase 3 and 4 – (August 2009 – lodgement of planning application in December 2009).

3 This is shown graphically in **Figure 2.2** of **Chapter 2** of this report.

4.2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

4 The purpose of the first phase of consultation was to introduce the public to the proposed project, the proposed route corridor options and the basis for same (with reference to constraints). It sought to provide the public with information on the project, to identify concerns of the public and stakeholders, and to allow stakeholders to provide feedback on the three identified 1km wide corridor options for consideration by the project team, as well as on the principle of overhead lines (OHL) versus underground cables (UGC) for consideration by the project team. This is captured in the 2009 indicative roadmap.

5 The second phase of consultation focused on the announcement of the preferred route corridors and indicative line routes to the public. It also advised that EirGrid would be contacting landowners along the indicative line routes.

6 The third phase of consultation announced the preferred route corridors and indicative line route to the public and invited public participation so that the opinion of the public could be considered and taken into account, where appropriate, prior to the preparation and submission of the planning application.

4.3 PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND LANDOWNER ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGIES ADOPTED

7 During the course of the preparation and subsequent submission of the previous application to the Board for planning approval, EirGrid consulted with members of the public and landowners in a number of ways as summarised in **Table 4.1**. The consultation processes undertaken aimed to facilitate a wide-ranging and accessible means for the public to engage with the EirGrid project team and for EirGrid to obtain the views and submissions of the public for review and consideration by the project team.

Table 4.1: Summary of the Public Consultation and Landowner Engagement Methods Adopted by EirGrid during the Course of the Previous Application (2007 – 2010)

Method	Consultation
Lo-Call Phone Line	The Lo-Call Phone Line for the project was set up in September 2007 and aimed to provide an accessible means of communication for members of the public to request information on the project or raise their queries. The phone line number was included on all consultation literature and widely publicised through press releases to the media.
Email Service	Two project specific email addresses were established for members of the public to submit their queries or request information on the project (meathcavanpower@eirgrid.com and cavantyroneinterconnector@eirgrid.com). These email addresses were included on all consultation literature and widely publicised through press releases to the media.
Postal Address	EirGrid provided a postal mailing address to which members of the public could direct their written correspondence and / or submissions on the project. This address was included on all consultation literature (including brochures) and widely publicised through press releases to the media.
Brochures and Leaflets	Numerous brochures and leaflets were produced and disseminated by EirGrid to stakeholders over the course of the consultation process.
Open Day Events	Five public consultation events were held which aimed to provide a forum for members of the public and landowners to meet directly with the EirGrid project Team, and to request and/or obtain further information and to issue feedback.
Meetings	Round table meetings were held between members of the public and the EirGrid project team.

Method	Consultation
Project Information Centres	<p>During the early stages of consultation, EirGrid met with stakeholders in public venues or at their homes. In recognising the need for a designated base for such meetings within the study area, EirGrid opened two staffed information centres, the Navan Information Centre and the Carrickmacross Information Centre, both of which opened in July 2008.</p> <p>All project information materials, including reports and mapping, were available at each of these offices and staff were available on specified days to meet with members of the public, record their feedback and manage their queries. This service was provided as a means of facilitating an accessible form of consultation for members of the public while ensuring their privacy. This facilitated open and frank discussion between the public and the EirGrid project team to ensure substantial feedback from the public as work progressed towards a preferred 1km wide corridor.</p>
Website	EirGrid used its website (www.eirgrid.com) as a medium for the provision of access by stakeholders to all relevant information (including booklets and leaflets, project reports and brochures).
Publications	Numerous publications (including project reports) were produced by EirGrid to provide stakeholders with responses to queries.

4.4 LEVEL OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PHASE 1: STRATEGIC CONSTRAINTS SCOPING (OCT 2007 – MAY 2008)

4.4.1 Level of Participation

8 The EirGrid project team engaged with the public and public concerned through the phone line, letters, feedback forms, emails, open days, and meetings. The level and breakdown of submissions received is detailed in **Table 4.2**.

Table 4.2: Level of Public Participation on the Strategic Constraints Scoping Phase*

Method of Stakeholder Feedback	Number of Submissions
Telephone Line	1,200
Feedback Forms	4,410
E-mails	939
Written Submissions	1,009
Individual Petition Signatories	2,596
Open Days**	800+
Small Group Meetings	220 people invited
Total	11,174+

* Excludes engagement with landowners by landowner agents which is addressed separately in **Chapter 7** of this Report.

** First series: 11th, 16th and 17th October – over 500 stakeholders in attendance and Second series: 27th and 28th November 2007 – over 300 stakeholders in attendance.

9 This level of participation should be seen in the context of the combined 2006 population for Monaghan, Cavan and Meath of 282,650.⁸

4.4.2 Nature of Feedback

10 From the engagement with the public during this period the EirGrid project team was able to build up a picture of the recurrent issues for stakeholders in respect of this project.

11 **Table 4.3** categorises the issues raised by stakeholders during this period and provides an overview of key locations and areas of interest and concern.

⁸ Based on the combined 2006 population for Monaghan, Cavan and Meath (source: CSO).

Table 4.3: Issues Raised during the Route Corridor Options Phase

Issues	Summary
Schools and Crèches	The main concern was proximity of the proposal to such facilities.
Ecology and Nature	<p>The main concern was for the wildlife and areas of natural beauty within the route corridors. Recognised areas of protection, including wildlife sanctuaries, were identified. Although many species were identified as species of concern - those highlighted were bats and Whooper Swans. Specific lakes utilised by Whooper Swan were also identified as places that could be impacted by the proposed development.</p> <p>Other concerns included the impact of the proposal on the visual amenity of the area, including woodlands, the drumlin landscape and bog lands. Local angling clubs also raised the impact of the proposal on the amenity of rivers.</p>
Heritage and Listed Buildings	<p>Many people raised concerns about the proximity of the proposal to heritage and listed buildings including parochial houses, castles, abbeys, graveyards, and historic hills. Further concern was raised in respect of thatched cottages.</p> <p>General concerns were raised from stakeholders in the project area about historic sites including special sites of archaeological interest, such as ring forts and heritage woodlands.</p>
Culture and Sport	<p>Cultural and sports organisations, such as GAA clubs and golf clubs, raised concerns regarding the impact of the proposed development on their organised recreational activities including future expansion plans. Members of the Gaeltacht community groups also actively opposed the proposal on the grounds of disruption to the natural and cultural heritage in the area.</p> <p>A very significant number of contacts were received from people voicing their concern over the possibility of the power lines being built near healing centres in the area.</p> <p>Members of the public also drew attention to cultural activities in their localities such as harvest festivals and street fairs.</p>
Tourism and Development	<p>Property developers highlighted their concerns in respect of the negative visual impact of the proposal on their land and specifically on current and future development proposals.</p> <p>Tourist facilities also highlighted the negative visual impact of the proposed power lines and potential to reduce the number of tourists</p>

Issues	Summary
	visiting the area.
Livestock and Racehorses	<p>Concerns relating to potential impacts on racecourses and cattle, the welfare of poultry and other animals (such as greyhounds) were also mentioned.</p> <p>Some parts of the route were identified as being close to popular areas for the breeding of racehorses. Breeders were very concerned about the health of their animals citing potential miscarriages as a huge loss of income.</p> <p>Cattle and dairy farmers also voiced concerns with regard to the health of their herds. Specific concerns regarding potential to affect beef research were also raised with reference to health implications for the study herd.</p>
Mining and Airfields	<p>A small number of stakeholders raised the issue of mining operations in the area and the potential impact blasting could have on the power lines.</p> <p>Airfields and flying clubs also raised concerns about the proposal interrupting flight paths.</p>

4.4.3 Responses to Issues Raised during Public Participation

- 12 Written submissions (by letter and e-mail) were responded to with an answer that addressed queries and concerns brought up. Relevant information materials including the 'Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)' and 'EirGrid Update' brochures, the 'Information on EMF' booklet, and general project information leaflets were included in letter responses, where necessary. Most queries were responded to promptly, but as the consultation process progressed, a number of in-depth, intricate queries requiring detailed and studied responses were required.
- 13 Furthermore, through the phone line (i.e. the EirGrid reception and customer relations lines) and open days, EirGrid and the EirGrid project team engaged with a wide public audience and sought to provide responses to all queries raised – directly or in subsequent follow up contact.
- 14 Discovering the key issues from the phone line, letters, feedback forms, emails, open days, and meetings enabled the EirGrid project team to produce appropriate public information leaflets to deal with particular themes. A selection of relevant publications is provided in **Table 4.4**.

Table 4.4: Publications influenced by Feedback from the Strategic Constraints Scoping Phase

Publication Name	Date Issued	Purpose
EMF Booklet	November 2007	<p>In response to public participation and queries raised in respect of potential health impacts, EirGrid produced a booklet addressing the topics of EMF and health. The booklet identified technical details of EMF and in particular the various field strengths that occur on different OHLs and UGCs. It identified and discussed the findings of recent studies on EMF and concluded with EirGrid's commitment to safeguard public health.</p> <p>These booklets were distributed to members of the public at meetings and open day events and also were made available on EirGrid's website.</p>
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	January 2008	<p>In response to public participation and queries raised EirGrid produced an FAQ document which aimed to respond to common queries raised by members of the public and to clarify some aspects of the project which had raised concerns with the public.</p> <p>The FAQ document was posted to members of the public in February 2008 and also made available on EirGrid's website.</p>
PB Power Preliminary Briefing Note	February 2008	<p>EirGrid commissioned a <i>Preliminary Briefing Note Overhead and Underground Energy Transmission Options</i> prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff. This summarised in general terms the technical and cost issues associated with each option. It preceded a comprehensive project specific and route specific comparative analysis of the options that was also carried out by Parsons Brinckerhoff and which was published in February 2009.</p> <p>The briefing note was available on the EirGrid website and posted on request to stakeholders.</p>

4.4.4 How Feedback Influenced Project Development

- 15 In order to facilitate transparent progression towards a preferred project solution a number of reports and studies were commissioned by EirGrid during this phase. The reports are identified in **Section 4.5.3**. The reports *inter alia* were commissioned and their scope informed as a result of feedback from stakeholders for example the publication of the EMF brochure arising from stakeholder concerns.
- 16 Feedback from stakeholders also informed the project communications strategy for the project. In this regard, EirGrid responded to stakeholder feedback to expand its consultation activities in the project study area. As a result of the positive reception to the first round of Open Days and interest in more information on the project, a second round of events was planned and took place. These took the same format as the first series of Open Days with information materials available and the project team on hand to answer people's questions. Another important development was the opening of the Project Information Offices in Navan and Carrickmacross in August 2008, which gave local people the opportunity to discuss plans for the proposed development with members of the EirGrid project team (refer to **Section 4.5**).



Figure 4.1: Carrickmacross Workhouse, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan, Location of the Project's Local Information Centre for Monaghan and Open Day Events Held in Monaghan

4.5 MAY 2008 – DECEMBER 2009 (INCLUDING PHASES 2, 3 AND 4)

- 17 These phases occurred after the announcement of the preferred route corridor and indicative line route to the public in April 2009. However, prior to this (between May 2008 and March 2009) the EirGrid project team continued to engage with the public through the phone line, letters, feedback forms, emails and meetings. EirGrid also released a number of technical reports in order to provide stakeholders with project information as it evolved.

- 18 Furthermore, as noted above, in order to facilitate further engagement with the public and strategic stakeholders during this period, EirGrid opened two Project Information Offices in the project area – one in Carrickmacross, County Monaghan and one in Navan, County Meath.
- 19 In April 2009 EirGrid published a community update brochure entitled *EirGrid Progresses 400 kV Power Line Projects to Next Phase*. This document announced the preferred route corridors (Route corridor 3B for the Meath-Cavan Project and Route Corridor A for the Cavan-Tyrone Project) and an indicative line route. EirGrid provided details on how the preferred route was identified, including the technical criteria that were used, and how the consultation process informed EirGrid's conclusions. Through use of the Indicative Project Roadmap (refer to **Section 2.2.2** of this Report), EirGrid clarified for stakeholders where the project was set to go next and it invited stakeholders to engage in the consultation process. EirGrid also commenced consultation with landowners at this time on the indicative line route (refer to **Chapter 7** for further details).
- 20 In July 2009, EirGrid published a further *Community Update Brochure* entitled *EirGrid is moving Towards the Final Preparation of the Planning Application*. It invited public participation so that the opinion of the public could be considered and taken into account, where appropriate, prior to the preparation and submission of the planning application.

4.5.1 Level of Participation

- 21 During the period between May 2008 and April 2009 the EirGrid project team continued to engage with the public through the phone line, letters, feedback forms, emails and meetings. Throughout the Spring of 2009, stakeholders also sent in a large volume of correspondence that included six series of standard questions, plus detailed questions on a range of other issues. EirGrid continued to engage with the public after the publication of the preferred route corridors and indicative line routes (i.e. April 2009) when focused landowner engagement commenced (refer to **Chapter 7**). Such engagement continued up to submission of the application for approval in December 2009.

4.5.2 Nature of Feedback

- 22 From the engagement with the public during this period a wide range of technical and environmental issues were raised. The key issues continued to relate to undergrounding, property devaluation and health, however, other more intricate queries requiring detailed and studied responses included those relating to heritage, bloodstock, and angling.

- 23 The publication of an Indicative Line Route in April 2009 also provided the public and landowners with additional detail in relation to the nature and location of the proposed development which resulted in *inter alia* specific queries on environmental aspects of the proposed development.

4.5.3 Responses to Issues Raised during Public Participation

- 24 Every effort was made to address and respond to queries raised by stakeholders through various consultation methods, including brochures, meetings, press releases, further investigation with technical specialists, research, and reporting, and open days, for instance.
- 25 Of particular note, throughout this period the EirGrid project team released a number of technical reports in order to provide stakeholders with information on the project as it evolved. The reports *inter alia* were commissioned in response to requests for further study by stakeholders. The aim of each of these reports was to show stakeholders how their considerations were taken on board and to provide them with feedback on any queries raised. In addition, EirGrid also provided reports that helped to explain the consultation process further and where this project fits in to the overall grid development strategy. These reports and other project information materials were made available to stakeholders in the Project Information Offices, on the EirGrid website and posted on request.
- 26 EirGrid, while providing feedback in writing if requested, also encouraged stakeholders to avail of a face-to-face meeting with the project team. EirGrid reiterated to stakeholders that the project team was available to meet with them and answer their queries at their convenience.

4.5.4 How Feedback Influenced Project Development

- 27 Feedback of relevance to the line route and environmental aspects of the proposal was reviewed and considered by the project team in the preparation of the final line design and EIS. In this regard, the primary means of responding to any relevant / new issues raised during this period of consultation (and those relevant from previous consultation activities) was through the content of the planning application for approval and EIS which was submitted to An Bord Pleanála in December 2009.
- 28 A summary review of key issues raised during consultation activities between 2007 and 2009 in respect of the project, and where EirGrid responded to issues arising, including the 2009 EIS, is set out in **Table 4.5**. This table was included as Table 3.5 in **Volume 1** of the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development Environmental Impact Statement (2009).

Table 4.5: Review of Issues raised between 2007 and 2009 and where they were responded to in Project Related Documents

ISSUE	CONCERN RAISED	EIS CHAPTER OR RELEVANT EIRGRID DOCUMENT
TECHNICAL		
Undergrounding	OHL versus UGCs	Referenced in EirGrid documentation including Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB Power) <i>Cavan-Tyrone and Meath-Cavan 400kV Transmission Circuits Comparison of high-voltage transmission options: Alternating current overhead and underground, and direct current underground</i> , (Feb. 2009) and Tokyo Electric Power Company of Japan (TEPCO) Technical Study on using EHV UGC as alternatives to OHL- (Oct 2009).
Railroad Corridors, Motorways	Should be developed in conjunction with and on state owned land, such as railway corridors and motorways, in order to group infrastructure.	Volume 1, Chapter 5 of the 2009 EIS.
		Referenced in EirGrid documentation including: <i>Locating 400kV cables in or Adjacent to Rail Beds Report</i> (Railroad Report), July 2009.
Route location	Concerns that corridors should have looked farther west and towards the Irish Sea. Felt a more direct route could be found.	Volume 1, Chapter 5; Volume 2, Part A, Chapter 3, Part B, Chapter 3 of the 2009 EIS.
		Referenced in various EirGrid documentation (refer to Volume 1, Chapter 5 for all references) of the 2009 EIS.
Route decision	Concerns that route was pre-decided and that the preferred route corridors were already known.	Volume 1, Chapters 5 of the 2009 EIS.
		Referenced in EirGrid documentation (refer to Volume 1, Chapter 4 of the 2009 EIS for all references).
PERSONAL		
Health/EMF	Issues with health risks from EMFs that are emitted from power lines.	Volume 1, Chapter 3; Volume 2, Part A, Chapter 6, Part B, Chapter 6 of the 2009 EIS.
		Referenced in EirGrid documentation: Information on Electric and Magnetic Fields Booklet; Dear Householder leaflet; FAQs January 2008.
Electromagnetic Interference	Concerns that power lines would interfere with television and mobile phone reception. Issues with pacemaker interference.	Volume 2, Part A, Section 2.6.3, Part B, Section 2.6.3 of the 2009 EIS.
Property Devaluation	Concerns that property prices would fall as a result of proximity to power lines.	Referenced in EirGrid documentation: Questions and Answers.
Property Development	Concerns that future development of land will be inhibited by power lines.	Referenced in EirGrid documentation: FAQ Brochure, Questions and Answers.

ISSUE	CONCERN RAISED	EIS CHAPTER OR RELEVANT EIRGRID DOCUMENT
Livestock, racehorses, and farming	Health concerns for livestock, including racehorses; concerns about sterilisation of land.	Referenced in EirGrid documentation: EMF Booklet, FAQ Brochure, Community Update Brochure July 2009, Questions and Answers.
Consultation Process	Concerns if consultation process was inclusive.	Volume 1, Chapter 3 of the 2009 EIS.
		Referenced in EirGrid documentation: Questions and Answers, July 2009, Community Update Brochure March 2009, FAQs, January 2008, Proposed Route Corridor Options Brochures (October 2007).
ENVIRONMENT		
Endangered Species/SACs	Whooper Swans, Smooth Newts, Bats, Atlantic Salmon, Brent Geese, Marsh Fritillary.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapter 7, Part B, Chapter 7 of the 2009 EIS.
		Referenced in EirGrid documentation: Questions and Answers, July 2009; Community Update Brochure, March 2009; FAQs, January 2008.
Visual Impact	Concerns that natural landscape would be impacted by power lines, issues that smaller, "more modern" designs could be used or line could go underground.	Volume 1, Chapter 4; Volume 2, Part A, Chapter 14, Part B, Chapter 14 of the 2009 EIS.
		Referenced in EirGrid documentation including: Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development: Tower Outline Evaluation and Selection Report (Oct 2009).
Drumlins, bogs, loughs, and woodlands	Issues regarding the protection of areas of natural heritage, including SACs and SPAs.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapters 7, 8, 9, 12, and 14; Part B, Chapters 7, 8, 9, 12, and 14 of the 2009 EIS.
		Referenced in EirGrid documentation: Proposed Route Corridor Options Brochures (October 2007); FAQs January 2008; Community Update Brochure March 2009.
Noise pollution	Concerns that excessive noise would come from power lines.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapter 11, Part B, Chapter 11 of the 2009 EIS.
		Referenced in EirGrid documentation: Questions and Answers July 2009, FAQs January 2009.
Water, rivers	Issues regarding water crossing, effects on breeding animals in lakes and rivers.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapters 7 and 9, Part B, Chapters 7 and 9 of the 2009 EIS.
		Referenced in EirGrid documentation: Proposed Route corridor Options Brochures (October 2007), FAQs January 2008, Community Update Brochure March 2009.
COMMUNITY		
Tourism	Concerns regarding potential negative impact to tourism in the area.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapters 5 and 14, Part B, Chapters 5 and 14 of the 2009 EIS.
		Referenced in EirGrid documentation including: <i>Kingscourt to Woodland 400 kV Power Line Response to Fáilte Ireland</i> (Nov 2008).
Proximity to dwellings	Issues regarding proximity to buildings, including schools, crèches, and homes.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapters 5, Part B, Chapter 5 of the 2009 EIS.
		Referenced in EirGrid documentation: FAQs January 2008; Questions and Answers, July 2009; <i>Community Update Brochure</i> March 2009; <i>Community Update</i> July 2009.
Heritage and Listed Buildings	Issues regarding visual impact on protected buildings.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapter 14, Part B, Chapter 14 of the 2009 EIS.
		Referenced in EirGrid documentation:

ISSUE	CONCERN RAISED	EIS CHAPTER OR RELEVANT EIRGRID DOCUMENT
		Proposed Route Corridor Options Brochures (October 2007), FAQs January 2008; <i>Community Update Brochure</i> March 2009.
Cultural and Sport	Concerns over negative impact to GAA clubs, golf courses, and healing centres in terms of health and proximity.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapter 5, Part B, Chapter 5 of the 2009 EIS.
Gaeltacht Communities	Concerns over negative impact to Gaeltacht communities, in terms of health, heritage, and proximity.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapter 14 of the 2009 EIS.
Mining and Airfields	Issues regarding low-flying airplanes and power lines, concern for mining disturbances to the power lines.	Volume 2, Part A, Chapters 5 and 8 of the 2009 EIS.

4.6 STATUTORY CONSULTATION PERIOD DECEMBER 2009 – JULY 2010

- 29 The application for planning approval for the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development (An Bord Pleanála Reference VA0006) was lodged on 18th December 2009. The details of the application were on public display during the period January – March 2010 (for a 10 week period) at the offices of An Bord Pleanála (the Board), the offices of the relevant County Councils (Meath, Cavan and Monaghan), at the project information offices at Navan and Carrickmacross, and on a dedicated web page.
- 30 Stakeholders, the general public and other interested parties had until the 12th March 2010 to make submissions / observations on:
- The implications of the proposed development on the proper planning and sustainable development of the area; and
 - The likely effects on the environment of the proposed development if carried out.
- 31 In addition, as part of the statutory consultation process, a number of prescribed authorities made observations on the content of the application for approval (including the (EIS) to the Board.
- 32 In May 2010, the Board commenced an oral hearing in respect of the proposed development. Both prescribed authorities and interested parties (to include new parties to the application) had the opportunity to make an oral submission to the oral hearing.

33 In June 2010, the EirGrid application was withdrawn. Therefore, the application for planning approval was not determined by the Board.

4.6.1 Level of Participation

34 940 written submissions or observations by members of the public and by prescribed authorities were received by the Board in respect of the application for planning approval for the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development. A copy of each of these submissions was sent to EirGrid by the Board. During the oral hearing prescribed authorities and interested parties (to include new parties to the application) also had the opportunity to make an oral submission to the hearing. In total, 155 oral submissions were made during the course of the oral hearing.

35 A summary of the level of participation during the statutory consultation stage is provided in **Table 4.6**.

Table 4.6: Level of Public Participation during the Statutory Consultation

Method of Stakeholder Feedback	Number of Submissions
Written Submissions	940
Oral Submissions	155
Total	1,095

4.6.2 Nature of Feedback - Written Submissions

36 EirGrid carried out a comprehensive review of the 940 written submissions or observations to identify the issues raised and to appropriately categorise each of those issues under the key specialist topic areas, as shown in **Table 4.7**. These topics related to various aspects of the proposed development and the contents of the application documentation, including the topics assessed within the EIS. Grouping issues together under the specialist topics ensured that matters raised in public participation and from the prescribed authorities were reviewed and appropriately addressed by the relevant EirGrid project team member.

37 Each written submission was assigned an identification reference number and a matrix of all the written submissions and the category of topics raised in each was created. Details of the output of this process, accompanied by explanatory notes on the topics and the types of issues raised, are included within this Report as **Appendix A**. These details were provided in Appendix A of the Final Re-evaluation Report, published in April 2013 (refer to **Chapter 5** of this report).

