

# North-South 400kV Interconnection Development



## An Bord Pleanála Reference: PCI001 Concept for Public Participation July 2014



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# 1 INTRODUCTION AND LAYOUT

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

EirGrid plc (EirGrid) and System Operator Northern Ireland Ltd<sup>1</sup> are jointly planning a major cross-border electricity transmission development between the existing high-voltage transmission networks of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The overall interconnection project (which is termed the ‘proposed interconnector’) for the purposes of this report, is a 400 kV overhead line circuit linking the existing 400 kV substation in Woodland, County Meath with a planned substation in Turleenan, County Tyrone. The North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development (the ‘proposed development’) comprises that portion of the proposed interconnector located within Ireland in counties Meath, Cavan and Monaghan.

This document sets out a Concept for Public Participation for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development, which is a designated Project of Common Interest (PCI) under European Regulation 347/2013. This Concept for Public Participation is submitted to An Bord Pleanála (the Board) in accordance with Article 9(3) of Regulation 347/2013 following the process outlined in the Board’s *Manual of Procedure for the Permit Granting Process* (May 2014) and in accordance with *Annex VI of Regulation 347/2013* which sets out the *Guidelines for Transparency and Public Participation* in respect of projects designated as Projects of Common Interest.

**Chapter 3** outlines the principles adopted for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development with the aim of creating dialogue with the public, landowners and stakeholders about the project.

Article 9(3) of the Regulation states that the competent authority (in this case, An Bord Pleanála) shall take into consideration any form of public participation and consultation that took place before the start of the permit granting process, to the extent that such public consultation has fulfilled the requirement of this Article. This document therefore includes details of the consultation that has taken place prior to the start of the permit granting process, i.e. between 2007 and lodgement of the previous planning application in 2009/2010 as well as the consultation that took place following the decision by EirGrid to re-evaluate the project in 2010. In this regard **Chapter 4** describes the extensive public consultation activities that have taken place since 2007. Parallel to this formal public consultation process, EirGrid has engaged directly with landowners, and/or landowner representative groups as appropriate, and throughout has reviewed and considered requests by landowners.

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<sup>1</sup> The planning of that portion of the proposed interconnector within Northern Ireland was originally undertaken by Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE). However, NIE was obligated by the European Commission to transfer its investment planning function (the “Planning Function”) to SONI. The SONI transmission system operator licence (the “Licence”) was amended on 28th March 2014 to take account of the transfer of the Planning Function following a consultation process by the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (NIAUR). The Licence amendments took effect on 30th April 2014. Accordingly, responsibility for the pursuance of the planning application in respect of the proposed interconnector within Northern Ireland has been transferred from NIE to SONI.

Extensive public participation and consultation has therefore already been undertaken to date for this project which EirGrid considers far exceeds the minimum requirements under Regulation 347/2013 for public consultation before the submission of the final and complete application file.

As is described in this document, in accordance with the *Guidelines* set out in Annex VI (3)(a), stakeholders affected by a project, including relevant national, regional and local authorities, landowners and citizens living in the vicinity of the project, landowner representative groups, the general public and their associations, organisations or groups, have been “*extensively informed and consulted at an early stage, when potential concerns*” could and/or can still be taken into account and in an open and transparent manner. The extensive public consultation and engagement covered all subject matters relevant to the particular stage in the process in conformity with the *Guidelines* set out in Annex VI (3)(b). Furthermore, comments and objections were ‘*admissible from the beginning of the public consultation until the expiry of the deadline*’ for each public consultation also in accordance with the *Guidelines* set out in Annex VI (3)(c).

This document contains not only details of public consultation to date but future public consultation to be carried out where the principles contained in the *Guidelines* set out in Annex VI(3) will also be observed. Public consultation is an integral part of the Strategic Infrastructure Development process which will apply to the proposed North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development. This is described in more detail in **Chapter 5** of this report and represents activities to be implemented in subsequent stages up to and including an anticipated oral hearing facilitated and managed by the Board in its capacity as the competent authority under the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2014 and specifically the *Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006*. The *Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006* inserted sections 182A to 182E into the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (the 2000 Act), which relate to the provision of electricity transmission and gas infrastructure development. Section 182A of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended) provides that where a person (the ‘*undertaker*’) intends to carry out a “*development comprising or for the purposes of electricity transmission*”, an application, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and / or Natura Impact Statement (NIS) shall be prepared and submitted to the Board for statutory approval of the development.