Table 4.7: Issues Raised in Public Participation and by Prescribed Authorities in Submissions Made in respect of the Previous Application for Planning Approval

	Topic Headings	Types of Issues Raised
1	Air, Noise and Vibration	Potential impacts arising from noise associated with the proposed pylons, transmission line and substation.
2	Application Documentation	Various procedural aspects of the application documentation, including, costs of purchasing the documents, queries relating to mapping, photomontages etc.
3	Consideration of Alternatives	Issues relating to undergrounding as an alternative to OHL, route alternatives (including disused railbed and the M3), substation site alternatives, other technology options and tower design options.
4	Construction	Construction techniques and safety considerations.
5	Consultation and Public Participation	Issues included observations relating to consultation with the public, stakeholders, landowners and prescribed authorities.
6	Cultural Heritage	Potential impacts relating to archaeology, architectural heritage, demesnes etc.
7	Flora, Fauna and Fisheries	Potential impacts relating to wildlife, flora, fauna (including Whooper Swans), trees, fisheries, etc.
8	Health	Potential impacts relating to health generally and EMF in particular.
9	Landscape and Visual Impact	Potential impacts relating to the visual impact of the proposed pylons, transmission line and substations and observations in respect of particular landscape types (e.g. local bogs, forestry etc.).
10	Legal	Observations relating to access rights for construction, maintenance and survey work, compensation and owner's rights. Also included observations relating to Strategic Infrastructure and EIA and Appropriate Assessment legislation (including <i>inter alia</i> , consideration of alternatives, transboundary and micro-siting ⁹).
11	Material Assets	Potential impacts relating to the impact of the proposed development on farming practices, the community, tourism and livelihoods.
12	Project Need	Issues including demand and policy provisions relating to the proposed development.
13	Operational	Operational issues.
14	Planning Context	Observations relating to national, regional and local

⁹ Micro-siting refers to the seeking of permission within the statutory consent for flexibility to the movement of tower positions within specified limits post-planning during the construction phase. It should be noted that EirGrid will not be seeking permission in its application to the Board to move tower positions post-planning such flexibility in this the new application for planning approval.

	Topic Headings	Types of Issues Raised
		development plan policy.
15	Property	Issues relating to Chapters 1 (General Introduction) and 2 (The Strategic Need for the Project) of Volume 1 of the EIS and the Planning Context Report.
16	Traffic	Potential impacts relating to the impact of the proposed development on the road network, access points, etc.
17	Soils, Water and Geology	Potential impacts relating to the impact of the proposed development on geology, soils, rivers and lakes.

4.6.2.1 Response to Key Issues Raised in Written Submissions of the Public and Prescribed Authorities

38 As with the feedback obtained from the public and public concerned and other stakeholders prior to the submission of the first application for planning approval, categorisation of submissions ensured that the appropriate member of the EirGrid project team reviewed the issues raised by the public and prescribed authorities participation. On completion of this process, the appropriate EirGrid project team member prepared a statement of evidence to be delivered at the oral hearing.

39 The statements prepared took cognisance of the issues raised within the consultation process and, where a submission raised a specific issue or query which had previously not been addressed within the contents of the application, the issue was specifically responded to within the statement of evidence.

40 Accordingly, having considered the submissions made to the Board, the primary means by which EirGrid replied to the issues raised by the public concerned and prescribed authorities was by providing responses in the statements of evidence presented by the EirGrid project team at the oral hearing.

4.6.3 Nature of Feedback and Response to Key Issues Raised - Oral Submissions

41 The issues raised during the oral hearing were also categorised by EirGrid in accordance with the topics outlined in Table 2.3 of Appendix A of the Final Re-evaluation Report (included within this report as Appendix A). The appropriate member of the EirGrid project team reviewed the issues to determine whether the matter should be considered further with reference to the questioning of evidence. Due to the withdrawal of the application for approval during the course of the oral hearing, there was no opportunity to respond to relevant or new issues raised during oral submissions. This feedback was however considered and reviewed by EirGrid when the project re-commenced during the re-evaluation process (described in Chapter 5 of this report).

4.6.4 Nature of Feedback and Response to Key Issues Raised – Final Project Solution and Final Design (2013 Onwards)

- 42 The feedback from the public, public concerned and prescribed authorities and landowners in particular provided information of relevance to the detailed design elements of the proposed development. These were considered as part of the re-evaluation process (as described in **Chapter 5**) however, because they relate to the more advanced stages of the detailed design they were specifically addressed and reported on as part of the preferred project solution stage (refer to **Chapter 6**).

5 RE-EVALUATION PROCESS (AUGUST 2010 – APRIL 2013)

5.1 RATIONAL FOR THE RE-EVALUATION PROCESS

1 Following the withdrawal of the previous application, EirGrid commenced the process of preparing a new application for planning approval in respect of the proposed transmission infrastructure development. Given the considerable volume of work undertaken during the preparation of the previous application and its relevance to the new application, EirGrid considered it appropriate to undertake a comprehensive review of that information together with additional information which became available, such as:

- Information contained within the written submissions submitted to The Board in respect of the previous application which had all been reviewed and considered by the EirGrid project team;
- Information of relevance to the project obtained during oral submissions made by the public and prescribed authorities during the previous oral hearing in 2010;
- Review of Government and EirGrid documents issued following the withdrawal of the previous application, as previously outlined in detail in **Chapter 4**; and
- Updated constraints information.

2 Consequently, it was deemed appropriate to initiate a process of review of the previous work rather than recommencing the entire project development and consultation process anew.

5.2 OTHER MATTERS OF RELEVANCE THAT OCCURRED DURING THE PERIOD

3 A number of relevant studies and reports were undertaken and published following the withdrawal of the previous application in June 2010, which were either directly or indirectly relevant to the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development in general, or to particular aspects thereof. As part of its re-evaluation process, EirGrid considered all information contained in these studies and reports. These reports are described briefly in the following sections.

5.2.1 Findings of the International Expert Commission (IEC)

4 In July 2011, the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources commissioned the International Expert Commission (IEC) to review and report on the case for, and cost of, undergrounding all or part of the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development. The

IEC's Report published in January 2012¹⁰ recommends against fully undergrounding the interconnector using an Alternating Current (AC) cable solution.

5 The key conclusions of the IEC Review included:

- If the option is to underground the connection along the whole, or main part of the route with today's technology, the best solution is a Voltage Source Converter (VSC) High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) solution combined with XLPE¹¹ cables;
- A conclusion that an overhead line still offers significantly lower investment costs than any underground alternative and could also be made more attractive by investing slightly more in new tower designs than the classical steel lattice towers now proposed; and
- The relative cost of an underground cable (UGC) DC solution is approximately €330 million more than that for an equivalent AC overhead line (OHL) solution for the project.

5.2.2 Report of the Joint Oireachtas Committee

6 Following the publication of the IEC Review, the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources facilitated a period of consultation, under the auspices of the Joint Oireachtas Committee (JOC) on Communications, Natural Resources and Agriculture. Plenary hearings were convened by the JOC in Leinster House in February 2012 and included representatives from the IEC, ESB Networks, EirGrid, Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR) and groups including North-East Pylon Pressure Campaign (NEPPC), the County Monaghan Anti-Pylon Committee (CMAPC) and Ratheniska Anti-Substation Group.

7 In June 2012, the JOC published a report on its consideration of the IEC Review and subsequent consultation process. The key conclusions of the report included:

- Broad agreement on the need for an interconnector, in order to ensure security of supply of electricity on the island of Ireland, and to allow wind power to be better integrated into the network;

¹⁰ International Expert Commission (IEC) (January 2012). *Meath- Tyrone Report Review by the International Expert Commission August – November 2011. (A review of the case for, and cost of undergrounding all or part of the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development)*. Available: <http://www.dcenr.gov.ie>.

¹¹ Cross-Linked Polyethylene

- The dispute is whether the power line should be laid underground or established overhead;
- Both proponents and opponents of the OHL acknowledge that the underground option is technically feasible. However, EirGrid expressed concerns as to the technical feasibility of switching to HVDC for this particular project;
- Proponents of the OHL argue that the underground option is too costly and would diminish the benefits of the project. Opponents of the OHL argue that delaying the line is costly and that if EirGrid would agree to undergrounding the project, it could be put into place sooner;
- OHL is unacceptable to many of the people who live along the proposed route. Undergrounding of the route does appear to be acceptable to the same individuals; and
- Early and continued engagement with stakeholders should involve maximising transparency and making as much information as possible available to the general public.

5.2.3 The Grid25 Implementation Programme 2011-2016 and Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 8 In May 2012, EirGrid published the *Grid25 Implementation Programme (Grid25 IP) 2011-2016*, a practical strategic overview of how the early stages of Grid25 are intended to be implemented. The publication of this document, and an associated *Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*, followed a national-scale public consultation process in respect of a draft Grid25 IP and SEA.
- 9 The Grid25 IP identifies the best current understanding of those parts of the transmission system that are envisaged as likely to be developed over the next five years to give effect to current Government policy. The Grid25 IP identifies the issues, objectives and associated processes that will need to be adopted when making decisions about how and where developments will occur. In this way, it establishes the parameters and criteria for the processes by which subsequent decisions will be made. The North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development is specifically referred to in the Grid25 IP.
- 10 Section 4.15 of the Environmental Report prepared as part of the SEA process sets out an Overall Development Potential Rating, which provides a high level assessment of the main constraints associated with the development of the transmission system. In addition to these constraints, Opportunity Areas were included to identify locations which represented potential opportunities to develop transmission infrastructure with a reduced environmental impact.

- 11 The area of the north-east of Ireland – where it is proposed to construct the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development is identified in the Overall Development Potential Rating map (Figure 4.23 of the Environmental Report) as generally of low, or localised constraint.

5.2.4 Government Policy Statement on Strategic Importance of Transmission and other Energy Infrastructure

- 12 On 17th July 2012, the Government approved and published its policy statement entitled *Government Policy Statement on the Strategic Importance of Transmission and Other Energy Infrastructure*¹².

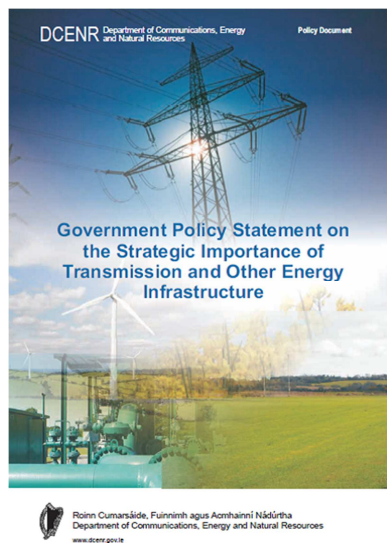


Figure 5.1: Government Policy Statement, Published in July 2012, on the Strategic Importance of Transmission and Other Energy Infrastructure

- 13 Within this policy statement, the Government endorses, supports and promotes the strategic programmes of the energy infrastructure providers, particularly EirGrid's Grid25 investment programme across the regions. The policy document reaffirms that:

“While the Government does not seek to direct infrastructure developers to particular sites or routes or technologies... it is Government policy and in the national interest, not least in the current economic circumstances, that these investment programmes are delivered in the most cost efficient and timely way possible, on the basis of the best available knowledge and informed engagement on the impacts and the costs of different engineering solutions” (page 6)

¹² Available at www.dcenr.gov.ie

- 14 The policy document recognises that delivery of long lasting benefits to communities is “an important way of achieving public acceptability for infrastructure”. In respect of Grid25 and other energy development, the document states that these “will have positive impacts for all local communities in underpinning regional and economic development and jobs” but recognises that “while everyone ultimately benefits from national energy infrastructure, potential negative impacts resulting from concerns about visual amenity health and safety need to be mitigated through the consultation process and where appropriate, community gain measures”.
- 15 In this latter regard, EirGrid notes that the Board has the power, pursuant to section 182B(6) of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended) to attach a condition to an approval granted in respect of electricity transmission development, requiring the construction or financing the construction (in whole or in part) of a facility, or provision or financing the provision (in whole or in part) of a service, in the area in which the proposed development would be situated that, in the opinion of the Board would constitute a substantial gain to the community.

5.3 RE-EVALUATION PROCESS

- 16 EirGrid’s re-evaluation process comprised of two stages: a preliminary re-evaluation in 2010 – 2011 and a final re-evaluation in 2013. This two-stage approach provided an opportunity for public engagement to be undertaken on the preliminary findings and on the recommendations of the re-evaluation process. Feedback from the public, public concerned and landowners on foot of the preliminary re-evaluation phase was considered by the project team prior to finalising the re-evaluation recommendations in 2013. The *Final Re-evaluation Report* and findings were in turn subject to a further round of public participation.
- 17 Details of the dates and the purpose of the public engagement are presented in **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1: Two Stages of Focused Public Consultation Undertaken by EirGrid as Part of the Comprehensive Re-evaluation of the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development

Stage	Dates	Purpose
Preliminary re-evaluation	9 th May 2011 – 1 st July 2011 ¹³	Pre-application consultation which sought feedback on the findings of <i>The Preliminary Re-evaluation Report</i> published in May 2011.
Final re-evaluation	16 th April 2013 – 27 th May 2013	Further period of consultation and public participation which sought feedback on the findings of <i>The Final Re-evaluation Report</i> published in April 2013.

¹³ Consultation was due to close on 17th June 2011, but as a result of stakeholder feedback and a desire to ensure that all interested stakeholders had the opportunity to engage, EirGrid extended the consultation period by a further two weeks.

- 18 The re-evaluation consultation and engagement process focused on the public and all interested stakeholders while a separate, and parallel, process focussed on potentially affected landowners (refer to **Chapter 7** of this report).

5.4 APPROACH TO CONSULTATION AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- 19 A programme of consultation and public participation was devised for the project and aimed to facilitate input into the project by the public and public concerned. The programme aimed to re-introduce the public, public concerned and landowners to the project and to inform them of the process from the preliminary re-evaluation through to the final re-evaluation, preferred project solution (refer to **Chapter 6**) and, ultimately, through to the submission of the new application for development consent. Refer to **Section 2.2.2** for details of the indicative project roadmap for this period.

- 20 With the publication of the re-evaluation reports, EirGrid informed the public and landowners about the project. In order to reach as many people as possible, all consultation and communication methodologies were designed to be fully accessible and aimed to ensure that:

- Public, public concerned and landowners were aware that EirGrid was re-evaluating the project and were intending to submit a new planning application for the project to An Bord Pleanála (the Board) in due course.
- The public, the public concerned and landowners would be provided with information on the project and details of the ways in which they could access this information via the project website, information service (phone line, email, information centres, public information events) and via the publications and mapping produced for the project.
- EirGrid would receive information and feedback as part of the public participation in the consultation process, which could be reviewed and considered as part of the development of the indicative project solution, through to the preferred project solution and prior to the finalisation of the line design.

- 21 A number of key audience groups were identified and invited to participate in the consultations, including:

- Elected Representatives and national representative stakeholders;
- Statutory and Prescribed authorities;
- Interest Groups;
- Local, Business and Community Groups;

- Observers of the previous planning application;
- An Garda Síochána;
- Landowners;
- Residents within the vicinity of the line route;
- Communities within the catchment of the line; and
- General Public.

22 By identifying and including stakeholders in a comprehensive, appropriate, and timely manner during the development of the project, EirGrid sought to ensure that:

- Information was and is provided to the public and landowners in an accessible and appropriate format;
- A better understanding of the issues relevant to decision-makers and stakeholders could be facilitated; and
- Impact on local communities was minimised, early public and community participation sought to help EirGrid understand matters of local importance, interest or concern, and identify constraints not already identified.

5.5 PRELIMINARY RE-EVALUATION (2010 – 2011)

23 The preliminary re-evaluation of the project was commenced by EirGrid in 2010 with the objective to ascertain whether the scope, content, conclusions, and proposal of the previous application for approval of the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development remain relevant for the purposes of informing and shaping a new application for approval. EirGrid published the findings of its review in a *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* in 2011 which was presented to the public for consultation from 9th May 2011 to 1st July 2011. The report also brought forward an 'Indicative Line Route' within an emerging 'Preferred Route Corridor'. As part of the public consultation, the public were afforded an opportunity to make submissions on the proposed indicative line.

24 The *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* identified the three route corridor options which had previously been drawn up in the detailed route and technology selection process undertaken between 2005 and 2008 in advance of the 2009 application. These three route corridor options were re-evaluated and re-assessed as was the technology proposed. The findings of this re-evaluation and re-assessment exercise were published in the report along with the identification

of an emerging preferred route corridor route and indicative line route. The key findings are summarised in **Table 5.2**.

- 25 A round of consultation was undertaken on foot of this re-evaluation process and the public were consulted on their opinions in relation to this re-evaluation of the route options and its findings (see terms of reference outlined in **Section 5.5.1**).
- 26 The overarching purpose of this consultation and public participation stage was to re-introduce the public, landowners and interested stakeholders to the project and to provide them with an opportunity to engage with the project team and submit their feedback on the principal aspects of the project which could be considered by the EirGrid project team prior to the *Final Re-evaluation Report* stage.

Table 5.2: Key Findings of the Preliminary Re-evaluation Report Published in May 2011

Key Findings
<p>There is still a clear and immediate need for enhanced interconnection with Northern Ireland, which will provide significant benefits by means of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve competition in the all-island electricity market; • Improve security of electricity supply; and • Support the ongoing and future development of renewable power generation.
<p>There remains a need (in the medium to long term) to reinforce the transmission network in the North-East area of Ireland.</p>
<p>The best technological solution for this project is a 400 kV Alternating Current (AC) single-circuit overhead line (OHL), running from the existing Woodland Substation in Co. Meath to a new substation at Turleenan in Co. Tyrone.</p>
<p>Undergrounding of short sections of the 400 kV line is feasible. However, to date, no areas that may warrant undergrounding of the AC circuit have been identified, other than the approach to Woodland Substation.</p>
<p>The previously proposed intermediate substation (in the vicinity of Kingscourt, County Cavan) is not now expected to be required within the next decade and as a result it will not be included in the new application for planning approval for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development.</p>
<p>Each of the route corridors identified as potentially feasible options for consideration in the previous application for planning approval remain viable as a routing option for the proposed development.</p>
<p>Route 3B in the Meath Study Area (MSA) and Route Corridor A in the Cavan Monaghan Study Area (CMSA) (as identified in the project development of the previous application) remain the corridors that are considered to strike the best balance between technical, environmental, community and other evaluation criteria. The identified Indicative Line Route within these route corridors is broadly similar to that line proposed in the previous application; however, some modifications have been made, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of the previously proposed Moyhill Substation near Kingscourt and certain modifications to the Indicative Line Route associated with this; and • Local modification of the Indicative Line Route to avoid new houses.

5.5.1 Terms of Reference

27 The terms of reference for consultation and public participation on the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report's* conclusions were to facilitate comment on the content and findings of the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* including the need for the project, the technological solution proposed (a 400 kV OHL), the study area including route corridors previously identified (which remained viable as a routing option for the proposed development) and the fact that the previously planned intermediate substation (in the vicinity of Kingscourt) was no longer considered necessary. The terms of reference directed to stakeholders during consultation on the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* were:

- Has EirGrid considered all relevant criteria in determining that the optimum technical solution for this project is an OHL? If not, what additional information should EirGrid consider or what viable, cost-effective alternative would you suggest?
- Have all other environmental criteria been appropriately considered and is there anything else that they thought should be looked at?
- Are there any other key issues that EirGrid should consider before submitting a new planning application to An Bord Pleanála?

28 The period for making submissions was between 9th May 2011 and 1st July 2011.

5.5.2 Participation Methods

29 The consultation stage was publicised via EirGrid's website, press releases, press advertisements, and direct mail to identified and interested stakeholders.

30 The locations and opening hours of the information offices located at Navan and Carrickmacross were advertised. The advertising also directed people to the EirGrid website for information on the project. A Community Update leaflet was also produced in May 2011 which described the proposed development and the purpose of the consultation phase. It provided details of how submissions could be made via written submission, e-mail, or verbal submission at information centres, via the project lo-call phone line or organised one-to-one meetings if requested.

5.5.3 Communications Activities

31 **Table 5.3** provides a summary of the communications activities adopted for consultation during the preliminary re-evaluation stage. Additional detail is also discussed in respect of these activities in the following sections of this report.

Table 5.3: Summary of Communications Activities Undertaken by EirGrid during Public and Landowner Consultation on the Preliminary Re-evaluation Report

Method	Communications Activity
Press Releases	Press releases were issued by EirGrid to media to ensure that the public (and landowners) were aware of the opportunities to participate in the consultation process.
Advertising	Advertisements were placed in local media to heighten awareness of the consultation.
Lo-Call Phone Line	The Lo-Call project phone line (1890 25 26 90) was staffed by members of the Project Communications Team who recorded details of incoming feedback / requests received from the public and referred these in turn to the EirGrid project team ¹⁴ .
Project Information Centres	The project information centres at Navan and Carrickmacross (which had been used for the previous application) re-opened to the public in May 2011.
Proactive Engagement	Proactive engagement with stakeholders was undertaken to ensure that as many stakeholders as possible were aware of the public consultation and the various opportunities and methods to engage.
Meetings	Meetings were held during this period of consultation with Monaghan County Council.
Consultation / Information Brochure	A Community Update brochure was prepared and issued by EirGrid in May 2011 and contained details of the findings of the <i>Preliminary Re-evaluation Report</i> , its key findings and the terms of reference for the consultation.
Poster	A poster was prepared with the aim of promoting awareness of the preliminary re-evaluation consultation stage and was circulated in the study area.
Letters/Mail-out	Letters and the Consultation Brochure were issued in a mail-out to stakeholders.
Website	All project information was provided on one new website: http://www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/NorthSouth400kVInterconnectionDevelopment/

¹⁴ The Lo-Call project phone remains in place to this present day.

5.5.3.1 Media Activity and Advertising

- 32 Press releases were issued by EirGrid to local and national media to ensure that the public (and landowners) were aware of the opportunities to participate in the consultation process. Advertisements were also placed in local media by EirGrid to inform members of the public (and landowners) of details of the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report*, the current status of the project and how the public and public concerned could participate in the consultation.
- 33 EirGrid also prepared and produced a poster for the project information centres with the aim of promoting awareness of the details of the consultation process and how the public could engage with the project team.

5.5.3.2 Project Information Centres

- 34 As part of the commencement of the public consultation on the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report*, the project information centres in Navan and Carrickmacross (which had been used for the previous application) returned to regular opening hours on 10th May 2011 (until 25th August 2011 when they were open by appointment). Since the closing of the oral hearing on the previous application they have been open by appointment only.
- 35 Each project information centre was open for one day a week – Tuesdays (Navan) and Wednesdays (Carrickmacross) respectively. In addition, during the week 16th to 20th May 2011, both information centres opened full-time, Monday to Friday. Hours of opening were 1pm to 7pm.
- 36 Copies of the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* and the Community Update Brochure were available at the project information centres for public viewing and EirGrid staff were on hand to respond to any queries of stakeholders and to record any verbal submissions stakeholders wished to make as a formal submission on the consultation phase.

5.5.3.3 Website

- 37 The EirGrid project website was updated at the start of the resumed consultation activities. Previously, the project website was split into two separate web pages (Meath-Cavan and Cavan-Tyrone). However, as a result of stakeholder feedback on the accessibility of information and the website interface, both websites were merged and all project information provided and updated on the new website address:

[http://www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/NorthSouth400 kVInterconnectionDevelopment/](http://www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/NorthSouth400kVInterconnectionDevelopment/)

38 As part of the consultation on the re-evaluation of the project, the website was updated, as follows:

- **9th May 2011:** Project information updated, including posting of the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* and appendices and the *Community Update Brochure* and map; and
- **17th June 2011:** Public announcement of consultation extension.

39 As the project continued to progress, all information was posted on this website.

5.5.3.4 Community Update Brochure (May 2011)

40 EirGrid prepared and produced a *Community Update Brochure (May 2011)* for dissemination to the public and interested stakeholders as part of consultation on the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report*. The brochure provided a clear and concise description of the background and context of the proposal and the current status of the project. It outlined how the project and associated consultation would progress from the preliminary re-evaluation to the submission of an application. It identified the key milestones and consultation phases along the way.

41 Specifically, the brochure provided information to the public on the following:

- Terms of reference for this stage of consultation and public participation (as described in **Table 5.5.1** of this report);
- Background and context of the project;
- Information on the current stage of the project (the preliminary re-evaluation) and the roadmap towards submission of a planning application to the Board for approval;
- Findings of the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report*;
- Evolution of the project and changes made as a result of the preliminary re-evaluation process;
- Details of how the public could contact the EirGrid project team (email; phone line; postal address and details of the information centres); and
- A feedback form in which stakeholders could submit their views to the EirGrid project team.

- 42 It included a map of the indicative line route and preferred corridor being considered, including how it would link with that part of the overall interconnector located in Northern Ireland. This *Community Update Brochure* was included in the consultation mail-out and was available digitally on the project website. A copy of the brochure is provided in **Appendix B** of this report.

5.5.3.5 Stakeholder Mail Out

- 43 A list of the stakeholders / stakeholder groups issued with letters and the *Community Update Brochure* advising of the commencement of the consultation on the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* is provided in **Table 5.4**. Contact details of stakeholders who made either a written or oral submission at the oral hearing convened in relation to the previous application for planning approval were compiled and included in the stakeholder mailing list as part of the re-evaluation consultation process. All of these stakeholders were issued with a letter dated 9th May 2011 inviting their participation in the consultation. EirGrid also offered to meet with them to discuss the project.

Table 5.4: Stakeholder Group Types Contacted as Part of Consultation on the Preliminary Re-evaluation Report and Issued with a Letter and Community Update Brochure

Type	Detail
Chambers of Commerce	All in Meath, Cavan, and Monaghan
Community Information Centres (CICs)	All within 5km of the proposed route
Public Representatives	TDs, MEPs, and Councillors in Meath, Cavan, and Monaghan*
Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)	County Boards in Meath, Cavan, and Monaghan
Health Centres	All in Meath, Cavan, and Monaghan
Businesses	Businesses which expressed a previous interest
Libraries	All in Meath, Cavan, and Monaghan
Project Groups	All in Meath, Cavan, and Monaghan
Schools	Primary, Secondary, and Third Level within 5km of proposed route
Observers	All from oral hearing on previous application, except landowners (subject to a separate process)
Tidy Towns	All within 5km of the proposed route

* Note: Senators did not receive this letter, as the Seanad elections were on-going.

- 44 Extensive effort was made by the EirGrid project team to identify methods of distributing information in respect of the project and to ensure that as many stakeholders as possible were aware of the consultation and of the many opportunities to participate. Follow up calls were made to some organisations to ensure that information had been received or to offer further project materials.
- 45 For some of these stakeholder groups, only those representatives located within 5km of the proposed line route (i.e. within a 10km corridor), were contacted. This was to ensure that key centres of public information within the directly affected communities, such as schools and community information centres, were aware of the project and could assist in dissemination of the project information to their members. These are the communities who advised that they are potentially most affected by the project and therefore a particular effort was made to engage with them.

5.5.3.6 Project Specific Groups

- 46 Such groups included the North East Pylon Pressure (NEPP) group. Three representatives of the EirGrid project team met with three representatives of NEPP on 17th May 2011 in the Knightsbrook Hotel in Trim, Co. Meath to discuss the group's views of the project. A second meeting between EirGrid and NEPP took place on 12th July 2011.

5.5.4 Feedback Received

5.5.4.1 Level of Participation

- 47 A total of 18 No. written submissions were received from stakeholders during the consultation and public participation period held in respect of the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report*. These submissions primarily comprised of private individuals (a number of whom were also landowners) within the area of the Indicative Line Route, as identified in the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report*. Submissions were also received from prescribed authorities and other organisations. A summary of the written submissions received is provided in **Table 5.5** which replicates Table 1 of Appendix B of the *Final Re-evaluation Report* (entitled *Review of Issues Raised in Written Submissions to An Bord Pleanála and Presentations at the Oral Hearing in respect of the Previous Application for Approval (An Bord Pleanála Reference VA0006)*). All submissions were allocated a specific reference number (e.g. FS-1, FS-2 etc.). The statutory bodies and other organisations that made submissions were specifically acknowledged. However, in the context of legal obligations in respect of data protection, information which might reveal the identity of private individuals / landowners was not detailed.

Table 5.5: Written Submissions Received during the Public Consultation Process in respect of the Preliminary Re-evaluation Report

Submission No.	Submission Body	Statutory Body / Organisation Detail
FS-1	Private Individual	
FS-2	Landowner	
FS-3	Landowner	
FS-4	Landowner	
FS-5	Statutory Body	NRA
FS-6	Landowner	
FS-7	Landowner	
FS-8	Statutory Body	Monaghan County Council
FS-9	Organisation	NEPP
FS-10	Organisation	Sinn Fein
FS-11	Organisation	Monaghan Anti-Pylon Committee
FS-12	Organisation	AMP/SAFE
FS-13	Private Individual	
FS-14	Private Individual	
FS-15	Private Individual	
FS-16	Organisation	Doohamlet District Community Development Association
FS-17	Private Individual	
FS-18	Private Individual	

- 48 As a result of the effort of the media activity undertaken by EirGrid during this stage to generate awareness and discussion on the project, there was extensive coverage of the project within local and national media.

5.5.5 Nature of Feedback

- 49 The nature of the feedback received was documented by EirGrid within Appendix B of the *Final Re-evaluation Report*. The key issues raised within the 18 No. written submissions included the following:

- Over-grounding versus undergrounding transmission infrastructure;
- Evidence of superior technical advances and alternatives;
- Identification of the study area;
- Potential health related impacts of overhead pylons and EMF;
- Potential impact on landscape and visual impact;
- Potential impact on property values;
- Potential impact on tourism and sporting activities and businesses reliant on income from such activities;
- Potential impact on ecology;
- Methodology of the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* and for corridor evaluation used during the re-evaluation process;
- Modifications made to the route alignment;
- M3 motorway near Grange, Co. Meath;
- Line design;
- Choice of transmission technology;
- EirGrid's authority to transmit electricity over private property;
- Proximity of the project to homes, schools and places of work;
- The relationship between the proposed interconnection development, and the Government's strategic transmission infrastructure plans and wind development proposals and how they connect to the grid;

- Issues relating to Aarhus Convention; and
- Calls for a halt to further wind development pending an investigation by a variety of technical specialists.

5.5.6 Responses to Issues Raised

50 In Appendix B of the *Final Re-evaluation Report*, the EirGrid project team sought to provide a comprehensive response to specific and detailed issues raised in the 18 No. written submissions on the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report*. These are set out in Section 2 of Appendix B of the *Final Re-evaluation Report*, and referenced by submission number. Where issues were referred to in general terms in the submissions, Section 4 of the report sets out the manner in which EirGrid and the project team has or proposed to respond to them. This included issues of relevance for the detailed design and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) stages in the project development process e.g. the likely ecology, landscape and agronomy impacts associated with the development. Appendix B of the *Final Re-evaluation Report* is included as **Appendix C** to this report.

51 EirGrid also responded to the feedback submitted by NEPP and the Monaghan Anti-Pylon Committee (referenced as submissions FS-9 and FS-11 in Appendix B of the *Final Re-evaluation Report*) and in doing so also provided a written response to each of the key points raised in their submissions.

5.5.7 How Feedback Influenced Project Development

52 Further to feedback, the initial consultation period, lasting six weeks and due to expire on 17th June 2011, was extended by a further two weeks to 1st July 2011. EirGrid considered that this additional period of time would permit on-going engagement to continue, where necessary, and to allow meetings to occur in the instances where engagement had yet to take place.

53 EirGrid had regard to the submissions and feedback on the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report*. While taking into account the feedback EirGrid and its consultants considered that the identified Route Corridor Options A and 3B remained the least constrained (and thereby preferred options) from a technical, environmental and community perspective. Furthermore, no issues were identified that would significantly alter the general alignment of the indicative line route within Route Corridor Options A and 3B as identified in the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report*. However, a number of local modifications to the indicative alignment, arising from inter alia the process of landowner engagement in respect of the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* were identified.

- 54 In addition, a number of issues were raised in submissions on the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* which it was considered should be better clarified in the *Final Re-evaluation Report* by means of additional or revised explanatory text. These are set out in the individual responses included within Appendix B of the *Final Re-evaluation Report* (included as **Appendix C** to this report).
- 55 Other feedback related to the amount of information being presented to stakeholders. Arising from specific feedback from County Monaghan Anti-Pylon Committee (CMAPC), EirGrid agreed to separate the *Final Re-evaluation Report* and the dissemination and consultation on the indicative line route. This was achieved through the publication of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* and the separate consultation phase associated with it.

5.6 FINAL RE-EVALUATION (2011 – 2013)

- 56 All submissions, both verbal and written, received from the public and landowners and other key stakeholders on foot of the preliminary re-evaluation phase were considered by the project team between 2011 and 2013. Also taking place during this period was a review initiated by Government. This commenced in July 2011 with the appointment of an International Expert Commission (IEC) to consider the case for and cost of undergrounding all or part of the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV line, including a review of all of the other reports carried out in respect of the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development project. The findings of the IEC were published in January 2012¹⁵ and were then the subject of a consultation managed by the Joint Oireachtas Committee. The Government review culminated in July 2012 with the publication of a policy statement on the importance of energy infrastructure.
- 57 Technical and environmental aspects of the project were also further considered by EirGrid in this period, and the 'Indicative Line Route' and 'Preferred Route Corridor' were refined. This final re-evaluation process again included a review of the previous application in order to ascertain whether the identified need, scope, alternatives considered (including technology alternatives), content and conclusions of that previous application remained applicable for the purposes of informing and shaping the new application for approval. It also comprised a review of all issues and submissions concerning the previous application, and information received and issues arising since June 2010.

¹⁵ International Expert Commission (IEC) (January 2012). *Meath- Tyrone Report Review by the International Expert Commission August – November 2011. (A review of the case for, and cost of undergrounding all or part of the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development)*. Available: <http://www.dcenr.gov.ie>.

- 58 A *Final Re-evaluation Report* was published by EirGrid in April 2013 which identified and described the revised and refined project proposals. The report outlined the nature and extent of the feedback which had been received and how it had been addressed in the revised proposals, as appropriate. EirGrid held a six-week period of public participation (between 16 April 2013 and 27 May 2013) following the publication of the *Final Re-evaluation Report* in April 2013. The advertising and media campaign and other methods of publicising the consultation period is set out in **Section 5.6.3** of this report.
- 59 During this period, EirGrid sought participation by the public and landowners on the report's content and key findings. EirGrid welcomed any feedback received and advised the public that responses received would be considered in the preparation of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* which would be published for consultation in due course.
- 60 In this regard, EirGrid deemed it appropriate to allow for an additional period of structured engagement on the content and findings of the *Final Re-evaluation Report* before proceeding to the next stage of the project. This additional period of engagement was in response to representations from the County Monaghan Anti-Pylon Group for additional engagement on the findings of the re-evaluation process. This resulted in EirGrid's decision to stagger the publication and engagement on the *Final Re-evaluation Report* and the consultation on the *Preferred Project Solution Report*.
- 61 This also enabled EirGrid to gather feedback on the *Final Re-evaluation Report* and this feedback was reviewed and considered by the project team prior to the publication of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* in July 2013.

5.6.1 Terms of Reference

- 62 The terms of reference for public engagement on the *Final Re-evaluation Report* were:
- To comment on the content and findings of the *Final Re-evaluation Report*;
 - Had EirGrid considered all relevant issues as part of the re-evaluation process? If not what other issues do you think EirGrid should consider?; and
 - To provide feedback on how best to adopt community gain within transmission project developments and the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development.
- 63 Members of the public and stakeholders were invited to make submissions on the information presented in the *Final Re-evaluation Report* during the period of public engagement from 16th April 2013 to 27th May 2013. EirGrid welcomed any feedback received and advised the public

that responses received would be considered in the preparation of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* which would be published for consultation in due course.

- 64 During the final re-evaluation stage, EirGrid also consulted with the public and landowners in respect of community gain issues following the publication of the Government's *Policy Statement on the Strategic Importance of Transmission and Other Energy Infrastructure* in July 2012. In particular, EirGrid sought feedback on how best to adopt community gain within transmission project development and the Grid25 programme in general. EirGrid sought the public's views on community gain in accordance with the terms of reference provided in **Table 5.6**.

Table 5.6: Terms of Reference for Community Gain

Terms of Reference for Community Gain
<p>Who</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Who should receive community gain?</i> • <i>Who should be included in the "community" on transmission projects?</i>
<p>What</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What initiatives should be eligible for community gain support, for example sports, arts, education?</i> • <i>What do you define as "gain" for your community e.g. mitigation measures such as compensatory undergrounding* or a fund for local community groups?</i>
<p>When</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>At what point in a project should community gain be considered?</i> • <i>At what point in a project should community gain be available?</i>
<p>How</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How should community gain be managed?</i> • <i>How should community gain be distributed, what criteria should be used and who should define that criterion?</i>

5.6.2 Participation Methods

65 The public engagement was publicised via EirGrid's website, press releases, press advertisements, and direct mail to identified and interested stakeholders.

66 Public open days in Monaghan, Cavan and Meath with venues and dates were advertised, as were the locations and opening hours of the Project Information Offices in Navan and Carrickmacross as well as a new office in Kingscourt. The advertising also directed people to the EirGrid website for information on the project. An information leaflet was also produced which described the proposed development and the purpose of the public engagement. It provided details of the public open days to be held and how submissions could be made via written submission, e-mail, or verbal submission at project information centres, public open days, via the project lo-call phone line or organised one-to-one meetings if requested.

5.6.3 Communications Activities

67 Every effort was made to facilitate as wide an engagement as possible. The public and all interested parties were invited to participate via the project information centres, phone line service, or to attend one of nine project information events, or to attend a pre-arranged project briefing.

68 **Table 5.7** provides a summary of the communication activities adopted for public engagement on the *Final Re-evaluation Report*. These activities are detailed in the following sections.

Table 5.7: Summary of Communications Activities Undertaken by EirGrid during the Course of Public and Landowner Engagement on the Findings of the Final Re-evaluation Report

Method	Communications Activity
Press Releases	Press releases were issued by EirGrid to media to ensure that the public and landowners were aware of the publication of the Final Re-evaluation Report and of the opportunities to engage in the final re-evaluation engagement stage.
Advertising	Seven advertisements were placed in local press and 80 advertisements were aired on local radio stations to heighten awareness of the final re-evaluation engagement. EirGrid placed additional advertisements in May 2013 to inform the public and landowners of additional open days to be held in local venues in County Monaghan arising from a request from the County Monaghan Anti Pylon Committee for additional events.

Method	Communications Activity
Lo-Call Phone Line	Continuation of the project Lo-Call phone line service.
Project Information Centres	EirGrid re-opened the two project information centres in Navan and Carrickmacross from 16 th April 2013 and also opened an additional information centre at Kingscourt, Co. Cavan.
Open Day Events	A total of nine open day events were undertaken during this stage. Details of these events are included in Table 5.9 .
Proactive engagement	Proactive engagement with stakeholders was undertaken to ensure that as many stakeholders as possible were aware of the engagement and of the various opportunities and methods to engage with the project team.
Meetings	Meetings were held during this period of engagement with a number of stakeholder groups including: Monaghan County Council on 4 th June 2013; Monaghan Anti-Pylon Group in Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan on 12 th April 2013; and North East Pylon Pressure Group (NEPP) in Trim, Co. Meath on 3 rd April 2013.
Community Update Brochure	A <i>Community Update Brochure</i> was prepared and issued by EirGrid which included details of the findings of the <i>Final Re-evaluation Report</i> , its key findings and the terms of reference for the engagement.
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	EirGrid produced an updated FAQ on the project website, in April 2013, which addressed the following issues: The North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development Current situation Timeline and design EirGrid and Grid25 Why is the project needed? Public consultation Economic downturn Renewable energy Moyhill Substation Overhead v underground

Method	Communications Activity
	Substation, lines and tower types Technical information EMF Local impact Landowner Access and Compensation
Letters/Mail-out	Letters and the Community Update Brochure were issued in a mail-out to stakeholders

5.6.3.1 Media Activity and Advertising

- 69 EirGrid engaged with local press and radio with the aim of promoting awareness of the Final re-evaluation engagement stage. Press releases were issued to the Irish Farmers Journal, Irish Times, Irish Independent, Irish Examiner, Meath Chronicle, Anglo Celt, Northern Standard, RTE, LMFM and Northern Sound. In addition, advertisements were placed by EirGrid on local radio stations, LMFM and Northern Sound.
- 70 As a result of the effort of the media activity undertaken by EirGrid during this stage to generate awareness and discussion on the project, there was extensive coverage of the project within local and national media.
- 71 EirGrid prepared and produced a poster for this stage of the engagement with the aim of promoting awareness of the details of the consultation process and how the public could engage with the project team. The poster advertisement was distributed to public places in the vicinity of the line route, including Kingscourt Mart, Navan Credit Union, and local newsagents.



Figure 5.2: EirGrid Poster Displayed in a Shop Window in the Study Area during Public Participation and Consultation on the Final Re-evaluation Report

5.6.3.2 Project Information Centres

72 The information centres at Navan and Carrickmacross continued to open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays respectively from 16th April 2013. Hours of opening were 12 noon to 7pm to facilitate people both during and outside of normal working hours (the hours of opening were extended). Meetings outside of these hours were facilitated via prior appointment.

5.6.3.3 Open Day Events

73 A series of public open day events were held during which details of the project were made available and the concerns of the public could be discussed. Members of the EirGrid project team were available at each open day to engage with members of the public and answer any queries or questions that might arise.

74 A series of six open day events were undertaken. In addition, following a request from Cavan – Monaghan Anti-Pylon Committee, EirGrid held three additional open day events in local venues in County Monaghan. A list of the open day events held by EirGrid during the engagement on the final re-evaluation is provided in **Table 5.8**.

Table 5.8: Details of Open Day Venues, Dates and Times undertaken by EirGrid for the Final Re-evaluation Stage

Venue	Date and Time
Town Hall, Cavan Town	Tuesday, 23 rd April 2013, 1.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.
Town Hall, Cavan Town	Wednesday, 24 th April 2013, 1.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.
The Workhouse, Shercock Road, Carrickmacross	Thursday, 25 th April 2013, 1.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.
The Workhouse, Shercock Road, Carrickmacross	Friday, 26 th April 2013, 1.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.
Navan Education Centre, Athlumney, Navan	Monday, 29 th April 2013, 1.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.
Navan Education Centre, Athlumney, Navan	Wednesday, 1 st May 2013, 1.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.
Additional Open Days	
Cremartin GAA Centre, Castleblayney	Tuesday, 21 st May 2013, 4.30 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.
Aughnamullen GAA Social Centre, Carrickmacross	Wednesday, 22 nd May 2013, 4.30 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.
Corduff-Raferagh Community Centre, Carrickmacross	Thursday, 23 rd May 2013, 4.30 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.



Figure 5.3: Navan Education Centre where Open Days were held Following the Publication of the *Final Re-evaluation Report* and *Preferred Project Solution Report*.

75 EirGrid produced information displays (A0 size panels) for use at these events and these displays were used by the EirGrid project team to aid explanation and discussion of the project topics with the public. These are summarised in **Table 5.9**. To assist with specific queries relating to the location of the Indicative Line Route, and specifically its proximity to the stakeholder's particular area of interest (which included residential dwellings, landholdings and community facilities such as schools), EirGrid produced detailed mapping of the Indicative Line Route. This mapping was provided on both the information displays (scale 1:10,000) and in books of maps (1:10,000 and 1:25,000). Additional supporting materials were also available.

Table 5.9: Details of the Displays Provided During the Open Days on the Final Re-evaluation Report

Title	Purpose of Display
Map of the current transmission system	This display illustrated the national grid network of high voltage power lines and cables that transport electricity around the country.
What is the project and why is it needed?	Provided information on the key drivers for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development.
CMSA and MSA Study Areas	Provided maps of the CMSA and MSA Study Areas.
Constraints within the CMSA and MSA	Provided information on the constraints collectively identified by the EirGrid project team and via information gathered during

Title	Purpose of Display
	consultation.
Constraints within the CMSA & MSA with Route Corridor Options	As above but with route corridor options overlaid to determine implications for constraints with each option.
CMSA and MSA Indicative Line Routes	Illustrated the Indicative Line Routes in both the CMSA and MSA study areas.
Project Development Roadmap	Provided information on the current stage of the project and its path towards the development of a preferred project solution and new planning application for the project.
Technology	Provided information on the comparative assessment of technology options assessed by EirGrid for the project.
Community Gain	Provided information on the principle of community gain and the terms of reference for consultation with the public on seeking feedback on community gain.

76 To assist with specific queries relating to the location of the Indicative Line Route, and specifically its proximity to the stakeholder's particular area of interest (which included residential dwellings, landholdings and community facilities such as schools), EirGrid produced detailed mapping of the Indicative Line Route. This mapping was provided on both the information displays (scale 1:10,000) and in books of maps (1:10,000 and 1:25,000).

77 Technical specialists were also on hand to discuss the issues of concern with stakeholders. The technical specialist fields were:

- Technology options;
- Electric and magnetic fields (EMF);
- Planning;
- Environmental matters, including ecology and archaeology;
- Line design; and
- Landowner considerations.

- 78 An EMF technical specialist was on hand at the open days to address queries and concerns from the public in respect to EMF. In addition, Compliance Engineering Ireland Ltd. was appointed by EirGrid to demonstrate the measurement of EMF at some of the open days¹⁶ using a variety of known household items, including a hairdryer and electric fire. This interactive display aimed to deliver a practical and easy way of understanding the principles and strengths of electric and magnetic fields. This display was supported by copies of EirGrid's EMF brochure, '*EMF and You*' and copies of this public information guide were provided to participants of the events
- 79 As far as possible, the project team endeavoured to capture the views and feedback provided on foot of public participation during these events. These notes were openly taken in the presence of the stakeholder, and it was explained that the purpose was to capture their views/concerns as a record of their participation, all of which would be recorded, collated and reviewed by the project team.

5.6.3.4 Community Update Brochure, April 2013

- 80 EirGrid prepared and produced a *Community Update Brochure, April 2013* for dissemination to the public and interested stakeholders as part of the public engagement on the *Final Re-evaluation Report*. This brochure provided a clear and concise description of the background and context of the proposal, progress so far (including the Independent Expert Commission review) and the current status of the project. It identified the project drivers and the need for the development. It outlined an overview of the entire project progression from the preliminary re-evaluation to the submission of an application, and where the project sat at that time. It identified the key milestones and consultation phases along the way.
- 81 It included a map of the indicative line route and preferred corridor being considered, including how it would link with that part of the interconnector to be located in Northern Ireland.
- 82 The information brochure outlined the findings of the *Final Re-evaluation Report*. It invited feedback on any of the findings of the report. Details of 6 No. open days to be held including location, dates and times were provided. Contact details were given for written submissions, email, website, information centres at Navan, Carrickmacross and Kingscourt.
- 83 A copy of this brochure is provided at **Appendix D** of this report.

¹⁶ This interactive EMF Demonstration was provided by EirGrid at the three additional open days requested by CMAPC and at the open day events held for the consultation on the *Preferred Project Solution Report*.

5.6.3.5 Stakeholder Mail-Out

84 A letter inviting participation in this stage of engagement, along with a copy of the Community Update Brochure, was posted to all of the following groups of stakeholders:

- Public representatives;
- Prescribed authorities (prescribed for the purposes of the application);
- National representative groups;
- County representative groups;
- Local, business and community groups within 5km of the Indicative Line Route;
- Members of the public, including observers contacted as part of the preliminary re-evaluation consultation and any additional stakeholders who engaged as part of that stage; and
- Landowners along the line route (described in more detail in **Chapter 7** of this report).

85 Where contact details were available for organisations and groups, these groups were contacted by members of the project team and provided with information on the engagement.

5.6.4 Feedback Received

5.6.4.1 Level of Participation

86 Details of the submissions received as part of consultation on the *Final Re-evaluation Report* are detailed in **Table 5.10**.