The Concept for Public Participation has also had regard to the Aarhus Convention (*Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters*), the Espoo Convention, Consolidated EIA Directive and Irish legislative requirements, all of which are reflected in the *Guidelines* set out in Annex VI of Regulation 347/2013.

As advised by the Board’s Manual of Procedures, due regard has been given to the requirements of the Data Protection Acts 1988 – 2003.



## 1.2 LAYOUT OF THE REPORT

For the purposes of assisting the Board the report is laid out as follows:

**Chapter 1: Introduction and Layout**

**Chapter 2: Designation of the Project as PCI** – Acknowledges and sets out the requirements for the project in terms of the PCI Regulation (347/2013).

### PART 1: CONCEPT FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

**Chapter 3: Concept and Guiding Principles for Public Consultation Process** – This firstly sets out the international best practice upon which all of the consultation for the project is based. It also outlines how these principles were adopted for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development with the aim of creating dialogue with the public, landowners and stakeholders about the project.

### PART 2: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TO DATE

**Chapter 4: Public Consultation and Participation Process to date** – This chapter sets out the chronology of consultation events that have taken place for this project, as well as detailing the measures adopted, key dates and stakeholders and timelines involved. This is divided into two phases: the first concerned with the consultation undertaken for the previous application, the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development; the second section concerned with the consultation undertaken for the current proposed application for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout the reference material provided in this report, the project is also referred to as the Cavan-Tyrone project. This is derived from the counties through which the transmission line will traverse (i.e. from the vicinity of Kingscourt, located in County Cavan to the town land of Turleenan, located in Co. Tyrone (Northern Ireland)). This project, in conjunction with the *'Kingscourt – Woodland 400kV Development'*<sup>[1]</sup> (TENE reference E210/06), is also on occasion collectively referred to as the North East projects, due to their geographical location on the island of Ireland. It was advised by An Board Pleanála that both projects should be combined into one project and planning application, hence forth, the Projects are referred to the North-South 400kV Interconnection Development when dealing with matters of Planning.

## **PART 3: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATION (EU) NO. 347/2013**

**Chapter 5: Information Requirements under Annex VI(4) Information Requirements** – This lists guidelines set out in of Annex VI(4) and assesses how the public engagement and consultation undertaken to date and the further/future engagement and consultation complies with same.

**Chapter 6: Information Requirements under Article 9 and Associated Annex VI Guidelines of Regulation (EU) 347/2013** – This outlines the remaining requirements of the regulation which must be met by the public consultation process for this project. It assesses how the consultation already engaged in and due to be engaged in complies with same.

**Chapter 7: Conclusion**

### **1.3 DEFINITIONS**

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 alongside what is meant by each of them in the context of the Concept for Public Participation for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development**

| <b>Term / Synonym</b>                      | <b>Meaning</b>  |
|--|---|
| <b>Consultation<sup>3</sup></b>            | 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.   |
| <b>Affected Party</b>                      | 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). |
| <b>Consultee</b>                           | The individual or organisation that responds to a consultation or participates in consultation exercises.   |
| <b>Engagement and Community Engagement</b> | 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.   |
| <b>Stakeholder</b>                         | 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.  |
| <b>Terms of Reference</b>                  | 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 understand what input they can have and how they can participate within the process of consultation / engagement.                         |
| <b>Participation</b>                       | 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.<br><br>Public Participation for the project was also drawn up by EirGrid with cognisance to the UNECE “ <i>Access to Information, Public Participation in</i>      |

<sup>3</sup> Jones, Rhion and Gammell, Elizabeth (2009). The Art of Consultation – Public Dialogues in a Noisy World.

| Term / Synonym                    | Meaning   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
|                                   | <i>Decision Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters</i> <sup>4</sup> .  |
| <b>Community</b>                  | <p>1. People living in a defined geographical area, or who share similar interests and concerns.</p> <p>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 are communities of interest.</p>  |
| <b>Transboundary Consultation</b> | 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 e.g. the Northern Ireland Department of the Environment (DoENI).                          |
| <b>Transparency</b>               | <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 that practice implemented by EirGrid on its consultation for the project to date.</p> |

#### 1.4 WHERE THE REQUIREMENTS OF REGULATION 347/2013 ARE ADDRESSED IN THIS REPORT

Table 1.2, Table 1.3 and Table 1.4 are intended to assist the Board in navigating this Concept for Public Participation document and where the relevant requirements of Regulation 347/2013, the *Guidelines* set out in *Annex VI of Regulation 347/2013* and the Board's *Manual of Procedure for the Permit Granting Process* (May 2014).

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<sup>4</sup> Available at <http://www.unece.org>

**Table 1.2 Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 347/2013 - Transparency and Public Participation**

| Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 347/2013 - Transparency and Public Participation   | Response and Where it is Addressed in this Report  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Article 9(3)</b> <i>“The project promoter shall, within an indicative period of three months of the start of the permit granting process pursuant to Article 10(1)(a), draw up and submit a concept for public participation to the competent authority,</i></p> <p><i>.....following the process outlined in the manual referred to in paragraph 1</i></p> <p><i>.....and in line with the guidelines set out in Annex VI”</i></p>   | <p>This Concept for Public Participation has been submitted to ABP within three months of the acknowledgement of the notification by An Bord Pleanála (2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014).</p> <p>It follows the process outlined in ABP’s <i>Manual of Permit Granting Process Procedures for Projects of Common Interest</i>. Refer to <b>Table 1.4</b> and <b>Section 2.4</b> of this report.</p> <p>It is line with the <i>Guidelines</i> of Annex VI. Refer to <b>Table 1.3</b>.</p>   |
| <p><b>Article 9(4)</b> <i>“At least one public consultation shall be carried out by the project promoter, or, where required by national law, by the competent authority, before submission of the final and complete application file to the competent authority pursuant to Article 10(1)(a).</i></p> <p><i>This shall be without prejudice to any public consultation to be carried out after submission of the request for development consent according to Article 6(2) of Directive 2011/92/EU. [statutory consultation period after submission of application and EIS]</i></p> <p><i>The public consultation shall inform stakeholders referred to in Annex VI.3(a)</i></p> <p><i>.....about the project at an early stage</i></p> | <p>The number of public consultation events held in respect of the project (5 No.) far exceeds the minimum of one required by the Regulation. Refer to <b>Chapter 4</b> and <b>Section 6.1.1</b> of this report.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Refer to <b>Table 1.3</b> and <b>section 5.2.1</b> of this report for details on the stakeholders addressed which includes stakeholders referred to in Annex VI.3(a).</p> <p>Refer to <b>section 4.2</b> which details the public consultation for the project which commenced in 2007 at an early stage in the project. Also following the withdrawal of the 2009 application EirGrid commenced a comprehensive re-evaluation of the project during which all of the key decisions made in formulating that 2009 application were subject to review and public consultation, refer to <b>section 4.4</b>.</p> |

| Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 347/2013 - Transparency and Public Participation  | Response and Where it is Addressed in this Report   |
|--|---|
| <p><i>.....and shall help to identify the most suitable location or trajectory</i></p> <p><i>.....and the relevant issues to be addressed in the application file.</i></p> <p><i>The minimum requirements applicable to this public consultation are specified in Annex VI(5).</i></p>   | <p>Refer to <b>sections 4.2 to 4.9</b> which detail the public consultation for the project that has occurred in the period 2007 – 2014, including consultation focusing on route and site selection.</p> <p>Refer to <b>sections 4.2 to 4.9</b> which detail the public consultation for the project that has occurred in the period 2007 – 2014, including focusing on issues to be addressed in the application file.</p> <p>Refer <b>Table 1.3</b>.</p> |
| <p><b>Article 9(5)</b> <i>“For project crossing the border of two or more Member States, the public consultations pursuant to paragraph 4 in each of the Member States concerned shall take place within a period of no more than two months from the date on which the first public consultation started”</i></p>   | <p>This provision of the Regulation is not applicable. Discussed in <b>section 2.1</b> and <b>section 6.1.2</b> of this report.</p>   |
| <p><b>Article 9(6)</b> <i>“For projects likely to have significant adverse cross-border impacts in one or more neighbouring Member States, where Article 7 of Directive 2011/92/EU and the Espoo Convention are applicable [where there are transboundary environmental impacts], the relevant information shall be made available to the competent authority of the neighbouring Member States. The competent authority of the neighbouring Member States shall indicate, in the notification process where appropriate, whether it, or any other authority concerned, wishes to participate in the relevant public consultation procedures.”</i></p> | <p>This is a matter for An Bord Pleanála as competent authority. Discussed in <b>section 2.5</b> and <b>section 6.1.3</b> of this report.</p>   |



| Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 347/2013 - Transparency and Public Participation  | Response and Where it is Addressed in this Report  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Article 9(7)</b> <i>“The project promoter, or, where national law so provides, the competent authority, shall establish and regularly update a website with relevant information about the project of common interest,</i></p> <p><i>.....which shall be linked to the Commission website and</i></p> <p><i>.....which shall meet the requirements specified in Annex VI(6).</i></p> <p><i>Commercially sensitive information shall be kept confidential.</i></p> <p><i>Project promoters shall also publish relevant information by other appropriate means to which the public has open access.”</i></p> | <p>A project website has been maintained since 2007 - refer to <b>section 2.3.4, Table 4.1, Table 4.4, Table 4.6, Table 4.10, Table 5.1, section 5.3.2.9</b>. Compliance with this requirement is summarised in <b>section 6.1.4</b> and with reference to <b>Table 6.1, Table 6.2</b> and <b>Table 6.3</b> of this report.</p> <p>The project website is linked to the Commission website. Refer to <b>section 2.3.4</b> and <b>6.1.4</b> of this report.</p> <p>Refer to <b>Table 1.3</b>.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>The project has adopted multiple communication tools to ensure the public has opportunities to access information. Refer to <b>section 3.3.1.2, Chapter 4</b> (in particular <b>Table 4.1 – Table 4.4, Table 4.6</b> and <b>Table 4.10</b>). Compliance with this requirement is summarised in <b>section 6.1.4</b> and with reference to <b>Table 6.1, Table 6.2</b> and <b>Table 6.3</b> of this report.</p> |

**Table 1.3                      Annex VI of Regulation (EU) 347/2013 - Guidelines for Transparency and Public Participation**

| <b>Annex VI of Regulation (EU) 347/2013 - Guidelines for Transparency and Public Participation</b>   | <b>Response and Where it is Addressed in this Report</b>   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Annex VI(3)</b> <i>“To increase public participation in the permit granting process and ensure in advance information and dialogue with the public, the following principles shall be applied:</i></p> <p><i>(a) The stakeholders affected by a project of common interest, including relevant national, regional and local authorities, landowners and citizens living in the vicinity of the project, the general public and their associations, organisations or groups shall be extensively informed and consulted</i></p> <p><i>.....at an early stage, when potential concerns by the public can still be taken into account</i></p> <p><i>.....and in an open and transparent manner.</i></p> <p><i>Where relevant, the competent authority shall actively support the activities undertaken by the project promoter.</i></p> <p><i>(b) Competent authorities shall ensure that public consultation procedures for projects of common interest are grouped together where possible.</i></p> | <p>Refer to <b>section 5.2.1</b> of this report for details on the stakeholders addressed, including those set out in VI(3)(a) of the <i>Guidelines</i>.</p> <p>Refer to <b>sections 4.2 to 4.9</b> which detail the public consultation for the project which commenced in 2007 at an early stage when potential concerns by the public could still be taken into account in accordance with item VI(3)(a) of the <i>Guidelines</i>. Also following the withdrawal of the 2009 application EirGrid commenced a comprehensive re-evaluation of the project during which all of the key decisions made in formulating that 2009 application were subject to review and public consultation, refer to <b>section 4.4</b>.</p> <p>Refer to <b>sections 3.3.1, 3.3.2 and 3.3.3</b> which outline the mechanisms used by the project to achieve accessible, meaningful and accountable consultation. Also refer to <b>sections 4.2 to 4.9</b> which detail the public consultation for the project that has occurred in the period 2007 – 2014 in accordance with item VI(3)(a) of the <i>Guidelines</i>.</p> <p>This is a matter for An Bord Pleanála as competent authority.</p> <p>This is a matter for An Bord Pleanála as competent authority.</p> |