Table 5.10: Public participation during the *Final Re-evaluation Report*

Method of Stakeholder Feedback	Number of Submissions
Project Briefing / Meeting	18
Information Centres & Telephone Line	22
Written submissions (including email)	58
Open Days (First Series*)	70
Open Evening Events (Monaghan) (Second Series*)	500
Total	668

* First series: 11th, 16th and 17th October – over 500 stakeholders in attendance and Second series: 27th and 28th November 2007 – over 300 stakeholders in attendance.

5.6.4.2 Recording and Dissemination Methods

87 All of the feedback received in response to consultation and engagement on the project was recorded. For each issue raised by stakeholders, a logical procedure was followed to ensure that the relevant EirGrid project team members were aware of the issue at the most appropriate stage and that it was addressed appropriately. The process can be generally described as follows:

1. Issue raised by stakeholder to member of project team via one of the communications channels provided (phone line, information centre, and open day).
2. A member of the project team replied with relevant factual information in response to the issue raised.
3. Where a stakeholder requested further information, the details of same were noted by the project team member, and were circulated to the appropriate member of the EirGrid project team for their attention/review and where appropriate, their response. Where a stakeholder requested specific information, for example the location of the line in proximity to their house, this information was communicated to the project team and a bespoke map was produced and subsequently issued. Details of the correspondence, including all attachments and enclosures (reports, brochures, mapping) provided were filed to maintain a record of the information issued and to track the level of feedback received and facilitate reporting for the project team to review.

4. The project team offered additional methods of engagement, such as a personal discussion on the issue (with the project team or relevant technical expert) and provided details of the methods by which the stakeholder could engage (i.e. information centre, open day events attended by the project team).
5. Details of all feedback received via the various methods (i.e., open day, information centre, email, letter), was recorded. Subsequently all of the feedback was collated in accordance with the themes of issues raised, e.g., line design, health and EMF, landscape and visual concerns. This collated feedback was circulated to the project team for their review and consideration and to ensure that at all times the project team was aware of the feedback and issues raised by the public.
6. The issues and feedback raised by public participation were reviewed by the project team in order to determine impact on the project.
7. As appropriate, the project team maintained contact with the stakeholder on the issue they raised in an effort to ensure that they were aware that their issue was considered and reviewed, and where appropriate, had been considered and reported within the project reports.
8. Any items that resulted in a change to the project or which raised significant or new project-related issues were disseminated to the relevant team members for their review and consideration.

5.6.5 Nature of Feedback

88 Chapter 2 of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* (published by EirGrid in July 2013) provided a high level summary of the main issues raised in public submissions on the *Final Re-evaluation Report*; it also included EirGrid's response to these issues. A more detailed summary of the issues raised was published in Appendix C of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* (entitled *The Final Re-evaluation Public Engagement Report*). Both Chapter 2 and Appendix C of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* are included as **Appendix E** and **Appendix F** to this report respectively. An overview of the issues is provided in **Table 5.11**.

89 It should be noted that submissions received from public authorities on the *Final Re-evaluation Report* were collated from written submissions and meetings and were summarised with an EirGrid response in Table 2.4 of the *Preferred Project Solution Report*.

Table 5.11: Nature of Feedback on the *Final Re-evaluation Report*

Category of Submission	Details
Submissions received from prescribed authorities on the <i>Final Re-evaluation Report</i>	Refer to Chapter 2, Table 2.4 of the <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i> for details (i.e. Appendix E of this Report)
Submissions received from other stakeholders on the <i>Final Re-evaluation Report</i>	<p>A number of submissions raised issues that were of relevance to, or in response to, the <i>Final Re-evaluation Report</i>. These related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project Need / Scope ○ Alternatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environmental and Cost Comparisons of UGC versus OHL; ▪ Routing suggestions for UGC; ▪ Reference to international examples and advances in technology; and ▪ Other options to meet the need of the project. ○ Study Area, Corridor Identification and Corridor Evaluation
Submissions relevant to the <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i> (i.e. the proposed line design)	<p>A number of submissions raised specific concerns or enquiries in respect of the alignment of the planned circuit, including potential localised modifications to, or siting of, the alignment as well as in relation to access during construction.</p> <p>Other relevant issues included structure design and locations, proximity to dwellings and other receptors, and operation of the line.</p>
Submissions relevant to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process	<p>As part of the re-evaluation consultation, issues of relevance to EIA were raised. Details of specific observations, constraints and considerations raised by stakeholders and of potential relevance for the EIA stage broadly fell under the following headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agronomy; • Community and Socio-Economic Impact; • Cumulative Impact; • Cultural Heritage & Archaeology; • Ecology; • Health; • Landscape and Visual Impact; and • Noise.
Submissions on community gain	<p>As set out in the terms of reference for public engagement on the <i>Final Re-evaluation Report</i>, EirGrid sought feedback on how best to adopt community gain within transmission project development and the Grid25 programme in general. A number of stakeholders provided feedback on this issue.</p>

Category of Submission	Details
Submissions on other issues	<p>A number of submissions also raised general issues relating to the project. These were grouped under the following headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public engagement; • Planning; • Compensation; and • Property.

5.6.6 Responses to Issues Raised

- 90 Written submissions received (via post, open day, email) were acknowledged in writing by EirGrid, thanking the stakeholder for taking the time to submit their feedback. Details of all oral submissions, received via the project information centres, open day events, during discussions with stakeholders / landowners were recorded in as much detail as possible. The details of the discussions were collated under themes for the project team to subsequently review.
- 91 The chosen response reflected the initial engagement contact method and the available contact details for the stakeholder in question. Using one method of engagement did not preclude the use of another; instead, all methods of engagement were used, but their use was determined based on the most appropriate response, the needs of the stakeholder, and the issue at hand.
- 92 Chapter 2 of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* entitled 'Public and Stakeholder Engagement' provides a summary of the engagement activities and feedback following the publication of the *Final Re-evaluation Report*. Further details are provided in the *Final Re-evaluation Public Consultation Report*, included as Appendix C to the *Final Re-evaluation Report*. This is included as **Appendix F** to this report.

5.6.7 How Feedback Influenced Project Development

- 93 The *Final Re-evaluation Report* concluded that, on the basis of the re-evaluation of updated environmental constraints and other information, a viable and environmentally acceptable indicative line route for a 400 kV OHL exists. It also concluded that there are no significant implications which would warrant the use of UGC along any part of the indicative line route.
- 94 The process by which landowner modification requests received were managed and dealt with is provided in **Chapter 7** of this report which also addresses landowner engagement. Similarly, any feedback from stakeholders (non-landowners) which had implications on the line design of the project was documented and considered by the project team.

- 95 Examples showing how issues and modification requests related to potential modifications to the line route are presented in Table 3.1, Table 3.2 and Table 3.3 of the *Preferred Project Solution Report*. These tables are included as **Appendix G** to this report.
- 96 More specific queries on environmental aspects were also raised. This feedback was also reviewed and considered by the project team in the preparation of the EIS.

6 PREFERRED PROJECT SOLUTION REPORT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

1 As part of this phase of consultation, three strands of engagement were undertaken, as follows:

- Consultation and public participation on the preferred project solution and environmental matters to be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS);
- Landowner engagement on the preferred line route, proposed tower locations and indicative access routes (described separately in **Chapter 7** of this Report); and
- Engagement with prescribed authorities (described separately in Chapter 3 (**Volume 3B** of the EIS which accompanies the planning application for approval).

2 This chapter sets out the approach undertaken in respect of public consultation and provides details of the communications activities carried out by EirGrid to ensure that the consultation was accessible, accountable and meaningful.

6.2 APPROACH TO CONSULTATION AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

3 Following review of all feedback received during the re-evaluation periods, EirGrid published a *Preferred Project Solution Report* in July 2013. It identified the detailed proposals for the project with preferred line route and proposed tower locations included. Details of indicative access routes for construction purposes were also identified.

4 Examples showing how issues and modification requests related to potential modifications to the line route as informed by previous phases of consultation (including those relating to the previous application for approval and the re-evaluation process) are presented in Table 3.1, Table 3.2 and Table 3.3 of the *Preferred Project Solution Report*. These tables are included as **Appendix G** to this report.

5 EirGrid held an eight-week period of formal public consultation (between Tuesday 16th July 2013 and Monday 9th September 2013). The advertising and media campaign and other methods of publicising the consultation period is set out in **Section 6.2.3** of this report.

6 During this stage, EirGrid also engaged with landowners and landowner representative groups as appropriate, on the detail of the preferred line route, proposed tower locations and indicative construction access routes. A process was put in place to assess and manage landowner modification requests received. Engagement with landowners is described separately in **Chapter 7** of this Report.

7 The publication of this report was an important step in the planning and delivery process for the project and EirGrid sought to:

- Consult with members of the public and other stakeholders on the scope of the EIS;
- Consult with members of the public and other stakeholders on the Preferred Project Solution;
- Provide members of the public, landowners, the public and other stakeholders with information on the project, line design and the progression towards a planning application; and
- Ensure that all relevant stakeholders had appropriate access to information and the project decision making process well in advance of the application being submitted to the Board.

6.2.1 Terms of Reference

8 The terms of reference during this stage of public engagement were:

- To comment on the content and findings of the *Preferred Project Solution Report*, in particular the following:
 - Line design methodology;
 - Construction and access routes methodology;
 - Provide feedback on environmental matters to be considered in the EIS; and
 - Provide any other feedback or comments or other issues relating to the project.

9 The period for making submissions was between 16th July 2013 to 9th September 2013.

6.2.2 Participation Methods

10 The consultation stage was publicised via EirGrid's website, press releases, press advertisements, and direct mail to identified and interested stakeholders. Also, EirGrid carried out a wide range of communications activities to facilitate as wide an engagement as possible.

11 Public open days with venues and dates were advertised, as were the locations and opening hours of the information offices located at Navan, Carrickmacross and Kingscourt. The advertising also directed people to the EirGrid website for information on the project. A *Community Update Brochure* was also produced which described the proposed development and the purpose of the consultation phase. It provided details of the public open days to be

held and how submissions could be made via written submission, e-mail, or verbal submission at project information centres, public open days, via the project Lo-Call phone line or organised one-to-one meetings, if requested.

12 To facilitate members of the public and other parties participating in this round of engagement, the following information was made available to all interested parties at the commencement of this round of engagement:

- The *Preferred Project Solution Report* and associated appendices was available for inspection at the project information centres and open days. The report was available on the project website and copies were provided to stakeholders upon request. In addition, copies of the report were provided to the county librarians in counties Meath, Cavan and Monaghan for display in their branches.
- An updated *Community Update Brochure* (July 2013) to reflect the current status of the project and details of how stakeholders could engage with EirGrid.
- 1:10,000 scale mapping showing the preferred line route and tower locations in the Cavan Monaghan Study Area (CMSA) and Meath Study Area (MSA) was made available on the project website. Both the 1:10,000 and 1:25,000 scale mapping showing the preferred line route and tower locations of the CMSA and MSA were available at the local project information centres in Navan, Carrickmacross and Kingscourt, at the project open days and upon request via the project information service. Bespoke maps were prepared and provided to stakeholders upon request.
- An updated version of the frequently asked questions document (FAQs) was produced and made available on the project website. Copies of this document were also available from the project information offices and at the open days. The FAQ document was published in July 2013.

6.2.3 Communications Activities

13 **Table 6.1** below provides a summary overview of the communications activities adopted for consultation during the preferred project solution phase.

Table 6.1: Summary of Communications Activities Undertaken by EirGrid during the Course of Public and Landowner Engagement on the Findings of the Preferred Project Solution Report

Method	Communications Activity
Press Releases	Press releases were issued by EirGrid to media to ensure that the public and landowners were aware of the publication of the <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i> and of the opportunities to engage in the consultation period.
Advertising	Eight advertisements were placed in local press to heighten awareness of the preferred project solution engagement phase. Radio advertising was also undertaken.
Lo-Call Phone Line	Continuation of the project Lo-Call phone line service from 9am to 5pm Monday - Friday.
Project Information centres	EirGrid re-opened the three project information centres in Navan, Carrickmacross and Kingscourt.
Open Day Events	A total of three open day events were undertaken during this stage (refer to Table 6.2).
Proactive engagement	Proactive engagement with stakeholders was undertaken to ensure that as many stakeholders as possible were aware of the engagement and of the various opportunities and methods to engage with the project team.
Meetings	Meetings were held during this period of engagement with a number of stakeholder groups.
Community Brochure Update	A <i>Community Update Brochure July 2013</i> was prepared and issued by EirGrid which included details of the findings of the <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i> and the terms of reference for the engagement.
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	EirGrid produced an updated FAQ on the project website, in July 2013. It was made available on the project website and in hard copy format at the open days, information centres and to those who phoned to request copies of information.
Letters/Mail-out	Letters and the <i>Community Update Brochure</i> were issued in a mail-out to stakeholders
Website	The project website was updated with information to reflect the publication of the <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i> .

Method	Communications Activity
Preferred Project Solution Report	In addition to being available on the website, at project information offices and at open day events, copies of the <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i> were also disseminated to the county librarians for public display and to any interested stakeholders on request (i.e. maps and reports).

6.2.3.1 Media Activity and Advertising

- 14 Extensive effort was made to ensure that as many people as possible were made aware of the project and that the public and public concerned had an opportunity to participate. This was achieved through a combination of news releases to national and local print, broadcast and electronic media, placing advertisements in local press and advertisements on two local radio stations, and on-line on the EirGrid website.
- 15 Advertisements were placed in local media by EirGrid to inform members of the public (and landowners) of details of the *Preferred Project Solution Report*, the current status of the project and how the public could participate in the public consultation.

6.2.3.2 Project Information Centres

- 16 As part of the public engagement on the *Final Re-evaluation Report*, having listened to feedback received from stakeholders at the previous stage for an information office for County Cavan, EirGrid responded and opened a third project information centre in Kingscourt, County Cavan. This centre was located within a room at the Dún a Ri House Hotel located on Station Road in Kingscourt, and opened for one day per week (Thursdays).



Figure 6.1: Location of the Project's Local Information Centre in Kingscourt, Co. Cavan¹⁷

- 17 The three project information centres at Navan, Carrickmacross and Kingscourt were open to the public during the consultation period on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays respectively throughout the eight week consultation period from 16th July until 5th September 2013 and, thereafter, were available to the public, stakeholders and landowners by scheduling a prior appointment with the project team. Hours of opening were 12 noon to 7pm to facilitate people both during and outside of normal working hours.

6.2.3.3 Open Days

- 18 EirGrid held three open days during the preferred project solution engagement period. The specific purpose of the open days held during the consultation on the *Preferred Project Solution Report* was to:

- Indicate to stakeholders the proposed locations of towers within the preferred line route;
- Build an understanding of the methodologies and approach for siting and constructing towers;
- Reinforce to stakeholders that the project is progressing towards a planning application;

¹⁷ Due to the unavailability of the venue in the Dun na Ri House Hotel, Kingscourt, that information centre closed on 1st April 2015 and a search for a replacement venue commenced. The new project information centre, located in the Cavan Enterprise & Technology Centre, Cootehill, Co. Cavan, opened in June 2015.

- Encourage stakeholders, including the public concerned, to participate in the process by providing feedback on the *Preferred Project Solution Report*;
- Encourage stakeholders to provide feedback on environmental topics to be covered in the EIS;
- Explain the history of the project; and
- Explain the need for the project.

19 Concerns were raised by stakeholders in County Cavan during the public open day on the *Final Re-evaluation Report* (23rd April and 24th April 2013) in relation to the location of the open day in Cavan, which had been held at the Town Hall in Cavan Town. Stakeholders considered that the event should have been held closer to the proposed line route. In response to this, EirGrid sourced an alternative venue in Kingscourt in which an open day event for the consultation on the *Preferred Project Solution Report* was held. This venue was located on the Main Street of Kingscourt in close proximity to shopping and community amenities with ample car parking available.



Figure 6.2: Location of the Kingscourt Open Day Consultation (Murtagh's Function Room) on the Preferred Project Solution Report

Table 6.2: Open Day Venues for the Preferred Project Solution Phase

Venue	Date and Time
Education Centre, Athlumney, Navan	Tuesday 30 th July 2013, 1.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.
The Workhouse, Shercock Road, Carrickmacross	Wednesday 31 st July 2013, 1.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.
Murtagh's Function Room, Main Street, Kingscourt	Thursday 1 st August 2013, 1.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.

- 20 Members of the EirGrid project team were available at each open day to engage with members of the public and answer any queries or questions that arose. As far as possible the project team endeavoured to capture the views and feedback provided by stakeholders during these events and these notes were openly taken in the presence of the stakeholder, and it was explained that its purpose was to capture their views / concerns and feedback, all of which would be recorded, collated and reviewed by the project team.
- 21 At each event technical experts were also available to provide stakeholders with information on the following topics and to address their queries and / or concerns:
- Technology options;
 - Electric and magnetic fields (EMF);
 - Planning;
 - Environmental matters including ecology and archaeology;
 - Line design; and
 - Landowner considerations.
- 22 New tailored information displays were prepared by the project team for these events, to illustrate details of and the rationale for, the design of the preferred project solution. The new displays focused on providing information on the key findings of the *Preferred Project Solution Report*, and a number of information displays provided at the final re-evaluation engagement were also represented. Details of the open day displays are provided in **Table 6.3**.



Figure 6.3: Navan Open Day, Navan Education Centre, Navan, Co. Meath – Consultation on the *Preferred Project Solution Report*

- 23 In response to feedback received from the public concerned, stakeholders and landowners during discussions at the previous round of open days held for the *Final Re-evaluation Report*, in particular the additional events facilitated by CMAPC, EirGrid developed a new display, 'Role of EirGrid' to clarify information in respect of who EirGrid is and its role in planning and securing the safe supply of electricity.
- 24 Similarly, the display showing the map of the transmission network was re-designed to more clearly illustrate the extent of existing energy infrastructure already in place in Ireland, including 400 kV overhead power lines. Again, this redesign was undertaken in response to feedback received during engagement on the *Final Re-evaluation Report*, when some members of the public advised that they considered the information on the map should be made clearer, particularly in respect to what transmission lines are already in existence. Some members of the public had advised that they thought what EirGrid was proposing in this project was a completely new type of transmission line in Ireland.



Figure 6.4: EirGrid's Open Day Display Presenting Information to the Public and Landowners on the Transmission Network during Consultation on the Preferred Project Solution Report

6.2.3.4 EMF Interactive Demonstration

- 25 Compliance Engineering Ireland Ltd. demonstrated the measurement of EMF using a variety of known household items, including a hairdryer and electric fire. This interactive display aimed to deliver a practical and easy way of understanding the principles and strengths of electric and magnetic fields. This display was supported by copies of EirGrid's Public Information Guide 'EMF and You'



Figure 6.5: Interactive Demonstration of EMF provided by Compliance Engineering Ltd. at the Consultation on the Preferred Project Solution Report

(Note: This demonstration was also provided at the additional open days facilitated by CMAPC following the publication of the Final Re-evaluation Report)

Table 6.3: Details of the Open Day Displays Presented at Open Days held during the Consultation on the Preferred Project Solution Report

Title	Purpose of Display
New Displays	
EirGrid's role	To provide information to stakeholders on who EirGrid is and its role in the planning and delivery of a safe and secure electricity transmission network.
Map of the transmission system	An updated map of Ireland's transmission system which showed the extent of existing underground and high voltage overhead power lines and provided graphics of 400 kV, 220 kV and 110 kV single circuit overhead power lines. The map included a revised dashed red line to indicate the location of the proposed North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development. This line had previously been shown as a larger, full red line which had given the impression to some stakeholders that the line proposed was bigger than any existing infrastructure. This panel enabled the EirGrid project team to explain

Title	Purpose of Display
New Displays	
	EirGrid's extensive experience in dealing with issues relating to the installation, operation and maintenance of OHL and UGC at transmission voltages.
Guidelines for OHL design and tower positioning	<p>To provide information to stakeholders, particularly landowners, on the guiding principles for the design of the OHL and the positioning of towers and the factors which EirGrid has to take into consideration during the design process (technical, environmental and landowner considerations).</p> <p>This panel enabled the EirGrid project team to explain the principles underlying the line design, as outlined in Chapter 3 of the <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i>, factors which would also have to be considered during the review of any landowner change requests received.</p>
Tower design	<p>This panel provided a photo image of the proposed structure type for the proposed 400 kV OHL, known as the 'IVI tower'. The image used was a photomontage i.e. a photographic image of the proposed structure superimposed onto a picture of the landscape to enable stakeholders to see what the structure would look like. This panel was supported by display models of structures.</p>
Maps of the Meath Study Area (MSA) and Cavan Monaghan Study Area (CMSA) showing preferred line route with proposed tower locations	<p>Provided large displays of the location of the preferred line route and the locations of the tower structures (1:20,000 scale).</p> <p>These panels enabled the EirGrid project team to assist stakeholders to locate their area of interest on the map and to discuss their feedback / concerns. The panels were supported by books of maps showing the line routes and tower locations and proposed construction access routes.</p>
Guidelines for identifying construction access routes	<p>Provided information on the guiding principles used by EirGrid in the identification of access routes.</p> <p>This panel enabled the EirGrid project team to explain how EirGrid seeks to minimise impact on the environment, farm and land management practices, and in identifying construction access routes taking technical,</p>

Title	Purpose of Display
New Displays	
	<p>environmental and landowner considerations into account.</p> <p>EirGrid sought feedback on the suitability of the indicative access routes shown and these panels were supported by books of maps showing the indicative access routes.</p>
Construction methodology	<p>Provided indicative information on the five stages of construction, construction methodology and duration of each phase, as described in Chapter 5 of the <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i>.</p> <p>The graphic was also used in the <i>Landowner Information Brochure</i>.</p> <p>This panel enabled the EirGrid project team to address stakeholder queries and concerns on how the project would be constructed, how long it would take and the methods which would be undertaken. This also facilitated EirGrid to explain the Health and Safety law and practice which would have to be adhered to by ESB and its contractors.</p>
Environmental matters to be included in the EIS	<p>Provided information on the topics which EirGrid would consider during the preparation of the EIS.</p> <p>This panel enabled the EirGrid project team to explain to stakeholders that the project requires an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) by the competent authority, An Bord Pleanála (the Board) and that EirGrid will prepare an EIS for submission to the Board. An explanation of each of the topics covered by an EIS was facilitated by this panel.</p> <p>EirGrid sought feedback on the topics which stakeholders considered should be included in the EIS by EirGrid.</p>
Public participation – how can I get involved?	<p>This panel provided stakeholders with the consultation terms of reference.</p> <p>This panel enabled the EirGrid project team to explain the methods by which the public could submit feedback / observations before the close of the consultation deadline on 9th September 2013.</p> <p>Copies of additional information, as outlined in Table 7.6,</p>

Title	Purpose of Display
New Displays	
	were available to stakeholders to take away.
Updated project development roadmap	<p>Provided information on the current stage of the project in the path towards the preparation and submission of a planning application to the Board.</p> <p>This panel enabled the EirGrid project team to explain the consultation roadmap and the steps in the process following the submission of the planning application i.e. the statutory public consultation and the decision-making process.</p>
Displays re-used from the Final Re-evaluation Open Days	
What is the project and why is it needed?	<p>Provided information on the key drivers for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development.</p> <p>Displaying this panel again during this stage enabled the EirGrid project team to explain again the reasons why the project is needed.</p>
Technology	<p>Provided information on the comparative assessment of technology options assessed by EirGrid for the project.</p> <p>Displaying this panel again during this stage enabled the EirGrid project team to explain the extent of EirGrid's consideration of underground versus overground issues and the technology available.</p>
Community gain	<p>Provided information on the principle of community gain and the terms of reference for consultation with the public, on seeking feedback on community gain</p> <p>Displaying this panel again during this stage enabled the EirGrid project team to re-explain the principle of community gain and during discussions to seek the views and feedback from stakeholders on how community gain should be considered and distributed. The panel clearly set out the terms of reference for consultation on community gain.</p>

*Revised version to replace the one used for the re-evaluation phase

26 Additional material was also available throughout the consultation at the local information centres and on request via the project information service.