| <b>Annex VI of Regulation (EU) 347/2013 - Guidelines for Transparency and Public Participation</b>  | <b>Response and Where it is Addressed in this Report</b>  |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Each public consultation shall cover all subject matters relevant to the particular stage of the procedure, and one subject matter relevant to the particular stage of the procedure shall not be addressed in more than one public consultation;.....</i></p> <p><i>however, one public consultation may take place in more than one geographical location.....</i></p> <p><i>The subject matters addressed by a public consultation shall be clearly indicated in the notification of the public consultation.</i></p> <p><i>(c) Comments and objections shall be admissible from the beginning of the public consultation until the expiry of the deadline only.</i></p> | <p>Refer to <b>sections 3.3.2, 3.3.3 and 3.3.4</b> which outline the mechanisms used by the project to achieve meaningful and accountable consultation, including the project roadmap in accordance with item VI(3)(b) of the <i>Guidelines</i>. Also refer to <b>sections 4.2 to 4.9</b> which detail the distinct focused public consultation phases for the project that has occurred in the period 2007 – 2014.</p> <p>Public consultation events for the project took place in more than one geographical location in accordance with item VI(3)(b) of the <i>Guidelines</i>. Refer to <b>section 3.3.1.2</b> which outlines the mechanisms used by the project to achieve accessible consultation. Also refer to <b>sections 4.2 to 4.9</b> which detail the open day events occurred in the period 2007 – 2014.</p> <p>The subject matter addressed by the various public consultation events for the project was clearly indicated in the communication tools used to notify the public, including published material in accordance with item VI(3)(b) of the <i>Guidelines</i>.. Refer to <b>sections 4.2 to 4.8</b> which detail the public consultation for the project that has occurred in the period 2007 – 2014.</p> <p>Feedback from the focused consultation events is in accordance with item VI(3) of the <i>Guidelines</i>. Refer to <b>section 3.3.1.2</b> which outlines the mechanisms used by the project to achieve accessible consultation. Also refer to <b>sections 4.2 to 4.9</b> which detail the distinct focused public consultation phases for the project that has occurred in the period 2007 – 2014 in accordance with item VI(3) of the <i>Guidelines</i>.</p> |
| <p><b>Annex VI(4)</b> <i>“The concept for public participation shall at least include information about:</i></p> <p><i>(a) the stakeholders concerned and addressed;</i></p>  | <p>Refer to <b>section 5.2.1</b> for details on the stakeholders concerned and addressed for public consultation activities in respect of the project.</p>  |

| <b>Annex VI of Regulation (EU) 347/2013 - Guidelines for Transparency and Public Participation</b>  | <b>Response and Where it is Addressed in this Report</b>  |
|---|---|
| <p>(b) <i>the measures envisaged, including proposed general locations and dates of dedicated meetings;</i></p> <p>(c) <i>the timeline;</i></p> <p>(d) <i>The human resources allocated to the respective tasks.”</i></p>   | <p>Refer to <b>section 5.2.2</b> for an overview of the measures which were envisaged, and then adopted for each of the five public consultation events.</p> <p>Refer to <b>section 3.3.4</b> and <b>section 5.2.3</b> for details on the project timeline and roadmap for the project and how this was enacted.</p> <p>Refer to <b>section 5.2.4</b> for details on the human resources allocated to the respective tasks.</p> |
| <p><b>Annex VI(5)</b> <i>“In the context of the public consultation to be carried out before submission of the application file, the relevant parties shall at least:</i></p> <p>(a) <i>publish an information leaflet of no more than 15 pages, giving in a clear and concise manner, an overview of the purpose and preliminary timetable of the project, the national grid development plan, alternative routes considered, expected impacts, including of a cross-border nature, and possible mitigation measures, which shall be published prior to the start of the consultation; The information leaflet shall furthermore list the web addresses of the transparency platform referred to in Article 18 and of the manual of procedures referred to in point (1);</i></p> <p>(b) <i>inform all stakeholders affected about the project through the website referred to in Article 9(7) and other appropriate information means;</i></p> <p>(c) <i>Invite in written form relevant affected stakeholders to dedicated meetings, during which concerns shall be discussed.”</i></p> | <p>Compliance with this guideline is addressed in <b>section 6.1.1</b>. Also refer to the brochures, newsletters and other published material used to notify the public about the project as described in <b>sections 4.2 to 4.9</b>.</p> <p>Refer to <b>section 6.1.1</b> and <b>Table 6.1, Table 6.2</b> and <b>Table 6.3</b>.</p> <p>Refer to <b>section 6.1.1</b> and <b>Table 6.1, Table 6.2</b> and <b>Table 6.3</b>.</p> |