6.2.3.5 Tower Display Models

27 EirGrid provided display models of the monopole and 'IVI Tower' models, the latter of which EirGrid deemed to be the preferred option for the project. The 'IVI Tower' was also illustrated in the tower design display panel available at the open day. These models are illustrated in **Figure 6.6**, with the 'IVI Tower' design pictured on the left and the monopole design pictured on the right.



Figure 6.6: Tower Model Displays on View at the Open Days Held following the Publication of the Preferred Project Solution Report

6.2.3.6 Community Update Brochure (July 2013)

28 This *Community Update Brochure* provided a clear and concise description of the background and context of the proposal, progress so far and the current status of the project. It identified the project drivers and the need for the development. It outlined EirGrid's Project Development and Consultation Roadmap and where the project sat at that time.

29 The information brochure requested feedback on the issues addressed in the *Preferred Project Solution Report*. Details of three open days to be held including location, dates and times were provided. Contact details were given for written submissions, email, website, information centres at Navan, Carrickmacross and Kingscourt.

30 A copy of this brochure is provided at **Appendix H** of this report.

6.2.3.7 Landowner Brochure (July 2013)

31 A *Landowner Brochure* was also prepared and issued by EirGrid which focused on issues of particular relevance to landowners such as how they could influence line route and tower movements and providing an explanation of the construction methodology for the project.

32 A copy of this brochure is provided at **Appendix K** of this report.

6.2.3.8 Proactive Engagement

33 Letters were issued by EirGrid to all of the stakeholders for whom mailing information was available. In addition, where contact details were available, organisations and elected members were contacted by phone or email. Both the North East Pylon Pressure Group (NEPP) and the County Monaghan Anti-Pylon Committee (CMAPC) were briefed by EirGrid in advance of the publication of the *Preferred Project Solution Report*.

6.2.4 Feedback Received During Consultation and Public Participation on the Preferred Project Solution

6.2.4.1 Level of Public Participation

34 The number and method of receipt of submissions during the formal public consultation stage following publication of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* is detailed in **Table 6.4**.

Table 6.4: Level of Public Participation on the Preferred Project Solution Report*

Method of Stakeholder Feedback	Number of Submissions
Information Centres and Telephone Line	35
Written Submissions (including email)	27
Open Days	62
Total	124

* Excludes engagement with landowners by landowner agents which is addressed separately in **Chapter 7** of this report

35 As a result of the effort of the media activity undertaken by EirGrid during this stage, in order to generate awareness and discussion on the project, there was extensive coverage of the project within local and national media.

6.2.5 Nature of Feedback

36 For the purposes of review and assessment by the project team the issues raised by stakeholders in submissions were categorised as follows having regard to the terms of reference for the consultation.

- Submissions relevant to the *Preferred Project Solution Report*;
- Submissions relevant to the EIS (including community and socio-impact, Flora and Fauna, EMF, proximity to dwellings and other receptors, property, compensation, cumulative impact, and cultural heritage);
- Submissions relevant to the planning application;
- Submissions relevant to construction and access routes methodology;
- Submissions relevant to community gain;
- Submissions relevant to line design;
- Submissions relevant to the public consultation process; and
- Any other feedback or comments or other issues relating to the project.

37 Feedback on site-specific issues raised by landowners during the process of landowner engagement were addressed by EirGrid's project team on a case-by-case basis as part of the

consideration of change requests submitted by landowners (described in **Chapter 6** of this report). During the course of this engagement, landowners also raised other feedback and/or issues of concern which were relevant to the wider consultation. The issues raised by landowners were broadly consistent with those raised by members of the general public, public concerned and stakeholders. However, details of other feedback / issues received from landowners that relate specifically to them are provided in **Chapter 7** of this report.

38 A number of submissions were received from prescribed authorities (prescribed as formal consultees to the application process in the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended) during consultation on the Preferred Project Solution Report. The EirGrid project team proactively engaged with prescribed authorities during this stage and details of this engagement are described in detail in Chapter 3 (Scoping the EIS) **Volume 3B** of the EIS which accompanies the planning application for approval.

39 A summary of the submissions is provided below.

6.2.5.1 Submissions Relevant to the Preferred Project Solution Report

40 Some submissions welcomed the fact that EirGrid would not be seeking permission for 'micro-siting'¹⁸ of towers in its application to the Board.

41 Concerns were raised that some of the assessment criteria considered at the 'preferred' route corridor stage had not been equally applied within the more detailed line design stage. The parties making that submission felt that landscape and environmental design considerations and constraints are prioritised at the higher preferred route corridor level, while at line design stage, technical and landowner considerations have been prioritised. An example provided in support of this contention was alterations to the tower locations proposed in Doohamlet, as a result of a development granted planning permission in 2011, and it was asked whether this amendment had resulted in bigger impacts on their area in terms of the landscape and environment. The submission sought an open and transparent basis for the prioritisation and consideration of constraints within the line design.

42 Submissions suggested that the project should not go ahead in its proposed format and greater consideration should be given to undergrounding of the line. Others considered that the project will have to be constructed overhead as in their opinion the underground issues are unknown.

¹⁸ Micro-siting refers to the seeking of permission within the statutory consent for flexibility to move tower positions within specified limits during the construction phase. It should be noted that EirGrid will not be seeking such flexibility in this application for planning approval.

- 43 Some stakeholders considered that their previous submissions had not been appropriately addressed in the responses provided by EirGrid in the *Preferred Project Solution Report* and felt that key points raised in their submission had been omitted. Others questioned where the feedback reported in Appendix C of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* had been answered by EirGrid.
- 44 Submissions were received in relation to the grounds upon which the route proposed in the *Preferred Project Solution Report* was chosen, as the preferred route, in preference to other routes.

6.2.5.2 Submissions Relevant to the EIS

- 45 Feedback on matters to be addressed within the EIS was sought and received during this round of engagement. The majority of the issues raised in written submissions and during discussions with stakeholders at the consultation events related to the potential impact of the proposed development on the environment which were broadly categorised under the following headings:
- Agronomy;
 - Community and Socio Economic Impact (including proximity to residential receptors);
 - Property Devaluation and Loss of Development;
 - Cultural Heritage & Archaeology;
 - Ecology;
 - Health and EMF;
 - Landscape & Visual Impact;
 - Noise; and
 - Cumulative Impacts.
- 46 It was considered by parties making submissions that an informed assessment of the proposed development could not be made until the EIS had been completed and details of the proposed mitigation measures and any subsequent line changes are proposed.

47 In relation to matters which stakeholders felt should be included as part of the EIS, the following submissions were received:

- Potential impact of the project on flight paths of hot air balloons and aviation should be considered as part of the EIS, given their feedback that County Meath is the ballooning capital of Ireland with many private pilots also based in the county;
- Potential impacts on human and animal health; and
- Some submissions received considered that the EIS should assess property devaluation.

6.2.5.2.1 Community and Socio Economic Impact

48 A number of stakeholders raised concerns about the effect that the project is having on the people of the local communities in proximity of the line. Many stakeholders identified distress and worry which they considered the project has caused, while others said they felt that their lives have had to be put on hold since 2007.

49 Many stakeholders advised that they object to the project due to the impact of overhead power lines on residential amenity.

50 A number of stakeholders raised concerns about being seen to engage with EirGrid, with many landowners advising that they did not want to agree to provide access for surveys as they did not want to go against the community. Many added details of their knowledge of opposition to the project within the local communities. Some stated that they would not make a submission for a design change and they considered the proposal may result in problems in the community.

51 While some acknowledged and appreciated the need for the project, they expressed concern in respect of public pressure and objection within the community. Some discussed the opposition to the project in the community but considered it likely that the proposal will go ahead despite the opposition. Some landowners advised that they could not go against the stated wishes of some of the wider community. Other stakeholders advised that they did not have a problem with the project but would not co-operate because it could upset their neighbours. Stakeholders expressed concern in respect of the proximity of the proposed line and tower locations to community facilities, including children's recreational areas and schools. Schools cited as examples included those at Muff, Corlea and Scoil Naomh Mhuire Naofa. Concerns in respect of the schools also included potential loss of attendees as a result of the project as parents would not want their children to go to a school that was close to power lines and tower structures. Similarly, some concerns were voiced that staff members may choose to relocate

their place of employment due to the power lines. These concerns were made on the basis of potential health issues and the perceived adverse impact of EMF on human health.

52 Submissions were received in respect of the local road network and whether money would be invested in this network following construction of the project.

53 It was considered by some stakeholders who operate businesses within the area that the project will adversely impact upon their business, particularly those who rely on income generated by visitors who travel and stay within the area to visit heritage sites. Examples of such locations included the Boyne Valley, Teltown and Trim Castle.

54 The nature of businesses who expressed opposition to the project on the grounds that it would adversely impact on their business included a hot air ballooning company, bed and breakfast tourist accommodation and a helipad operations business.

Proximity to Dwellings and Other Receptors

55 Many submissions expressed concerns relating to the proximity of the line route to dwelling houses or other receptors. A large number of the attendees at the project open days requested measurement of the exact distance from their dwelling house or other receptor to the preferred line route and / or tower structures. A number of submissions concerned the proximity of the line route to dwelling houses and other receptors, such as community facilities and schools. A number of stakeholders raised concerns regarding the proximity of these receptors to the line route and tower structures on the basis of adverse visual impact and their concerns in relation to human and animal health.

6.2.5.2.2 Property

56 Stakeholders expressed concerns regarding the potential impact of the project on property values, loss of development potential and future development restrictions which may arise as a result of the project. Some participants requested letters from EirGrid to confirm that planning approval for a house on their lands would not be affected by the proposal. A number of stakeholders advised that they felt that their property (farm and / or house) would be devalued. Some felt that devaluation could be as much as 30% of the current value. Submissions received from the public living near existing power lines advised that property values have dropped to the point where they cannot give their houses away. Some participants asked for details of the arbitration process which EirGrid propose to use to assess compensation for residents whom they felt will have devalued properties as a result of the project.

- 57 Concerns were raised that land would become sterile as a result of the proposal and many landowners expressed concern in respect of potential loss of development on their lands and also in respect to future planting of trees.
- 58 Some stakeholders asked if development of new housing was possible near the proposed line route and tower structures and whether there would be an issue with obtaining planning permission for same.
- 59 Participants felt that EirGrid should provide compensation as a result of property devaluation and some stakeholders requested that EirGrid purchase their property as compensation for the project. Frustration in respect of the project was raised, with stakeholders advising that had they known about the project that they would not have invested time and money into their property. Other participants stated that they had located to rural locations to escape the noise and infrastructure of the city.
- 60 Submissions were received from some stakeholders potentially interested in purchasing property in the area who wished to obtain details about the project, specifically the location of the line route and tower structures in proximity to their property of interest.
- 61 Submissions were received which advised how land was given to people by their parents and how they intended to pass it onto their children and future generations and that they did not wish the inheritance of their children to be compromised by the proposal.

6.2.5.2.3 Compensation

- 62 A number of submissions questioned the nature and extent of the compensation package on offer for the siting of tower structures on land and for oversail of OHLs. People questioned specifically how much money they would be paid and how these payments would be taxed. Some submissions indicated that the stakeholder would accept a number of tower structures.
- 63 Some stakeholders considered that adjoining landowners should also receive compensation for the project.

6.2.5.2.4 Cumulative Impact

- 64 Some submissions were received in relation to the potential cumulative impacts of the proposal when considered with other proposed developments. Specific examples included:
- Cumulative impacts of the proposal with proposed new residential development in proximity to their location;

- Stakeholders stated that they had engaged in discussions with developers of wind turbines and were interested in discussing the potential impact that the line may have on wind turbine proposals; and
- Some stakeholders expressed their concern regarding the cumulative impact of the proposal along with proposed development of wind turbines and felt that this proposal is only being built to accommodate the construction of wind turbines in Ireland.

6.2.5.2.5 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

65 Concerns were raised regarding the project's potential impact on cultural heritage and archaeological sites in proximity to the preferred line route and tower locations. Specific sites that stakeholders felt should be considered by the project team included:

- Ringforts in proximity to the preferred line route;
- Neolithic site at Moynagh lake with details of archaeological surveys of Neolithic sites requested;
- Crannog within Whitewood lake;
- The Boyne Valley;
- Trim Castle;
- Heritage sites in Cruicetown / Nobber, Whitewood and Brittas House;
- Bective area;
- Archaeology in Teltown; and
- Local heritage features located on landowner lands including forts.

6.2.5.2.6 Ecology

66 During this consultation phase, concerns continued to be raised about the welfare of animals and wildlife in proximity to the line. Stakeholders were concerned about the potential impact of the proposal in particular on birds. Specific ecological sites and features that stakeholders felt should be considered by the project team included:

- The impact on hedgerows and trees; and
- The impact on birds.

6.2.5.2.7 Health and EMF

67 Public concerns about the potential health impacts of the proposal continued to be an on-going issue raised during this consultation. Stakeholders queried what the levels of EMF would be if the line was undergrounded. Particular concerns were raised in respect of the potential adverse health impact on school children attending schools in proximity to the line. A distance of 285 metres from a school was considered too close.

68 Stakeholders suggested that EirGrid could avoid health impacts on local communities by putting the project underground.

69 Specific queries and concerns raised included:

- Feedback from stakeholders living near existing overhead transmission power lines which they considered to be a risk factor for childhood acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, risk of damage to DNA, cancer, neurodegenerative disease and miscarriage;
- Request for data or references for peer reviewed publications for epidemiological work carried out, or supported by EirGrid or its predecessor, on the impact of 400 kV lines in Ireland;
- Risks to children sleeping in houses in proximity to overhead power lines;
- Feedback that hospitals now ask cancer patients whether they live near pylons;
- Requests to see reports which would prove that there are no adverse health effects from power lines and pylons;
- Concerns raised about the effects of EMF on livestock and examples were provided of hedgerows which had changed shape as a result of EMF;
- Requests for information on the health impacts of the existing 400 kV lines with some stakeholders advising that they felt that EirGrid has not adequately assessed the health impact of the proposal;
- Concerns that insurance companies in Ireland have already placed EMF as an exclusion on insurance policies and those European insurers are already enforcing their version of the precautionary principle;
- Concerns about the impact of overhead power lines on pacemakers; and

- Concerns in respect of EirGrid's publications on health effects, how they were produced with some stakeholders questioning the examples provided in the EMF Public Information Guide published by EirGrid.

6.2.5.2.8 Landscape and Visual Impact

70 General concerns regarding potential visual impact, how the project would impact upon the following:

- Views of the countryside from their land and / or dwelling;
- The landscape and visual quality of areas, in particular potential adverse impacts on drumlin landscape; and
- Impact arising from tree cutting as a result of the project.

71 Specific concerns relating to landscape and visual impact received included:

- A submission representing the views of a community association stated that they remained concerned that the proposed development would negatively impact upon the residents and members of its community and that its landscape and environs are being sacrificed for the protection and prioritisation of other areas;
- Enquiries regarding the height of the structures were made;
- In respect to the proposed tower design and 'IVI Tower' structure proposed, many stakeholders considered that in their opinion the proposed structure looks worse than existing pylons;
- Numerous stakeholders expressed their specific concern regarding the potential proximity of structures to their dwelling houses and some advised how the project will be visible to them from all viewpoints from their dwelling house and / or farm and that they did not wish to see these structures and would be opposing the project;
- Concern was raised from some stakeholders that structures would be positioned on the highest viewpoints within their area and questioned why tower structures were proposed in drumlin areas; and
- Stakeholders expressed frustration in respect of planning applications submitted for development of residential dwellings in the area which were refused, yet EirGrid could propose power lines and tower structures in elevated areas.

6.2.5.2.9 Noise

- 72 Stakeholders expressed concerns regarding the potential noise impacts they considered the project would introduce to areas in proximity to the preferred line route and tower structures.
- 73 Specific feedback relating to the issue of noise included:
- Concerns in respect of the noise which will come from the power lines. Submissions were received which stated that adverse noise impacts were currently experienced in close proximity to power lines, particularly during wet weather conditions;
 - Specific concerns raised in relation to potential noise impacts on sensitive noise receptors, including people with an autism diagnosis;
 - A number of stakeholders expressed their concerns relating to potential adverse noise impacts on their family, particularly when combined with the noise they already experience from existing infrastructure in their location, including power lines and the M3 motorway; and
 - Submissions in relation to the potential noise of the proposed structures and line with some submissions asking for details of the noise that may result from specific distances from the line, including the aural sound intrusion in decibels at distances of up to 300 metres from the line.

6.2.5.3 Submissions Relevant to the Planning Application

- 74 A number of stakeholders enquired about the process of the preparation of the planning application and questioned when EirGrid will be submitting the application. Stakeholders asked how the planning process would be undertaken and who would ultimately decide whether the project would go ahead or not;
- 75 A number of stakeholders who had made submissions in relation to the previous application sought an explanation of what had happened with the previous application, including why the oral hearing had stopped. Others stated they felt the previous EIS was a weakness of that application;
- 76 Enquiries were also made about the planning process in Northern Ireland and submissions questioned the current status of that application;
- 77 Many stakeholders who attended the open day events came to register their objection to the project and considered that it should not go ahead as it goes against the wishes of the

community. Conversely, other submissions advised that they are in favour of the project and have no objection to it going ahead and advised that they are in favour of progress. Submissions were received which questioned how objections could be made and whether they should be made to the local authorities or to the Board;

78 Some stakeholders stated that, whether EirGrid gets planning permission or not, they will not permit pylons on their land; and

79 Some stakeholders who had inherited their farms and who intend to pass their farms onto the next generation in turn stated that they do not want this inheritance compromised by what they perceive to be carcinogenic pylons.

6.2.5.4 Submissions Relevant to Construction and Access Routes Methodology

80 The construction process and land access were raised in a number of submissions and, during the project information open day events, a number of stakeholders discussed site-specific access issues in relation to their landholding and / or location. Some examples are:

- Submissions containing and / or referencing areas where access may be a problem, for example fields with steep and / or narrow access;
- Submissions enquiring whether any disturbed land will be returned to its original state;
- Some stakeholders questioned how EirGrid proposes to gain access to lands where people are objecting to the proposal and, given the media coverage in the Anglo Celt, which reported that the proposal goes against the interests of farmers;
- Submissions which asked if EirGrid are proposing to drive heavy machinery through lands;
- Submissions were received in respect of ESB and its construction of lines in the past where it was suggested land had been destroyed by construction activities;
- Some stakeholders advised that they were satisfied with the proposed access tracks; and
- Some stakeholders discussed their experience of construction of similar proposals in Scotland.

6.2.5.5 Submissions Relevant to Community Gain

81 A number of stakeholders provided feedback relating to community gain during the consultation on the preferred project solution. This feedback predominantly related to enquiries on the principle of community gain, suggestions and feedback in respect of who should receive community gain and who should manage the fund. Specific feedback included:

- That the principle of community gain is a good one and would be very positive for the local community. Stakeholders questioned what EirGrid could do for the community;
- Community gain funding should be made available to local, community services in proximity to the line route, including scouting and sporting organisations. Specific examples of proposed and on-going developments by these organisations were submitted which included the following:
 - A new scout den for Kingscourt Scout Club;
 - A purpose built community centre at Magheracloone which the submission described as a large and diverse parish currently lacking in modern leisure and social facilities;
 - Magheracloone Gaelic Football Club's Development Plan which includes plans for developing a new playing pitch; and
 - The proposed District Councils could be used to oversee the delivery of community gain.

6.2.5.6 Submissions Relevant to Line Design and Location of Tower Structures

82 In relation to the line design and the proposed siting of tower structures, submissions related to the following:

- Many stakeholders stated their opposition to plans for the project in its proposed format and advised that they did not agree with the preferred line design;
- Some felt that the proposed positioning of tower structures on their lands, is disproportionately closer to their property as opposed to other landowners;
- Many stakeholders were unhappy to find out that the preferred project solution had resulted in additional pylons proposed on their land compared with the 2009 proposal and considered that they had been allocated an unfair amount of structures;
- Some stakeholders asked if the line route and tower locations displayed at the open days and in reports were final and whether changes to the design were possible;

- Some stakeholders questioned why tower structures were proposed in the middle of fields and requested an explanation for why towers were removed from hedgerows, compared with the 2009 proposal;
- Enquiries regarding the heights of the tower structures proposed and the distances between the towers;
- Submissions received to relocate tower structures as its proposed location would obstruct access to the remainder of their landholding;
- Enquiries in respect of how low the wires can drop between masts, i.e. clearance distances; and
- Submissions which asked why the line route was proposed in proximity to their dwelling instead of positioning it near farmhouses where nobody is living.

6.2.5.7 Submissions Relevant to the Consultation and Public Participation Process

- 83 It was felt by some stakeholders that the project is not in compliance with the Aarhus Convention. Some participants were of the view that the consultation was not meaningful and that it was simply a public relations exercise. A number of stakeholders expressed the opinion that EirGrid does not listen to the views and feedback of the people. CMAPC considered that its facilitation of additional events in County Monaghan in May 2013, and which were attended by over 500 people including landowners, was an exercise it would not have undertaken had it been realised that the events were for the purposes of public engagement and not for public consultation.
- 84 CMAPC considered EirGrid had not taken on board the significant volume of concerns and feedback raised at the events. Having subsequently met with their members, it was stated that landowners had expressed disappointment regarding the events held in May 2013 and were unanimously of the opinion that any further consultation regarding pylon locations would be futile.
- 85 Many stakeholders who contacted the phone line and / or the open day events advised that EirGrid does not listen to the concerns of the public citing that if EirGrid had done so, the project would be underground and would have been built by now.
- 86 Some stakeholders expressed concern about where the North East Pylon Pressure (NEPP) group obtain their information and felt that it was important to hear both sides of the argument. They explained that this was why they had attended the open day.

-
- 87 Some submissions requested information on what national consultation process has taken place to allow the proposal to be considered.
- 88 Some participants suggested that local parish bulletins should be used to advertise information on the open days while others commented that the *Community Update Brochure* did not provide information about the health issues of the project.
- 89 With reference to communication and engagement with landowners, many submissions were received which enquired as to how landowners were being contacted and whether they were providing access to EirGrid for surveys. Some stakeholders questioned why EirGrid had produced brochures for landowners but not for residents.
- 90 Some stakeholders considered that the mapping displayed and/or provided for the project gave the perception that the line was further away.
- 91 Some members of the public attended the open days as they had heard about the project on the radio and wanted to find out more about the project and what EirGrid does.
- 92 Some submissions expressed the view that it is pointless to talk to EirGrid and that EirGrid does not listen to people who have said all along that they want the project to be located underground.
- 93 A submission was received which considered that all publications relating to the development should be made publicly available in the Irish language and requested that all information made available henceforth by EirGrid, be made available in Irish.
- 94 Submissions were received in relation to the locations of the project information centres with some submissions questioning why the information centres had closed in September.

6.2.5.8 Other Feedback or Comments or Issues Relating to the Project

6.2.5.8.1 Reference to International Examples and Advances in Technology

- 95 A number of stakeholders referenced international examples where UGC was used and also referred to advances in UGC technology. Specific issues raised include:
- General enquiries made regarding new electricity infrastructure in other countries and referenced recent projects in Sweden and Denmark where UGC was selected as the technology of choice;

- Many stakeholders did not accept the reasons presented by EirGrid as to why the project could not be undergrounded and felt that cost was a major contributing factor. Some stakeholders added that cost should not be provided as a reason for not undergrounding the project; and
- Some participants clearly demonstrated an understanding of the issues surrounding the overhead versus underground debate, nonetheless they maintained that the project should be undergrounded.

6.2.5.8.2 Kingscourt Substation

96 A number of stakeholders questioned why the substation at Kingscourt was no longer part of the proposal and enquired about EirGrid's plans for a substation in the future.

6.2.5.8.3 Undergrounding versus Overgrounding

97 A significant number of stakeholders stated their preference to underground the powerlines. Some submissions stated that they would support the project if it was undergrounded. A number of submissions spoke of NEPP's request for the cables to go underground and advised that had it been done that the matter would have been dealt with six years ago;

98 It was felt that OHLs are unacceptable and that the powerlines should be undergrounded. Some stakeholders felt that if lines can be brought underground from England to Batterstown that they should continue to bring them the rest of the way underground;

99 Some stakeholders considered that EirGrid should be the leaders in the field and put this project underground for the people. It was considered by some stakeholders that EirGrid is refusing to underground this project because it will set a precedent to underground all of its other projects; and

100 A number of stakeholders suggested potential routing options for an UGC. The majority of these suggested co-location with existing infrastructure. Specific locations suggested included existing linear corridors e.g. run the lines under cycle paths outside of Navan or under the M3 motorway.