| <b>Annex VI of Regulation (EU) 347/2013 - Guidelines for Transparency and Public Participation</b>  | <b>Response and Where it is Addressed in this Report</b>   |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Annex VI(6)</b> <i>“The project website shall make available as a minimum the following:</i></p> <p>(a) <i>the information leaflet referred to in point (5);</i></p> <p>(b) <i>a non-technical and regularly updated summary of no more than 50 pages reflecting the current status of the project and clearly indicating, in case of updates, changes to previous versions;</i></p> <p>(c) <i>the project and public consultation planning, clearly indicating dates and locations for public consultations and hearings and the envisaged subject matters relevant for those hearings;</i></p> <p>(d) <i>contact details in view of obtaining the full set of application documents;</i></p> <p>(e) <i>Contact details in view of conveying comments and objections during public consultations.”</i></p> | <p>Refer to section <b>6.1.1</b>.</p> <p>The website includes such a summary in both online and report format, refer to <b>section 2.3.4 section 5.3.2.9</b> and section <b>6.1.4</b>.</p> <p>Refer to section <b>6.1.1</b>. Also refer to the brochures, newsletters and other published material used to notify the public about the project as described in <b>sections 4.2 to 4.9</b> and <b>Table 5.2</b>.</p> <p>These contact details will be provided in due course on lodgement of the application.</p> <p>Refer to section <b>6.1.1</b>.</p> |

**Table 1.4 An Bord Pleanála - Projects of Common Interest Manual of Permit Granting Process Procedures (May 2014)**

| <b>An Bord Pleanála - Projects of Common Interest Manual of Permit Granting Process Procedures (May 2014)</b>   | <b>Response and Where it is addressed in this Report</b> |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Section 5.3 – Public Participation Before Submission of the Application File</b></p> <p><i>“Annex VI(5) of the Regulation sets out what, at least, the relevant parties shall provide”.</i></p> <p><i>“An Bord Pleanála (Competent Authority), during pre-application procedure stage will expect the project promoter to provide details of having complied with the foregoing.”</i></p> | <p>Refer to <b>Table 1.3</b>.</p> <p>Noted.</p>          |

| An Bord Pleanála - Projects of Common Interest Manual of Permit Granting Process Procedures (May 2014)   | Response and Where it is addressed in this Report   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>The Public Participation Concept</b></p> <p><i>“Article 9.3 of Regulation 347/2013 provides that a project promoter shall, within an indicative period of three months of the start of the permit granting process under Article 10(1)(a) draw up and submit a concept for public participation to An Bord Pleanála.</i></p> <p><i>Within three months of receipt of the concept, An Bord Pleanála (Competent Authority) shall request modifications or approve the concept. An Bord Pleanála (Competent Authority) will seek an opinion of other relevant authorities concerned with the project.</i></p> <p><i>Annex VI(4) of the Regulation provides details of what the concept shall at least include.”</i></p> <p><i>“Generally, An Bord Pleanála (Competent Authority) intends, where it has approved a public participation concept for a specific project, to require the project promoter to publish the approved public participation concept on the project website as a further means of enhancing transparency and public participation.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, An Bord Pleanála (Competent Authority) considers that all submissions received as part of the public consultation process should be published on the project website unless the submitter has provided reasonable reasons for the consideration of An Bord Pleanála, as Competent Authority, for wishing that their submission be received in confidence.</i></p> <p><i>Project promoters should be aware of their responsibilities under the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 in relation to personal information such as addresses and contact details.”</i></p> | <p>This Concept for Public Participation has been submitted to ABP within three months of the acknowledgement of the notification by An Bord Pleanála (2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014).</p> <p>This is a matter for ABP as competent authority.</p> <p>Refer to <b>Table 1.3</b>.</p> <p>Refer to <b>section 2.4</b> of this report. EirGrid will comply with this stipulation, if required by An Bord Pleanála.</p> <p>This has not been the practice to date as private individuals who made submissions were not informed in advance that their submissions might be published. However if it is a requirement of the Board in the future that submissions be made public then stakeholders will be advised of this in advance and submissions can then be made in that knowledge. EirGrid will then publish the submissions while also maintaining compliance with the Data Protection Acts. Also refer to <b>section 2.4</b></p> |
| <p><b>Section 5.5</b></p> <p><i>“An Bord Pleanála (Competent Authority) will expect that the website is maintained by the project promoter concerned and that all changes to the website content are documented so that An Bord Pleanála (Competent Authority) can trace what information was made available to the general public at specific times.”</i></p>   | <p>Refer to <b>section 2.3.4</b> and <b>6.1.4</b> of this report.</p>   |



## 2 DESIGNATION OF THE PROJECT AS A PCI AND REQUIREMENTS OF REGULATION 347/2013

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Regulation (EU) No. 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (Guidelines for Trans-European Energy Infrastructure) was adopted on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013 and entered into force on 1 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 which list form an Annex to the Regulation. In this regard, Commission Delegated Regulation 1391/2013, issued on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2013 which identified the projects forming part of the first union list of projects of common interests (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)*

This is the overall interconnection project and requires two separate applications; one application by EirGrid for the part of the project in Ireland and a separate application for that portion of the project in Northern Ireland.