6.2.5.8.4 Project Need

101 During this engagement period many stakeholders made observations and provided feedback in respect of the need for the project. Specific issues included:

- Some stakeholders welcomed the project and stated that they were in favour of the project. Some acknowledged and appreciated that there is a need for the power line to be constructed but that it should be underground. In this regard, some submissions advised that there would be no opposition to the project if EirGrid proposed to underground it and that the project would be built by now had EirGrid proposed to put it underground;
- Some stakeholders recognised the need for the project and that grid development is required to support the development of Ireland's economy as demand for electricity grows. Some submissions acknowledged that additional transmission capacity is needed to meet this demand;
- Submissions were received which questioned the basis for EirGrid's published predictions in relation to the reliability of the electricity supply in the north-east area;
- As was the case during feedback in the previous consultation on the *Final Re-evaluation Report*, many stakeholders still did not accept the principle of the project. Their reasons for this opinion were based on the high level of unemployment and emigration. Some felt that given the poor status of Ireland's economy that money would be better spent on hospitals and that this project is not needed;
- Some submissions considered that the project is about making money and not about the people;
- Some felt that the project is only being proposed to facilitate export of energy to the United Kingdom;
- Feedback also received was that there is a massive amount of pylons and that the proposed project is the motorway of ESB; and
- Some stakeholders considered their local area will be hit by excessive amounts of infrastructure for which there is no need.

6.2.5.8.5 Cost

- 102 Some stakeholders made enquiries in relation to the cost of the project and considered that the costs spent on public information events and material would have been better spent on undergrounding of the project;
- 103 Some submissions also advised that thousands of euros of community money has been spent opposing the project in an attempt to prevent the power line passing overhead;

- 104 Some participants enquired how much the new interconnector will impact electricity costs over the coming years and requested information on the cost savings projected by EirGrid;
- 105 Some felt that the cost of the project is not being adequately addressed by ESB and EirGrid, and cited the case of the Flagford-Srananagh 220 kV project which, when it was submitted, was initially estimated to cost approximately €36 million but that it went on to cost multiples of this figure and
- 106 Some stakeholders asked about the costs associated with the production of technical reports for the project.

6.2.5.8.6 Health and Safety

- 107 In respect of guidelines for the operation of high voltage OHLs, submissions were received which advised that the guidelines provided by EirGrid are for acute (short term) exposure and not chronic (long term) exposure. It was felt that the examples of household appliances provided by EirGrid in the EMF booklet related to acute exposure and that people chose to live in houses and use these appliances but did not choose to live near high voltage power lines which they considered to be forced upon people. Details of EirGrid's proposed insurance indemnity for health claims costs arising from the project were sought and how it is proposed this will be permanently indemnified on an on-going basis after any potential commercial sale of EirGrid.

6.2.5.9 Submissions Received from Prescribed Authorities on the Preferred Project Solution Report

- 108 A number of submissions were received from prescribed authorities (prescribed as formal consultees to the application process in the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended) during consultation on the *Preferred Project Solution Report*. The EirGrid project team proactively engaged with prescribed authorities during this stage and details of this engagement are described in detail in Chapter 3 (Scoping the EIS) **Volume 3B** of the EIS which accompanies the planning application for approval.

6.2.5.10 North-East Pylon Pressure Group Request

- 109 On 14th August 2013, NEPP invited EirGrid to attend a public meeting scheduled for 17th October 2013. NEPP outlined that the objective of the meeting would be for all parties to have a platform to present their rationale and justification for supporting an OHL or underground cable policy for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development.

- 110 Following consideration of their request, EirGrid responded to NEPP on 30th August 2013 and declined the invitation to attend.
- 111 In its letter of 30th August 2013, EirGrid stated that it has engaged in a significant amount of public and stakeholder engagement in Meath, Cavan and Monaghan since the publication of the *Final Re-evaluation Report* in April 2013. This has included:
- Numerous open days across Meath, Cavan and Monaghan;
 - One-to-one meetings at our local information centres in Carrickmacross, Kingscourt and Navan;
 - Engagement with NEPP and CMAPC;
 - Political briefings;
 - Briefings for County Council Officials;
 - Regular media briefings and interviews; and
 - Press and radio advertising.
- 112 EirGrid added that it had met with a significant number of landowners and other stakeholders over the course of the consultation on the *Preferred Project Solution Report*. EirGrid added that it would continue to be available to engage directly with landowners and / or stakeholders who had a concern or a query regarding the project at the local information centres in Navan, Carrickmacross and Kingscourt over the following weeks.
- 113 EirGrid stated that its preference was to meet landowners individually as any such discussions relate to their property, and as such, EirGrid considered that it is appropriate to discuss a landowner's lands with the landowner concerned and therefore considered it inappropriate to do so in a public forum (refer to **Chapter 7** of this report).
- 114 EirGrid also stated that it had no difficulty, and indeed would welcome, the landowner having whatever representation he or she deemed necessary at any such meeting, whether a member of the NEPP Committee, legal representation or other professional advisor.

6.2.6 Responses to Issues Raised during Public Participation

- 115 All correspondence issued and received by EirGrid in respect of the consultation on the project was recorded in accordance with the process already described in **Section 4.6** of this report.

- 116 Calls to the project information line were managed by the project team and stakeholders were provided with responses to their queries. In cases where a response was not readily available, or where the issue raised required consideration and review by the EirGrid project team, a record of the discussion was captured in respect of the concern/query, and these were in turn reviewed by the project team.
- 117 EirGrid acknowledged receipt of written submissions received (via post and email), and stated that the issues raised would be reviewed and considered by the project team.
- 118 Incoming queries were responded to directly by the project team and any queries which required technical responses or specific information were directed to the appropriate technical specialist for review and assessment. Requests for specific information by members of the public and the public concerned, for example a bespoke map illustrating the proposed location of the line route and / or tower structure in proximity to a dwelling house, were prepared and issued by the project team.
- 119 **Table 6.5** provides information on the key issues and concerns of the public consultation on the *Preferred Project Solution Report* and an indication of where these are addressed in the EIS and / or supporting information submitted by EirGrid to the Board as part of the planning application.

Table 6.5: Key Concerns of the Public Consultation on the *Preferred Project Solution Report* and an Indication of Where These are Addressed in the EIS and / or Supporting Information Submitted by EirGrid to An Bord Pleanála as part of this Planning Application

Issue	Concern /Issue	EIS Chapter or Relevant EirGrid Document
Proximity to dwellings	Issues relating to proximity of the proposal to homes, schools, community facilities and businesses.	<i>Human Beings - Population and Economic</i> Chapter of the EIS.
Heritage sites	Concerns relating to potential adverse impacts on tourism amenity.	<i>Cultural Heritage and Human Beings – Tourism and Amenity</i> Chapter of the EIS.
Community and sport	Impact on local community amenities and sporting clubs.	<i>Human Beings – Tourism and Amenity</i> Chapter of the EIS.
Visual impact	Visual impact on landscape and visual amenity, drumlin landscape.	<i>Landscape</i> Chapter of the EIS.
Noise pollution	Noise impact from the power line.	<i>Air – Noise and Vibration</i>

Issue	Concern /Issue	EIS Chapter or Relevant EirGrid Document
		Chapter of the EIS.
Ecology	Impacts on birds, wildlife, fisheries, water quality.	<i>Flora and Fauna</i> Chapter of the EIS & Natura Impact Statement (NIS).
Health / EMF	EMF, Cancer, Miscarriage.	<i>Human Beings – EMF</i> Chapter of the EIS; 'EMF and You' Booklet and project FAQs
Property Devaluation	Devaluation of property.	EirGrid FAQs and Planning Report, which accompanies the application for planning approval.
Property development	Concerns about the loss of ability to apply for planning permission in the future for development (e.g. new dwellings on family owned land).	Planning Report, which accompanies the new planning application.
Livestock and farming	Concerns issues of landowners outlined in chapter 7 of this report.	<i>Human Beings - Land Use</i> Chapter of the EIS.
Undergrounding	OHL Versus UGC.	<i>Transmission and Technology Alternatives</i> Chapter of the EIS.
Route location	Location of the preferred line route.	<i>Route Alternatives</i> Chapter of the EIS.

6.2.7 Impact of Public Participation

- 120 EirGrid reviewed and considered the submissions made by the public and landowners and other stakeholders during the course of the consultation on the preferred project solution, and also feedback received during consultation on the *Final Re-evaluation Report*, where much of the feedback related to the detailed design and environmental impact of the proposal.
- 121 On foot of the submissions and feedback received, the EirGrid project team made a number of modifications to the design of the final project solution.
- 122 These modifications were made in line with feedback received from landowners who engaged with EirGrid as part of consultation on the design of the line route, the siting of tower structures

and construction access routes. This is discussed in more detail in **Chapter 7** which describes the engagement undertaken with landowners and the outcome of the engagement, including the modifications made to the line route arising from change requests submitted by landowners.

123 The guidelines used by EirGrid for dealing with modification requests are set out below:

- All reasonable design change requests were technically and environmentally assessed along with assessment of landowner considerations;
- In order to be implementable, suggested design changes had to:
 - Meet the general line design requirements¹⁹ (this included the environmental and technical considerations identified in Section 3.3.2 of the *Preferred Project Solution Report (July 2013)*);
 - Must not have resulted in an undue greater impact for nearby or adjoining dwellings / sensitive receptors;
 - Should minimise the number of macro²⁰ changes required to the overall line design; and
 - Confined, where possible, to the landowner's property.

124 A balanced judgement was made based on technical, environmental and other considerations.

6.2.7.1 Scope of the Environmental Impact Statement

125 The issues raised in certain submissions received, *inter alia*, during the consultation on the preferred project solution, have been considered by the EirGrid project team during the preparation of the current application for planning approval and in the preparation of the accompanying EIS and, where relevant, the NIS.

126 Chapter 3 of **Volume 3B** of the EIS, which accompanies the planning application for approval, presents a summary of how the consultation process has informed the preparation of the new planning application and the EIS including consultation with prescribed authorities.

¹⁹ Priority was given to modifications to ensure compliance with relevant legislation (Codified Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive 2011/92/EU) and Habitats Directive ((92/43/EEC)).

²⁰ Representing a significant change over several hundred metres which has generally resulted in additional angle masts

7 LANDOWNER ENGAGEMENT

7.1 INTRODUCTION

- 1 Landowners were identified at an early stage as an important group of the public concerned with the proposed development. At all stages of the project, the EirGrid project team was open to discussing the project with landowners, in order to address concerns and issues that they may have. In this regard, EirGrid seeks to minimise disturbance to current land use and farm management practices and, as a result has always undertaken a proactive approach with its landowner engagement for the project.
- 2 However, it was feedback from landowners on the consultation activities and events during the initial stages of the project (i.e. during 2008 and 2009) that informed the proactive, tailored and parallel landowner engagement strategy pursued by EirGrid after the re-evaluation of the project commenced in 2010.
- 3 This chapter of the report outlines the consultation and engagement which has taken place with, and on behalf of, landowners since 2007. Samples of letters and related documents issued during landowner engagement are included in **Appendix I** of this report.

7.2 LANDOWNER ENGAGEMENT 2007 TO 2010

- 4 Focused landowner engagement commenced with the publication of the preferred route corridors and indicative line routes in April 2009. Landowners were identified after a property registry search along the length of the indicative line routes. EirGrid wrote to all landowners / occupiers inviting them to meet with the project team and discuss the proposal and any concerns they may have. The letters were followed up by other efforts to visit landowners and to request access for environmental and / or technical surveys. Details of the landowner mail out undertaken during this period is provided in **Table 7.1**.

Table 7.1: Details of the Landowner Mail Out Undertaken between 2007 and 2009

Date Issued	Information Provided
07 April 2009	<p>Each potentially affected landowner was issued with the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A letter from EirGrid announcing the completion of studies to identify the optimum routes for two new transmission lines, the Meath – Cavan line and the Cavan – Tyrone line; • That a representative of EirGrid would be visiting them in the coming weeks to discuss the proposal; • Invited landowners to discuss any potential impact on their farming practices or development plans with the EirGrid representative or by contacting EirGrid; • A map (or maps) showing the proposed location of the line as it crossed their land; and • A copy of an information sheet providing details of the new transmission lines.
29 July 2009	<p>A letter was issued to each landowner by its appointed landowner agent which enclosed the <i>Community Update Brochure</i> for July 2009.</p>
21 December 2009	<p>A letter was issued to each landowner by its appointed landowner agent to advise the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform them that EirGrid was submitting the planning application and EIS to the Board; • Invitation to contact EirGrid with any questions, issues, or concerns about the project; • A public consultation would take place following the submission of the application and that submissions on the project at that stage must be made directly to the Board; • Advised that EirGrid had proposed a ten-week public consultation period to An Bord Pleanála given that the application was being submitted close to the Christmas period; and • Enclosed a copy of the <i>Community Update Brochure</i>
21 January 2010	<p>A letter was issued to each landowner by its appointed landowner agent to advise the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform them that EirGrid had submitted the planning application; • That the public consultation period for the project had been extended to a ten-week period, until 12th March 2010; • Enclosed a paper copy of the non-technical summary of the EIS and a DVD that contained a full copy of the EIS; and • Details of the opening hours of the EirGrid Information Centres where the application could be viewed and that members of the EirGrid team would be available for questions.

- 5 In July 2009, EirGrid announced that it would begin focusing on preparing a planning application and urged landowners to get in touch as soon as possible with any queries.

7.2.1 Level of Landowner Participation

- 6 Subsequent to the publication of the preferred route corridors and indicative line routes, landowners availed of opportunities to provide feedback through the established mechanisms namely the phone line, letters, feedback forms and e-mails. Throughout the Spring of 2009, stakeholders sent in a large volume of correspondence that included six series of standard questions, plus detailed questions on a range of other issues relating to *inter alia* heritage, bloodstock and angling (refer to **Section 4.5.1**). It is relevant that a significant proportion of these particular stakeholders were landowners.
- 7 Notwithstanding the efforts of the EirGrid project team to contact landowners directly and / or visit them and gain access to survey lands, limited engagement was achieved (approximately 33%).
- 8 Following submission of the application for approval for the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development, in December 2009, landowners were active participants in the statutory consultation process.
- 9 It is also noted that a number of landowners dropped into the project information offices after they opened in August 2008 either to source relevant project information or to discuss issues with members of the EirGrid project team. This was especially notable after submission of the planning application with the Board, as a copy of the application was available in the offices.

7.2.2 Nature of Feedback

- 10 The publication of indicative line routes in April 2009 provided landowners with detail in relation to the nature and location of the proposed development relative to their landholdings. EirGrid received a wide range of feedback relating to *inter alia*:
- EirGrid's rights to enter / access lands to undertake surveys;
 - Compensation for effects such as crop damage;
 - The safe working distance for conducting farming operations near towers and live wires;
 - Whether EirGrid needs the agreement of all landowners prior to submitting plans to the Board; and
 - What safety precautions will be taken during the construction of the OHL.

11 Furthermore, landowners also provided feedback relating to the nature and manner in which landowner consultation was conducted during this phase of the project. Much of this feedback was articulated by landowners in written and / or oral submissions in respect of the application for approval for the Tyrone-Meath 400 kV Interconnection Development, after it was lodged with the Board in December 2009. This included:

- Concerns with the way landowners were made aware that the proposal would be located on their property. It was asserted that a preferred final design with final tower locations was published before engaging with landowners and that this gave the impression that the design was a *fait accompli* and would not be changed.
- It was asserted that clear terms of reference were not provided to landowners on how and when they could have an influence on the line design.
- Belief that landowners should be afforded the opportunity to engage earlier in the process so that they could have greater input into the development of the project.
- Concerns with the way EirGrid and its representatives sought to engage with landowners.
- It was asserted that there was a lack of information and transparency on how the line design was developed and how it would be constructed.
- It was asserted that a lack of importance was given to the potential of the proposal to impact agricultural practices.

7.2.3 Responses to Issues Raised

12 During this phase of the project, notwithstanding the attempts of EirGrid to engage directly with landowners, the primary means of responding to feedback was through the FAQ's published between January 2008 and July 2009. In this regard, EirGrid sought to respond to the key issues specifically raised and relevant to landowners (as summarised above).

13 Additional feedback was also provided through the publication of further FAQ's in January 2010. This document outlines the answers to questions sent to EirGrid by landowners and the local community in response to the July 2009 FAQ's. The new questions in this document in effect were 'follow-up' questions that sought clarification on some of the answers given in July 2009.

7.2.4 How Feedback Influenced Project Development

14 The primary means of responding to the general issues raised by landowners during this period of landowner consultation (and previous consultation activities) was through the final design and

content of the planning application and EIS which was submitted to the Board in December 2009.

- 15 Feedback from landowners during this stage also informed the longer term project communications strategy for the project. The lessons learned influenced the tailored landowner engagement strategy pursued by EirGrid and the project team from 2011 onwards. In this regard, the indicative project roadmap was adjusted to highlight when landowners would have opportunities to engage with the project team at all stages of route development and project design. This strategy included terms of reference for consultation with landowners and opportunities for landowners to provide feedback and input into the line design, tower locations and indicative route. In addition, a formal system was put in place to facilitate and process change requests.
- 16 In particular, EirGrid listened to the concerns of landowners who previously noted that they were often unaware of what stage the project was at. By providing terms of reference for the landowner engagement, EirGrid sought to address this issue by providing more guidance to the landowners about the project's status and by explaining the opportunities for landowners to participate in each phase of the project before it advanced to the next phase.
- 17 Additionally, the landowner terms of reference advised landowners what was open to consultation and amendment in the effort to ensure that the consultation was meaningful to both EirGrid and the landowners.
- 18 The landowner engagement process was supported by the wider range of consultation activities. In correspondence with landowners, EirGrid reminded landowners that meetings in their homes and on their land were not the only way to engage with the project team and that, should they wish, they could meet with the project team at the project information centres.
- 19 It is also noted that feedback from landowners during this phase (including submissions to the Board in respect of the previous application for approval) which related to detailed design matters fed into the detailed design considerations of the subject North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development, as presented in the *Preferred Project Solution Report* (refer to **Section 6.2**).

7.3 LANDOWNER ENGAGEMENT 2011 - 2015

- 20 EirGrid commenced engagement with landowners on the indicative route in May 2011 in parallel with the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* consultation phase. An updated property registration search prior to this time was undertaken in December 2010. As part of this round of

engagement all landowners were issued letters that enclosed terms of reference for landowner engagement for this project.

- 21 The terms of reference set out the three phased approach to landowner engagement and explained the opportunities for landowners to participate in each phase of project development. The three phases are shown in **Figure 7.1**.

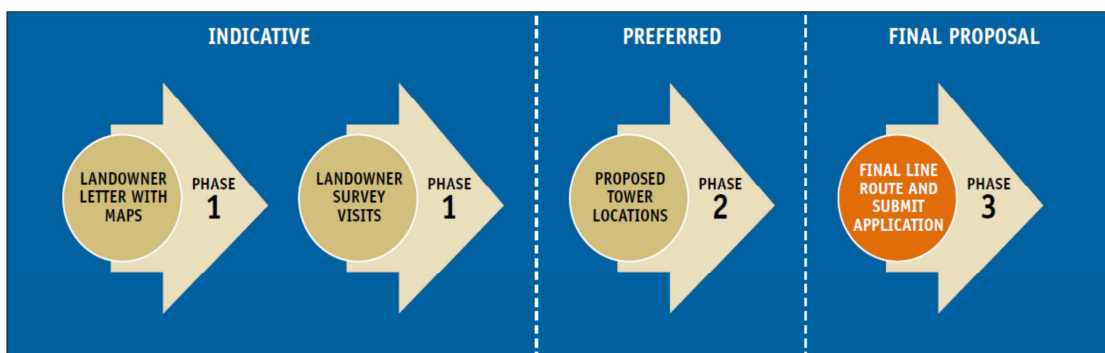


Figure 7.1: EirGrid's Phased Approach to Landowner Engagement for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development

7.3.1 Phase 1- Indicative Route

- 22 Phase 1 of the landowner engagement process took place between May and July 2011, following the publication of the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* for the project. As part of that phase, all landowners were issued with maps showing an indicative route of the line on their property. **Table 7.2** provides a summary of the information posted to landowners during this phase.
- 23 Phase 1 consultation was an opportunity for landowners to confirm ownership and make comments and suggestions with respect to the project. The purpose of the initial letter was to inform landowners of the project, to identify land holdings that may be affected by the project, and to gather information in respect of the most up-to-date information on ownership, land use and land management practices in the area potentially affected by the project. An important function of the initial letter was to engage with as many landowners as possible in order to secure their inputs at the earliest possible point in the design process.
- 24 A second letter was issued by EirGrid to all landowners, informing them that the initial consultation period, lasting six weeks and due to expire on 17th June 2011, had been extended by a further two weeks to 1st July 2011. EirGrid considered that this additional period of time would permit on-going engagement to continue, where necessary, and to allow meetings to occur in the instances where engagement had yet to take place.

- 25 Prior to the commencement of the re-evaluation consultation, EirGrid provided training to all landowner agents during three full-day landowner engagement workshops. All landowner agents were briefed on how to facilitate an accessible, meaningful, and accountable consultation process that would respect the landowner and their needs. Every attempt was made by EirGrid's landowner agents during Phase 1 to visit each landowner on the indicative line route in order to discuss the project and to engage as part of the wider re-evaluation consultation process (previously described in **Chapter 5** of this report).
- 26 The project team made at least three attempts to visit / meet with each landowner, and where this was not successful, an additional letter detailing the visit / meeting attempts was issued to the landowner in question requesting that they contact the landowner agent
- 27 A pre-survey interview form / checklist was completed by each landowner agent during the course of their visit and discussion with each landowner.
- 28 The objectives of this engagement were to meet with each landowner to obtain their feedback, confirm ownership, discuss the line route and proposed positioning of towers to minimise impact on farming practices and to request access for environmental and / or technical surveys where applicable.

Table 7.2: Details of the Landowner Mail Out Undertaken as part of Phase 1 of Landowner Engagement

Date Issued	Information Provided
6 th May 2011	<p>Each potentially affected landowner was issued with the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A letter from EirGrid announcing the commencement of the landowner consultation phase; • A copy of the <i>Community Update Brochure</i> (May 2011); • A letter from ESBI or TOBIN explaining their role as consultant to EirGrid; and • A landowner map at 1:2,500 scale with the Indicative Line Route indicated on both a base map and an aerial photograph.
17 th June 2011	A letter from EirGrid to all landowners, advising that the initial consultation period was now extended by two weeks to 1 July 2011.

7.3.2 Period between Phases 1 and 2

- 29 The *Final Re-evaluation Report*, published in April 2013, provided details of the modified indicative line route, and provided the public and landowners, with an indication of the emerging preferred line route, prior to the finalisation of the preferred project solution.
- 30 EirGrid deemed it appropriate to allow for an additional period of structured engagement on the content and findings of the *Final Re-evaluation Report* before proceeding to consultation with landowners on the preferred solution stage of the project. This additional period of engagement was in response to representations from the County Monaghan Anti-Pylon Group for additional engagement on the findings of the re-evaluation process. This resulted in EirGrid's decision to stagger the publication and engagement on the *Final Re-evaluation Report* and the consultation on the *Preferred Project Solution Report*.
- 31 This also enabled EirGrid to gather feedback on the *Final Re-evaluation Report* and this feedback was reviewed and considered by the project team prior to the publication of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* in July 2013.
- 32 In this additional phase of landowner engagement, the letters described in **Table 7.3** were issued to landowners.

Table 7.3: Details of Letters Issued to Landowners as Part of the Final Re-evaluation Stage Following an Assessment of the Modified Line Route

Landowner Category	Information Provided
Existing landowners	<p>Letters were issued to these landowners to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform them of the publication of the <i>Final Re-evaluation Report</i>; • Explain that they would receive further correspondence from EirGrid accompanied by maps of the Preferred Project Solution in due course; and • Invite landowners to provide feedback on the re-evaluation process and to advise them of open days scheduled as part of the wider engagement with the public and stakeholders on the <i>Final Re-evaluation Report</i>. <p>A 1:10,000 scale map accompanied the letter and illustrated the Indicative Line Route crossing their landholding.</p>
New landowners (due to transfer of ownership)	<p>A letter was issued to these landowners to advise that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EirGrid had noted their new ownership of the landholding;

Landowner Category	Information Provided
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EirGrid had corresponded with the previous owner and had provided them with a map showing the indicative route through the landholding; and • They would receive further correspondence from EirGrid (including maps) on the preferred project solution. <p>A copy of the 1:10,000 scale map showing the proposed indicative line route through the landholding accompanied this letter.</p>
New landowners (due to modification)	<p>A letter was issued to these landowners and included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on the project; • Information on the <i>Final Re-evaluation Report</i> and the consultation process; • 1:2,500 scale map showing the proposed indicative route through their landholding; • A separate letter from EirGrid requesting permission to access the landholding for survey; and • Notification that they would receive further correspondence from EirGrid (including maps) on the preferred project solution. <p>Following the issue of these letters, a follow up visit was carried out by EirGrid and their landowner agents to request access for survey.</p>
Persons no longer landowners	<p>These landowners were issued letters to advise them that they were no longer directly affected by the line route of the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development. The letter also included:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:10,000 scale land map showing the Indicative Line Route in proximity to their lands; and • Information on the <i>Final Re-evaluation Report</i> and the consultation process.

33 In the period between Phase 1 and Phase 2, an updated property registration search was undertaken by EirGrid's consultants in October 2012 to ensure that the project team had access to the most up-to-date landowner information. The search was undertaken along the modified line route (due to revisions made on foot of Phase 1) and the results were compared with the 2011 landowner list. The results indicated the following:

- Fifty new landowners were identified as follows:

- Six of these new landowners were identified as 'new' i.e. these landowners were not directly affected by the initial indicative route in 2011; and
 - The remaining 44 No. landowners were 'new' as a result of transfer / establishment of ownership.
- Ten landowners were identified as no longer being affected by the modified line route, compared with the initial Indicative Line Route in 2011.

7.3.3 Phase 2 – Preferred Line Route

- 34 This phase commenced in July 2013 with the publication of the *Preferred Project Solution Report*, whereby EirGrid issued landowners with detailed maps of the preferred route, proposed tower locations, indicative temporary access routes and work areas for construction. It ran for a period of eight weeks, from 16th July 2013 to 9th September 2013, in parallel with the wider consultation on the *Preferred Project Solution Report* (described in **Chapter 6**).
- 35 One of the key messages delivered to landowners during this stage was that EirGrid would not be seeking flexibility in the new application in respect of the movement of tower positions (i.e. 'micro-siting') post-planning.
- 36 EirGrid wanted to provide landowners with as much opportunity as possible to influence the design of the line and tower locations at this stage prior to planning. In doing so, landowners and members of the public were provided with a number of avenues for engagement and to submit a change request to the proposal, all of which were availed of:

- Change request form;
- Visit by Wayleave agent;
- Phonenumber or email;
- Open days;
- Through the agricultural advisor;
- Drop into project information offices; and
- Representative Groups (e.g. CMAPLG) or local politicians.

37 A key element of EirGrid's proactive approach to engagement with landowners was the preparation and issue of a comprehensive *Landowner Information Brochure* which set out information for landowners on the current stage of the project. It also provided information on the offer of an agronomy assessment by an agricultural advisor to each landowner who had any concerns about the potential impact of the proposal on their landholding. The *Landowner Information Brochure* is included in **Appendix I**.

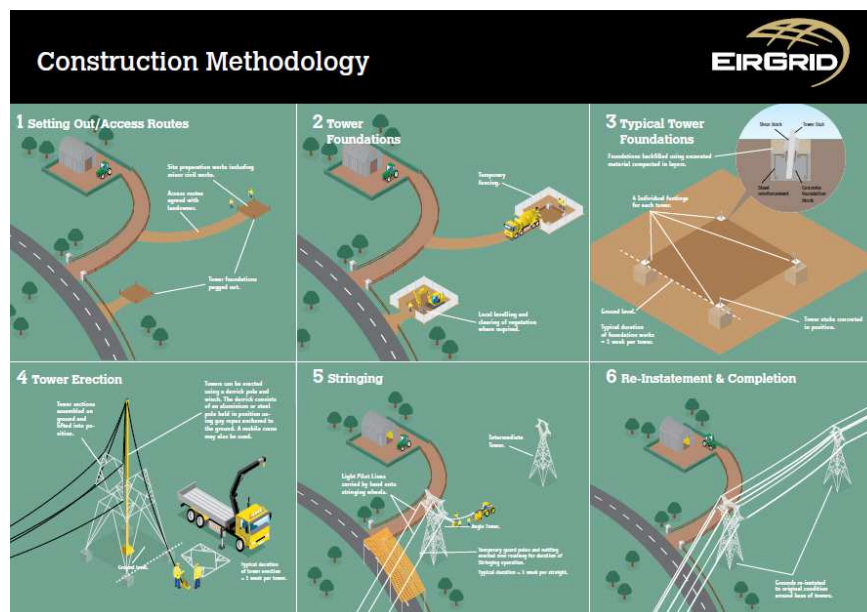


Figure 7.2: EirGrid's Schematic Illustration of Construction Methodology Published in July 2013 as part of Consultation on the Preferred Project Solution Report

38 Landowners were issued with letters and updated maps of the preferred route and proposed tower locations by post on 15th July 2013. In these letters, EirGrid communicated its willingness to engage with landowners and invited them to comment on the tower locations and to

participate further in the consultation process. Where landowners had previously requested a modification to the line route during Phase 1 of landowner engagement, this was reflected in their letter.

39 The following were the objectives of this phase of engagement:

- Confirm landholdings;
- Request feedback on the preferred line route, tower locations and access routes;
- Seek landowner feedback in order to minimise impact on farming practices;
- Understand matters of local importance, interests, concerns;
- Identify any local constraints not already known; and
- Request access to survey land.

40 During this phase, landowners were provided with updated maps of i) the preferred route and proposed tower locations and ii) indicative access routes. Each landowner was also sent a copy of the *Landowner Information Brochure* which set out the following information:

- Background and context;
- The landowner engagement terms of reference;
- Information on the progression of the project towards a new planning application, including details of the current stage, at that time which was the identification of the preferred project solution, and information on the *Preferred Project Solution Report*.
- Details of the open days and project information centres where landowners could meet the project team;
- Details of the guidelines for the design of OHLs and tower positioning;
- Compensation;
- The guidelines for the identification of construction access routes;
- Graphic illustration of the indicative construction methodology for the project;
- Details of the preferred tower types proposed;

- Details of how landowners could engage with EirGrid to influence the line design and tower positioning process. This was accompanied by a 'Landowner Change Request Form';
- Contact information for EirGrid and ways that landowners could contact the project team;
- The offer of an agricultural adviser to discuss landowner concerns and to carry out an assessment of the impact that the proposal may have on their farm practice;
- Reference to the removal of limits of deviation (micro-siting) from the proposal; and
- Reference to the movement of towers from hedgerows.

41 **Table 7.4** presents a summary of the key messages and content of the letters and landowner information packs issued by EirGrid during Phase 2 of landowner engagement to two recipient groups.

Table 7.4: Details of the Information Issued to Landowners During Phase 2 of Landowner Engagement

Letter Description	Key Items Addressed	Enclosures
Modification Requests (All landowners who requested changes during previous round of engagement)	<p>Information that the project had entered the next stage and invited participation in the next stage of consultation.</p> <p>Thanks for participating in the previous round of consultation.</p> <p>Responded to change request. The letter advised whether their modification request had either been accommodated or not by the EirGrid project team and set out the reasons for same.</p> <p>Offered assessment of land by an agricultural advisor and change request options.</p> <p>Requested access to survey land.</p> <p>Referenced enclosed maps and brochures.</p>	<p><i>Community Update Brochure</i> and <i>Landowner Information Brochure</i></p> <p>Map(s) showing tower locations</p> <p>Map(s) showing access routes</p>
General landowners (i.e. all remaining landowners from whom modification requests were not received in Phase 1)	<p>Information that the project had entered the next stage and invited participation in the next stage of consultation.</p> <p>Requested access to survey land.</p> <p>Referenced enclosed maps and brochures.</p> <p>Offered assessment of land by an agricultural advisor and change request options.</p>	<p><i>Community Update Brochure</i> and <i>Landowner Information Brochure</i></p> <p>Map(s) showing tower locations</p> <p>Map(s) showing access routes</p> <p>Notice to new landowners due to transfer of ownership</p>

7.3.3.1 Landowner Change Requests

42 As part of the design process of the preferred line route, EirGrid gave consideration to technical, environmental and landowner considerations. The guiding principles for the overhead line design, tower positioning and the identification of access routes used by EirGrid were outlined in the *Landowner Information Brochure* and published in Chapter 3 of the *Preferred Project Solution Report*, which was available on request to any landowner who requested a copy or alternatively was available on the project website and at the project information centres.

- 43 As described in **Chapter 6**, at each of the open days, EirGrid displayed information panels in respect of the preferred project solution. Panels of particular relevance to landowners included map displays of the preferred line route and tower locations, guidelines for the OHL design and tower positioning and guidelines for the identification of construction access routes.
- 44 Members of the EirGrid technical line design team were on hand at each of the open days to answer any questions which landowners may have had on the line route and tower locations. Similarly, EirGrid's consultant agronomist was available to discuss the impact of the proposal on landowners' farm practices.
- 45 To accommodate consideration and assessment of landowner's desired changes to the line route and tower locations, the *Landowner Information Brochure* included a landowner change request form and information on how landowners could influence the line.
- 46 This form asked landowners the following information:
- Their preferred method of contact (i.e. phone, email, post, visit);
 - Would they like to meet directly with EirGrid;
 - Would they like an agricultural advisor to carry out an assessment of the impact the proposal may have on their farm practice;
 - Would they allow access for an environmental field survey of their property so that EirGrid could assess any change request made;
 - Did they have any feedback on the proposed line route, tower locations or indicative access routes detailed on the map; and
 - Feedback and details of their proposed change(s) and their reasons for the requested change(s).

7.3.3.2 How Change Requests were Considered

- 47 Where the recommendation or request to modify the line design, as published in the *Preferred Project Solution Report*, was determined to be environmentally and technically feasible and in accordance with landowner considerations guiding the design, modifications to the line design have been undertaken.

- 48 It is EirGrid's experience of developing electricity transmission infrastructure that individuals, who live in close proximity to the line route, including landowners, will often make a request to maximise the distance from the proposed line to their dwelling. In addition, landowners will often express a preference as to where the line might cross their land; or request a change as to how or where a line is proposed to cross their land; and, in particular, where any structures might be located on their land (e.g. on field boundaries or in hedgerows). In addition, other bodies and organisations (including prescribed authorities) often raise issues or concerns in respect of particular aspects of the proposed development, including tower positions.
- 49 Modification requests received during the engagement with landowners on the preferred project solution were dealt with as follows:
- From a technical perspective, the proposed tower position modifications were assessed using a Digital Terrain Model (DTM), Power Line Systems – Computer Aided Design and Drafting (PLS CADD), aerial photography, aerial Light detecting aerial survey (LiDAR)²¹ and Ordnance Survey mapping to determine its feasibility. Implications for tower spans, tower heights, conductor clearance levels, separation distances to dwellings, etc., were also assessed; and
 - From an environmental perspective, the proposed modification was assessed by the relevant specialists – including ecologists, archaeologists, hydrologists, geologists, landscape architects, planners, agronomists and wayleave agents. Initially, a desk based assessment was undertaken which included a review of environmental constraints using aerial photography, LiDAR survey and other environmental datasets. Field, vantage point and other site specific surveys were also carried out where applicable and, if possible, surveys were carried out on the lands with the consent of the landowner.
- 50 The guidelines adopted for dealing with modification requests are set out below:
- All reasonable design change requests were technically and environmentally assessed in accordance with the approach outlined above; and
 - In order to be accommodated, suggested design changes:
 - Had to meet general line design requirements (as set out in the *Preferred Project Solution Report*);
 - Must not result in an undue greater impact for nearby or adjoining dwellings / sensitive receptors;

²¹ LiDAR is a remote sensing technology that uses laser scanning to collect 3 dimensional (3D) data.

- Should minimise the number of macro²² changes to the overall line design; and
- Proposed modifications should be confined, where possible, to the landowner's property.

51 A balanced judgement was made based on technical, environmental, landowner and other considerations. Each landowner was issued with a letter which informed them whether their change request had either been accommodated, or not, within the line design and set out the reasons for same. The contact information of their designated landowner agent was included within the letter and further information or discussion of the reasons was facilitated by EirGrid.

7.3.4 Phase 3 – Final Line Route

52 In Phase 3, following the assessment of all of the modification requests received, landowners were informed (in writing) of the final line route²³, tower locations and proposed temporary access routes as appropriate to their landholding that EirGrid was intending to submit to the Board for approval. These letters were issued on 12th December 2013.

53 In the case of those landowners who had submitted a change request the letters advised whether or not the request had been accommodated. Where a change request could not be accommodated an explanation was provided and the landowners were invited to contact their landowner agent if they required further explanation.

54 The following categories of letters were issued to landowners:-

- General landowners to inform them of the latest proposal;
- Landowners whose requested modification has been accommodated; and
- Landowners whose modification request had not been accommodated.

55 Details of the correspondence issued to landowners are provided in **Table 7.5**.

²² Representing a significant change over several hundred metres which has generally resulted in additional intermediate / angle towers

²³ The December 2013 line route was subsequently revised by EirGrid and was published in March 2015. The review resulted in some of the proposed tower positions being re-positioned along the alignment. The alignment itself did not change as a result of the review.

7.3.5 Correspondence with Landowners Prior to Submission of the Planning Application

- 56 In March 2015, EirGrid published a final line design proposal for the project. The December 2013 line route had been reviewed and resulted in some of the proposed tower locations being re-positioned along the alignment. The alignment itself did not change. A total of 16 landowners were affected by the resulting changes. Prior to publication of the revised line design EirGrid wrote to these 16 landowners, informing them that a review of the December 2013 line route had been undertaken and had resulted in a number of changes to the line design. The letter provided information about how the changes would impact on their landholding and enclosed a map to illustrate the change. It included the name and contact information of their designated landowner agent with whom they could discuss the change. Following receipt of the letter meetings were held with a number of the landowners. A sample of the letter is provided in **Appendix I** of this report. The changes arising from the review of the December 2013 line route applied to the CMSA with no changes applicable to the MSA.
- 57 EirGrid will issue landowners with a map of the final proposal, as it affects their lands, prior to the submission of the planning application to the Board. This letter will be accompanied by a copy of the PCI Public Information Leaflet and Community Update Brochure (refer to **Chapter 8; Section 8.2** of this Report).
- 58 Following the submission of the planning application to An Bord Pleanála, EirGrid will issue a printed copy of the non-technical summary of the EIS along with a digital copy of the entire EIS and NIS on compact disc to landowners.

Table 7.5: Details of the Information Issued to Landowners During Phase 3 of Landowner Engagement

Landowner	Key issues Addressed	Enclosures
Landowners whose Modification Request was accommodated	<p>Informed them that their change request had been accommodated.</p> <p>Provided information on when the application would be submitted to the Board.</p> <p>Information on the current status of the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a 1:2,500 scale land map showing the final line design crossing their lands. • a 1:2,500 scale map showing the access routes to towers and stringing locations, where applicable. • <i>Community Update Newsletter</i> – December 2013.
Landowners whose Modification Request was not accommodated	<p>Informed them that their change request had not been accommodated and provided reasons for this decision.</p> <p>Advised them that the EirGrid landowner agent dealing with their request would like to call to them to discuss the reasons provided in further detail.</p> <p>Provided information on when the application would be lodged with the Board.</p> <p>Information on the current status of the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a 1:2,500 scale land map showing the final line design crossing their lands. • a 1:2,500 scale map showing access routes to towers and stringing locations where applicable. • <i>Community Update Newsletter</i> – December 2013.
General Landowner This letter was sent to all remaining landowners who did not submit a change request and to landowners identified within 50m of the centreline.	<p>Informed them that the line design has been finalised.</p> <p>Provided information on when the application would be submitted to the Board.</p> <p>Information on the current status of the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:2,500 scale land map showing the proposed final line route with tower locations crossing their lands. • 1:2,500 scale map showing indicative access routes to towers and stringing locations of any towers that may be on their property. • <i>Community Update Newsletter</i> – December 2013.

7.4 NATURE OF FEEDBACK

7.4.1.1 Phase 1

59 During Phase 1 much of the landowner engagement focused on site-specific issues, including the project's potential impact on specific landholdings. These issues were dealt with on a landowner-by-landowner basis.

60 During the landowner consultation, a number of issues were raised. **Table 7.6** provides the key issues and their relevant sub-issues that were recorded by landowner engagement agents during Phase 1 of the consultation process.

Table 7.6: Key Landowner Issues Raised During Phase 1 of Landowner Engagement

Key Issue	Sub-Issue
Access	EirGrid's legal rights to enter lands.
Agronomy	Agriculture concerns, livestock (cattle and bulls), bloodstock, stud farms, bees, cell count in cows, infertility in livestock, potato drills, impact on Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPs), Agri-Environment Options Scheme (AEOS) or subsidies, silage, commonage, fruit tunnels, poultry.
Archaeology	Forts, monuments.
Aviation	Impact on low-flying aircraft.
Communications	Poor communications, duration of consultation / commentary period.
Compensation	Compensation for development, insurance, donation to community groups.
Construction Impacts	Impact of farming practices during construction, size and type of construction vehicles, duration of construction works, depth of foundations, construction noise.
Devaluation	Planning permission, loss of development of site, loss of land sale, devaluation, loss of future development, impact on rental income, impacts on sheds, impact on existing wind farms, loss of development of future wind farms.
Environment	Forestry / trees, shelter belts, swans, bogs / swamps, hedgerows, lakes, flora and fauna, geology (quarries, sand holes, spring wells).

Key Issue	Sub-Issue
Health	EMF, pacemakers, autism, cancer, radiation.
Local Constraints	Movements, specific issues on land (trees, hedgerows, swamps).
Need and Planning	Need for project, transboundary impact.
Route Alternatives	Route selection, possibility to consider alternative routes, existing power lines.
Substations	Reason for omission of Moyhill Substation.
Visual Impact	Impact on views, impact on local lakes, impact on residential amenity.
Undergrounding	Request for undergrounding, local job creation as a result of undergrounding.

7.4.1.2 Phase 2

- 61 During the Phase 2 landowner engagement, a number of general issues were raised, the majority of which were broadly consistent with those raised by other stakeholders as previously documented in **Table 7.6** and **Chapters 4, 5** and **6** of this report.
- 62 **Table 7.7** provides the key issues and their relevant sub-issues that were recorded by landowner agents during the Phase 2 consultation process on the preferred project solution.

Table 7.7: Landowner Issues Raised During Phase 2 of Landowner Engagement

Key Issue	Sub-Issue
Access	Landowners provided feedback on the proposed indicative construction access routes and provided information on potential access problems. Feedback included information on local topography and information on preferred access routes. Many landowners advised EirGrid that they will not provide access on the grounds of their concerns in respect of health and EMF and / or visual impact.
Construction	Queries were raised in relation to the proposed duration of construction on their lands and the methods by which this would be achieved. Landowners also asked if lands and access tracks would be re-instated following the construction phase.
Agronomy	Impacts on their landholding and farm management practices.

Key Issue	Sub-Issue
Compensation	Landowners raised queries in relation to the level of compensation payments for the tower structures, how these payments would be issued and the tax implications.
Devaluation and loss of development	Many landowners expressed their concern in respect to how the construction of the project would devalue their lands and property with many referencing how they had inherited the lands from previous generations and how they themselves planned to pass it on to the next generation. In this context, landowners raised specific concerns in relation to how the proposals would impact on future planning applications for their family.
Local constraints	Landowners raised concerns with regard to localised constraints which they identified, and provided information on. Examples included ringforts, quarries, wells etc.
Undergrounding	Many landowners advised that their preference was to underground the cables for the projects, while others advised of their complete opposition to the project, whether it be under or overground.

7.5 RESPONSES TO ISSUES RAISED DURING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (PHASES 1 AND 2)

- 63 Each of the change requests submitted by landowners, either via the landowner change request form or during the visit with the landowner agent, was assessed by EirGrid's appointed line design technical and environmental specialists in accordance with technical, environmental and landowner considerations as described in Chapter 3 of the *Preferred Project Solution Report*.
- 64 Where the recommendation or request to modify the line design, as published in the *Preferred Project Solution Report*, was determined to be environmentally and technically feasible and in accordance with landowner considerations guiding the design, modifications to the line design have been undertaken. Each landowner was issued with a letter which informed them whether their change request had either been accommodated, or not, within the line design and set out the reasons for same. The contact information of their designated landowner agent was included within the letter and further information or discussion of the reasons was facilitated by EirGrid.

7.6 IMPACT OF LANDOWNER ENGAGEMENT (PHASES 1 AND 2)

65 The approximate level of landowner engagement from 2011 to 2013 (arising from Phase 1 and Phase 2 landowner engagement activities) is provided in **Table 7.8**. In response to Phase 2 – preferred line route (including relevant modification requests by landowners during Phase 1) EirGrid's proactive engagement with landowners resulted in approximately 60 change requests in relation to line design and access routes being submitted by individual landowners. Over 50% of these have been incorporated into the final design.

Table 7.8: Outcome of Landowner Engagement from the Re-evaluation Period to Submittal of Application

Total number of landowners*	456
Landholdings Surveyed	115
Number of Change Requests Received**	57
Number of Change Requests Accommodated**	30

Notes:

* Total No. of Landowners affected by proposals throughout design phase (therefore greater number than that affected by the final proposed line which is 439)

** After publication of *Preferred Project Solution Report*

66 As noted in **Section 3.7.2** certain landowners issued forms of authority and instructions to EirGrid to communicate only through their appointed representatives, EirGrid and their agents were thereby precluded from proactive communications with landowners who were represented by the two landowner representative groups. As a consequence of this, EirGrid could only provide statutory or other formal notices relating to their lands directly to these landowners and thus EirGrid was unable to proactively contact landowners represented by these groups during phase 2 landowner consultation.

8 PERIOD POST CLOSURE OF CONSULTATION ON THE PREFERRED PROJECT SOLUTION AND PRIOR TO THE SUBMITTAL OF THE PLANNING APPLICATION

8.1 SEPTEMBER 2013 TO DECEMBER 2013

1 Since informing landowners (in writing) of the final line design and tower location that EirGrid was intending to submit to An Bord Pleanála (the Board) for approval (on 12th December 2013) the following consultation activities took place:

- The project information phone line, email and project website remained in place and was promoted as being operational. The website was updated with information on what activity was taking place.
- EirGrid prepared and issued a *Community Update Newsletter* in December 2013 (refer to **Appendix J** of this report) which provided members of the public and landowners with information on project activity that had taken place since the close of the consultation on 9th September 2013. Media, public representatives and other stakeholders were updated about project progress and were provided with a copy of the *Community Update Newsletter*.
- Community groups in the three counties which had expressed an interest in further engagement during previous stages of the project were contacted. These included groups who expressed interest in participating in the consultation on community gain for the project and those who had requested additional meetings with the project team.
- Each of the local chambers of commerce in counties Cavan, Meath and Monaghan were offered a briefing on the project in December 2013. A briefing was provided to Navan Chamber on 4th December 2013.
- Landowners who submitted change requests were contacted by EirGrid's landowner agents via letter in December 2013 and advised whether their change request had been accommodated in the final line design. In cases where a change request could not be accommodated by EirGrid, the reasons for same were provided within the letter to the landowner. All landowners were issued with a letter and accompanying map which illustrated the proposed final line design that EirGrid intended to submit to the Board in due course.
- EirGrid delivered presentations to the local authorities in counties Cavan and Meath during October 2013.

- EirGrid attended a meeting with the Joint Oireachtas Committee on 4th December 2013, as requested, to address queries in respect of EirGrid projects, including the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development.

8.2 PROJECT PROPOSAL PHASE (DECEMBER 2013 - SUBMISSION)

2 In December 2013 following review of feedback on the *Preferred Project Solution Report* consultation, EirGrid published on the project website, its final line design which was intended to form the basis for an application for planning approval to the Board. A *Community Update Newsletter* was also issued in December 2013 (refer to **Appendix J** of this report) to publicise this and to advise stakeholders on how they could view and seek information on the details of the final line design.

8.2.1 Other Matters of Relevance that occurred during the Period

8.2.1.1 Independent Expert Panel

3 In January 2014 the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources appointed an Independent Expert Panel (IEP) to oversee and facilitate a “*comparative analysis of underground and overhead alternatives for the Grid West and Grid Link projects*”. In addition, the IEP was tasked with providing an opinion to the Minister on “*the compatibility of the methodologies to be employed on the GL and GW projects with what has already been done on the North South Transmission Line project*”.

4 In July 2014 the Panel, which is made up of Mrs Justice Catherine McGuinness, Chairperson, Professor Keith Bell, Professor John Fitzgerald, Dr. Karen Foley and Mr. Colm McCarthy provided its opinion on the matter and this has been published by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR). The IEP is of the opinion that the work completed to date on the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development is compatible with the terms of reference that they have specified for the Grid West and Grid Link projects. This opinion was published by the Department of Communications, Energy, and Natural Resources (DCENR).

8.2.1.2 EirGrid’s Grid25 Initiatives

5 In January 2014, EirGrid set out a number of initiatives, in response to public concerns expressed about some of its major projects proposed as part of the Grid25 strategy (which includes the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development) to develop and upgrade Ireland’s electricity transmission network.

6 The initiatives, published on EirGrid’s website <http://www.eirgrid.com/media/Grid25Initiatives.pdf> include a proposal for community gain funds for localities located close to new pylons and

substations. Further details of the Grid25 initiatives are also provided on the website and are set out in the *Planning Report Volume 2A* of the application documentation.

- 7 As set out in **Section 2.1.5**, the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development is designated a Project of Common Interest (PCI) with reference to Regulation (EU) No. 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (Guidelines for Trans-European Energy Infrastructure). EirGrid submitted a notification under Article 10.1(a) of Regulation 347/2013 to the Board on 3rd June 2014 in respect of the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development. An acknowledgement of the notification was received by EirGrid from the Board, on 2nd July 2014 which confirmed that the Board considers the project as being “*mature enough to enter the permit granting process*”.
- 8 EirGrid published a *Community Update Brochure* in July 2014 (refer to **Appendix K** of this report) to ensure continued awareness of the project prior to the submission of the application. It advised that EirGrid was preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in accordance with the scoping opinion that was provided by the Board and which was informed by the feedback received during public consultation and participation. It also provided an update on the opinion of the IEP that the work completed to date on the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development is compatible with the methodologies now being employed on the Grid West and Grid Link projects. The brochure set out EirGrid’s updated Project Development and Consultation Roadmap and identified the stage which had been reached in terms of the roadmap. It also advised on the timelines associated with the PCI notification procedures being undertaken at that time by EirGrid and the lead up to an application submission. This brochure also contained an overview of the project and the national grid development strategy (Grid25) and provided the web addresses of the EU Commission’s transparency platform the Board’s *Project of Common Interest Manual of Permit Granting Process Procedures*.
- 9 During this time, EirGrid continued to operate its project information service and to provide project briefings to key stakeholders.

8.2.2 Communications Activities Undertaken from March 2015 up to Submission of the Application for Approval

- 10 As referred to in **Section 2.2.2.1** of this report, in December 2013 EirGrid published a document “*Reviewing and Improving our Public Consultation Process*”. This review examined EirGrid’s approach to consultation and compared it with international best practice for consultation on strategic infrastructure projects. It also summarised feedback received from the public, elected representatives and the media in respect of consultation undertaken primarily on the larger EirGrid projects. The review identified three main themes, set out below:

- Theme 1: Develop a Participative Approach – “we will move to a more community focused approach when developing electricity projects – to enable a greater stakeholder participation from the outset”;
 - Theme 2: Change our Culture and Process – “we will change the culture in our organisation – to develop stronger relationships with stakeholders and communities”;
 - Theme 3: Encourage Leadership and Advocacy – “we will seek support from the political system and state bodies – to better explain energy issues and make the benefits of a stronger system clearer to all”.
- 11 Each theme underpins a number of commitments, all with the intent of enhancing the collaborative nature of the project development process. This enhanced approach is envisaged to apply both to the project development phase, and on an ongoing basis.
- 12 As part of these commitments, EirGrid engaged with the public, stakeholders and landowners, in advance of the submission of the planning application to the Board. EirGrid opened the project information centres in Navan, Carrickmacross and Kingscourt on 16th March 2015 (excluding bank holidays and public holidays). This engagement with the public and public concerned provided stakeholders with an update on the project, including recent developments and factors that had influenced the timeline for the planning process (including the IEP Review and the designation of the project as a Project of Common Interest (PCI). This engagement informed the public and public concerned of the final line design that EirGrid intended to submit to the Board in due course.
- 13 As part of the commitments made by EirGrid in its updated approach to consultation in respect of its transmission projects, EirGrid placed advertisements for the recruitment of two community liaison officers (CLOs) and three agricultural liaison officers (ALOs). These roles will provide a liaison role to assist with the engagement of stakeholders throughout Ireland (including Meath, Cavan and Monaghan) for EirGrid’s projects. The ALOs will liaise with key agricultural stakeholders and landowners in regard to transmission infrastructure development in all phases of the project lifecycle from initiation and through the planning and construction phases. The CLOs will liaise with individuals, representatives of local authorities and relevant stakeholder groups.
- 14 As part of its commitment to respond to the concerns of the agriculture, equine and tourism sectors in respect of its major projects EirGrid published three reports. These are available at www.eirgrid.com/aboutus/publications/gridinitiatives. |

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- 15 On March 27th 2015, EirGrid published “*Your Grid, Your Views, Your Tomorrow. A Discussion Paper on Ireland’s Grid Development Strategy*”. The document, and associated appendices, was published on the EirGrid website. In Chapter 5 of the discussion document, EirGrid advised the following with regard to the North-South 400kV Interconnection Development:

“Our review of Grid25 found there remained a compelling and clear need for the project. We expect to submit a planning application for the North South 400kV Interconnection Development in the coming weeks.

We remain committed to our new standards of consultation to ensure that all interested parties have an opportunity to voice their views. To that end, we have recently opened local offices in Carrickmacross, Navan and Kingscourt”.

- 16 EirGrid attended, by invitation, a meeting of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on 21st April 2015, as requested, to address queries in respect of the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development.
- 17 A summary of communications activities that were undertaken by EirGrid between March 2015 up to submission of the planning application is provided in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1: Summary of Communications Activities that were undertaken by EirGrid between March 2015 up to submission of the Planning Application

Method	Communications Activity
Project Information centres	<p>EirGrid opened the three project information centres in Navan, Carrickmacross and Kingscourt on 16th March 2015. Each office opened between 12 noon and 6pm on their advertised days (excluding bank holidays and public holidays).</p> <p>The Navan office opened for two days per week (Tuesdays and Fridays).</p> <p>The Carrickmacross office opened for two days per week (Mondays and Thursdays).</p> <p>The Kingscourt centre opened for one day per week (Wednesdays) and remained open on each Wednesday until 1st April 2015. Thereafter the venue was no longer available and a search for a replacement centre commenced. A replacement venue in County Cavan was obtained and opened in the Cavan Enterprise & Technology Centre in Cootehill, Co. Cavan in June 2015.</p> <p>.</p>
Press Releases	<p>A press release was issued by EirGrid to local media to ensure that the public and landowners were aware of the opening of the project information centres in March 2015.</p> <p>A press release was issued by EirGrid to local and national media in advance of the submission of the planning application to the Board.</p>
Advertising	<p>Advertisements were placed in local media to inform the public and stakeholders of the opening of the project information centres in March 2015.</p> <p>Advertisements were placed in two national newspapers to inform the public of the publication of the PCI <i>Public Information Leaflet</i> in May 2015.</p> <p>Notices will be placed in two national newspapers and three regional newspapers to inform the public of the intention to shortly submit the application to the Board. A notice will also be placed in the Irish Independent's "Seachtain" Irish language newspaper.</p>
Lo-Call Phone Line	<p>The project Lo-Call phone line service, that operates from 9am to 5pm Monday – Friday, continued to operate.</p>
Information Material	<p>EirGrid published a <i>PCI Public Information Leaflet</i> and notice of its publication was advertised in two national newspapers.</p> <p>A Community Update Brochure will be issued to stakeholders to coincide with the submission of the planning application to the Board. This brochure will be a user's guide to the application refer to Appendix M).</p>

Method	Communications Activity
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	EirGrid will produce an updated FAQ on the project to coincide with the submission of the application to An Bord Pleanála. The FAQ will be available in hard copy format at the three project information centres.
Website	<p>The project website was updated with information to reflect the opening of the project information centres, the publication of the <i>PCI Public Information Leaflet</i> and the closure of the project information centre in Kingscourt. Details of the new project information centre in Cootehill, Co. Cavan were added in June 2015 coinciding with its opening.</p> <p>EirGrid will publish the Community Update Brochure on the project website to coincide with its issue to stakeholders and landowners prior to the submission of the planning application to An Bord Pleanála.</p> <p>The website will be further updated to coincide with the submission of the planning application to the Board and will link to the planning website.</p>

- 18 EirGrid published the line design that forms the basis of this planning application to the Board, on its project website in March 2015. To coincide with this publication, the project information centres, which were accessible by prior appointment since consultation on the preferred project solution ended in September 2013, opened in March 2015. The project information centres in Navan (Tuesdays and Fridays) and Carrickmacross (Mondays and Thursdays) opened for two days per week (between 12 noon and 6pm) and the centre in Kingscourt for one day per week (Wednesdays; 12 noon to 6pm). During this time, EirGrid staff were available to provide the latest information on the project. Due to the unavailability of the venue in the Dun na Ri House Hotel in Kingscourt for the project information centre, the venue closed on 1st April 2015 and a search for a replacement centre in County Cavan commenced. A new project information centre located in the Cavan Enterprise & Technology Centre in Cootehill opened in June 2015.
- 19 EirGrid placed advertisements in local newspapers to notify the public of the opening of the project information centres and to provide details of the opening hours and locations of each centre. The advertisement informed the public of the publishing of the proposed line design and invited the public and stakeholders to visit the project information centres to meet with the project team to discuss the proposed line design.
- 20 EirGrid staff were available in each of the project information centres to provide the latest information on the project and to address any queries the public may have on the proposal.
- 21 In May 2015, EirGrid published the PCI Public Information Leaflet on the project website. The content of the leaflet is provided in the following section. Printed copies of the leaflet were available in each of the project information centres

22 The publication of the *PCI Public Information Leaflet* (refer to **Appendix L** of this report) was advertised in The Irish Times and Irish Independent and was made available on the EirGrid project's website for viewing and / or download. In addition, the leaflet was available at each of the project information centres and on request via the project information service. The leaflet provided information on the following:

- The history of the project to date;
- Information regarding Regulation 347/2013;
- The project status as a Project of Common Interest (PCI);
- The main implications (benefits and obligations) arising from its status as a PCI;
- Future project roadmap including an indicative date for lodgement of an application under Section 182A of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2014 and indicating the opportunities for public participation.

23 The *Community Update Brochure* will be issued to stakeholders to coincide with the submission of the application (refer to **Appendix M** of this report). This brochure will provide information on:

- A map of the final line design submitted to the Board along with a brief description of the line, tower locations and a description of the process and rationale for how the final line was completed;
- A summary of the EIS, including proposed mitigation measures;
- A guide to the application (and the documentation submitted to the Board) and the statutory process being undertaken;
- Details of where the application documentation (including the EIS and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) can be viewed and / or downloaded. This will include information on where and when the application and EIS/NIS will be on public display;
- Details of how the public can make submissions or observations to the Board with details of the closing date and where submissions should be sent;
- Information on the dates, opening hours and locations of the project information centres

24 Other activities, in addition to those listed in **Table 8.1**, that EirGrid intends to undertake to coincide with the submission of the application include:

- EirGrid will issue a press release notifying the media in counties Cavan, Meath and Monaghan of the submission of the planning application.
- The project website will be updated with information to reflect the submission of the application.

8.3 STATUTORY CONSULTATION PROCESS

25 The requirements of the planning approval process under the *Planning and Development Acts 2000-2014*) make provision for consultation during the statutory process in the following ways. Relevant provisions include *inter alia*:

- An applicant is required to publish notice of the application in at least one National newspaper and one newspaper circulating in the area and site notices will also be required. Refer to **Volume 1A** of the application documentation which outlines how EirGrid will meet these requirements.
- A dedicated website will be set up for the statutory application process and will include all the planning application documentation to be submitted to the Board. All information will be available for view and download. Refer to **Volume 1A** of the application documentation for further detail. A link to this new website will be provided from the project webpage on the EirGrid website which hosted all the information on the project and consultation to date. Application documentation will be available on the dedicated website in the Irish language. The website will continue to be updated and documents made available throughout the planning process.
- The planning application documentation will also be available at the Board's offices and those of the planning authorities in whose jurisdictions the proposed development will be located (i.e. Monaghan, Cavan and Meath County Councils). EirGrid will also make hard copies of the application, including the EIS and NIS available for inspection and for purchase (for the reasonable cost of making the copy) during the statutory consultation phase, following submission of the application.
- The statutory process provides for the making of written submissions to the Board. Any person or body may make a submission to the Board within the period allowed for the application to be inspected in relation to the implications of the proposed development on the proper planning and sustainable development and the likely effects on the environment or adverse effects on the integrity of a European site, of the proposed development. The requirements for making a submission are set out in Article 217 of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001* (as amended). Guidance is also available on the Board's website (www.pleanala.ie).

- The statutory process also makes provision for the holding of an oral hearing and in the case of strategic infrastructure proposals these are generally convened. In the event that an oral hearing is held, parties have the right to make oral submissions and at the discretion of the inspector to put questions to the applicant.

26 In addition, EirGrid will continue to operate the project phone line and email service throughout the statutory consultation phase. In addition, each of its three project information centres (Navan, Carrickmacross and Cootehill) will be open throughout the period and staff will be available to provide guidance and assistance in relation to obtaining information / viewing the application documentation.

9 CONCLUSION

- 1 In the period since 2007, EirGrid adopted a public consultation process for the proposed North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development that comprised two strands. The first strand focussed on the public, the public concerned and all interested stakeholders. The second strand focussed on landowners who could potentially be affected by the project.
- 2 From the outset in 2007, EirGrid recognised that creating awareness of the project was important to ensure the ongoing participation of the public throughout each of the project development stages and, critically, during periods of focussed public consultation. To this end, EirGrid employed diverse communications methods and tools in the effort to provide a wide-ranging and accessible public consultation process. This was to provide those who wished to participate with opportunities to engage with the project, in a format of their choice i.e. via traditional methods (such as post, hard copy documents and maps) or online (such as email, project website).
- 3 EirGrid's approach to public consultation for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development project was drawn up and implemented in accordance with its three underlying pillars for public consultation, each of which are compatible with the requirements of the Aarhus Convention. EirGrid's consultation pillars are that it be accessible, meaningful and accountable. To achieve this, EirGrid adopted a wide variety of communications methods and tools that included *inter alia* the following:
 - A dedicated Lo-call project phone line (1890 25 26 90) that was established in 2007, at the first phase of consultation for members of the public to contact the project team for further information, to have their questions answered and make requests for documents and meetings with the project team. This phone line has remained open to the public between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, since 2007 to date.
 - EirGrid provided an email and postal addresses in 2007 for members of the public and landowners to direct their queries and / or request information in writing.
 - A project website where all key project materials, including reports and the most up to date maps could be accessed by the public. This facility was in operation since 2007 and included a section called 'project activity' that provided the public with a date stamped record of project publications since the inception of the project.
 - Media and advertising between 2007 and 2010 (leading up to the preparation and submission of the first application for planning) which re-commenced during the preliminary re-evaluation phase in 2011 and continued up to the submission of the application.

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- Brochures and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) documents were produced on a regular basis to provide the public with the latest information on project developments, to summarise key reports and documents and to answer questions that had been raised throughout the public consultation process. Each brochure also provided details on how the project team could be contacted along with the dates and venues of open days and the project information centres.
 - EirGrid opened local project information centres within the project area where members of the public, landowners and stakeholders could drop in or set up appointments to meet with the EirGrid project team and / or to receive project information. The information centres were supported by the other communications elements of the project (phone line, e-mail service and written service).
 - Numerous open days and information evenings were held at key project milestones. These events were devised to provide an opportunity for all interested members of the public and stakeholders to ask questions directly about the project and to have their questions answered face-to-face with the EirGrid project team. At these events, project information such as maps and brochures were available for people to view and / or take away to read in their own time.
 - Briefings and one-to-one meetings for interested stakeholders, and those who requested such meetings, were provided to present and discuss information on the project. Personal meetings for individuals or small representative groups were also available to stakeholders, so that their questions could be answered in a more individual manner.
 - Feedback received from landowners during the initial stages of the project (i.e. during 2008 and 2009) informed a proactive, tailored and parallel landowner strategy that was employed by EirGrid after the re-evaluation of the project commenced in 2010. EirGrid set out a three-phased approach to landowner engagement that explained the opportunities for landowners to participate in each phase of the development of the project.
 - Project roadmaps were drawn up by EirGrid and presented to the public throughout the public consultation. This was an iterative process that evolved throughout the development and progression of the project and was influenced by feedback received during public consultation.
 - Project terms of reference referring to the parameters within which the scope of consultation / engagement is defined were clearly set out by EirGrid at the start of any period of focussed public consultation so that stakeholders could understand what input they could have and how they could participate within the process.

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- 4 Feedback from the public, public concerned, stakeholders, statutory and other authorities and landowners throughout the consultation phases has impacted incrementally on the development of the project at each stage, and ultimately on the proposal which now forms the application for approval to the Board.

9.1 EFFECTIVE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC AND LANDOWNERS

- 5 The high levels of awareness of the project generated by EirGrid's media and advertising facilitated an effective roll-out of the other key elements of the public consultation and landowner engagement process. Importantly, it allowed the project team to establish a list of interested stakeholders to whom it issued all subsequent written information and consultation material, as well as engagement via phone. The multiple communications methods provided by EirGrid sought to ensure that all stakeholders were provided with an opportunity to access information via traditional methods (via post, hard copy reports and documentation) and online opportunities (information website, e-mail).
- 6 High levels of public awareness were achieved in relation to how and where information could be obtained, and overall there was a successful information and consultation campaign.

9.2 LEVEL AND NATURE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND FEEDBACK RECEIVED

- 7 As reported in the preceding chapters of this report, responses and feedback were received from the public and landowners throughout each of the development stages of the project. At the earlier phases of the project, feedback was predominantly negative, and opposed to either the principle of the development, the overhead technology proposed and / or its potential health implications. Some of the stakeholders who provided their feedback and participated in the consultation and engagement represented a wider contingent of the stakeholder community, for example members of representative community groups or associations.
- 8 As the project development progressed and greater detail of the indicative line route emerged, the public concerned engaged more with the detail of the proposals, in terms of location and environmental implications. A recurring theme during each stage of consultation was the desire of stakeholders to see the interconnector completely undergrounded or constructed using an alternative technology that did not require overhead transmission infrastructure. In response to these submissions, EirGrid employed a process of on-going review and consideration of available technologies on the basis of any new information that emerged. EirGrid communicated to stakeholders the reasons why the overhead option remained their preferred choice of technology option.

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- 9 All submissions received during the public consultation process, to date, have been reviewed and considered by EirGrid and taken into account during the development of the project, including the identification of the preferred route corridors, indicative line routes and in determining the preferred line route. A significant amount of feedback was received following the submission of the previous application, all of which was reviewed and comprehensively considered by EirGrid during the re-evaluation of the project which commenced in 2010.
- 10 Much of the public and stakeholder feedback following the preliminary re-evaluation process (since 2011) related to the principle of the project and the need for it in the first instance. Another key item related to the technology proposed and, in particular, to the underground versus overhead options. A range of environmental considerations was also raised by the public concerned. Submissions received at this time led EirGrid to review a number of technological aspects of the project, and also highlighted environmental issues for further consideration. Combined with alterations to the proposal, due to environmental and operational considerations, the Indicative Line Route was modified following consultation after publication of the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report*.
- 11 Submissions made subsequent to the publication of the *Final Re-evaluation Report* in 2013 again raised queries in respect of the principle of the project and the technology proposed, but greater numbers of comments were made in relation to the detail of the Indicative Line Route than during the earlier phases. These related to the position of the line, likely locations of tower structures, proximity of the proposal to dwellings and construction access requirements. More specific queries on environmental aspects were also raised. This feedback resulted in some further modifications to the Indicative Line Route which also influenced the locations proposed for tower structures in the following stage of the Preferred Line Design. It also identified environmental issues to be considered in the EIS.
- 12 The greatest amount of detailed feedback was received following the publication of the *Preferred Project Solution Report* and the detailed mapping of the Preferred Line Route. This led to a notable amount of change requests received by EirGrid from landowners. Each of these change requests were individually evaluated and a significant number of them were incorporated in the final design submitted for planning approval. Data to be included in the EIS was again modified as a result of, inter alia, this stage of consultation.
- 13 In March 2015, the project information centres opened during which time EirGrid staff were available to provide information on the line route that would form the basis of the planning application. and
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- 14 Prior to the submission of the planning application to the Board, EirGrid provided information on the progress of the project in respect of the PCI process in a *PCI Public Information Leaflet* (refer to **Appendix L**). .
- 15 To coincide with the submission of the planning application to the Board, stakeholders and landowners will be provided with information on the planning application, information on the application documents and a guide to the statutory process that will follow.
- 16 Having reviewed and considered the submissions received during each round of public consultation to date, EirGrid is satisfied that pertinent information was provided to the public at each juncture of the public consultation process. EirGrid provided a variety of opportunities to the public to participate during its public consultation. EirGrid reviewed and considered the output of each public consultation that was undertaken. Where specific or bespoke information was sought by stakeholders in relation to the project (e.g. distance of the project to their location), such requests were responded to individually. EirGrid sought to respond to feedback received from the public in publications and in public information material provided.

9.2.1 Reporting on Consultation Feedback

- 17 Following the withdrawal of the previous application in late June 2010, EirGrid commenced a re-evaluation of the project. This concluded in April 2013 with the publication of a *Final Re-evaluation Report* (FRR). Appendix A of the FRR includes a review of issues raised in written submissions to An Bord Pleanála, and observations made at the oral hearing, in respect of the previous application. Appendix B provides responses to submissions and other engagement arising during the re-evaluation process. Subsequently in July 2013 EirGrid published a *Preferred Project Solution Report* (PPSR). Chapter 2 of the PPSR outlines, and provides response to, feedback received during the public engagement following publication in July 2013 of the *Final Re-evaluation Report* while Appendix C includes a detailed analysis of this feedback.

9.2.2 Application Documentation

- 18 The application for planning approval itself is accompanied by an EIS, including a non-technical summary, which provides a further source of information for the public. This document, along with the other elements of the planning application, has been placed on public display at the offices of the Board and at Cavan, Meath and Monaghan County Council offices, in addition to being available at the designated project website. Detailed information on the proposed development and potential impacts are included in the EIS, NIS, and other application documentation.

9.3 SUMMARY

- 19 Having regard to all of the foregoing detail provided in this report (and appendices), it is clear that the pre-application period of consultation undertaken by EirGrid fully meets the requirements of the Aarhus Convention, Codified EIA Directive and Irish national legislation.

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