The planning of that portion of the proposed interconnector within Northern Ireland was originally undertaken by Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE). However, NIE was obligated by the European Commission to transfer its investment planning function (the "Planning Function") to the System Operator Northern Ireland (SONI). The SONI transmission system operator licence (the "Licence") was amended on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2014 to take account of the transfer of the Planning Function following a consultation process by the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (NIAUR). The Licence amendments took effect on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014. Accordingly, responsibility for the planning application in respect of the proposed interconnector within Northern Ireland has been transferred from NIE to SONI.

The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), in its capacity as competent authority for PCI in the United Kingdom, has confirmed that the SONI application in the North can avail of the transitional provisions of Article 19 of Regulation 347/2013 and therefore does not require to comply with Chapter III of the Regulation which includes the submission of a concept for public participation.

An Bord Pleanála (the "Board") has determined that the transitional provisions (Article 19) of the PCI Regulation (347/2013) do not apply to that portion of the overall interconnection project within Ireland, i.e. the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development. Therefore, the provisions of Chapter III of Regulation No. 347/2013 Regulation apply in respect of the development within Ireland, specifically

Article 9 relating to Transparency and Public Participation and Annex VI “*Guidelines for Transparency and Public Participation*”.

## 2.2 PCI NOTIFICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

EirGrid submitted a notification under Article 10.1(a) of Regulation 347/2013 to the Board on 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014 which confirmed that the Board considers the project as being “*mature enough to enter the permit granting process*”.

## 2.3 TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS OF REGULATION 347/2013

Article 9 of the Regulation is entitled “*Transparency and Public Participation*”, while Annex VI is entitled “*Guidelines for Transparency and Public Participation*”. The requirements in respect of these matters are described below.

### 2.3.1 General Principles

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).

Annex VI(3) provides that to increase public participation in the permit granting process and ensure in advance information and dialogue with the public, the following principles shall be applied:

*(a) The stakeholders affected by a project of common interest, including relevant national, regional and local authorities, landowners and citizens living in the vicinity of the project, the general public and their associations, organisations or groups, shall be extensively informed and consulted at an early stage, when potential concerns by the public can still be taken into account and in an open and transparent manner. Where relevant, the competent authority shall actively support the activities undertaken by the project promoter.*

*(b) Competent authorities shall ensure that public consultation procedures for projects of common interest are grouped together where possible. Each public consultation shall cover all subject matters relevant to the particular stage of the procedure, and one subject matter relevant to the particular stage of the procedure shall not be addressed in more than one public consultation; however, one public consultation may take place in more than one*

*geographical location. The subject matters addressed by a public consultation shall be clearly indicated in the notification of the public consultation.*

*(c) Comments and objections shall be admissible from the beginning of the public consultation until the expiry of the deadline only.*

As will be described later in this document, these principles have been met by EirGrid in the public consultation to date and will continue to be abided by throughout the permit granting process.

### **2.3.2 Information to be included in Concept for Public Participation**

Annex VI(4) of Regulation 347/2013 stipulates that the concept for public participation shall at least include information about:

- (a) The stakeholders concerned and addressed –
- (b) The measures envisaged, including proposed general locations and dates of dedicated meetings
- (c) The timeline
- (d) The human resources allocated to the respective tasks.

This document includes all the above information. The details of the public consultation process already undertaken and also due to be undertaken are described for each of these requirements in **Chapters 4 and 5**.

### **2.3.3 Public Consultation before submission of the Application File**

Article 9(4) of the Regulation states:

*“At least one public consultation shall be carried out by the project promoter, or, where required by national law, by the competent authority, before submission of the final and complete application file to the competent authority pursuant to Article 10(1)(a). This shall be without prejudice to any public consultation to be carried out after submission of the request for development consent according to Article 6(2) of Directive 2011/92/EU. The public consultation shall inform stakeholders referred to in Annex VI.3(a) about the project at an early stage and shall help to identify the most suitable location or trajectory and the relevant issues to be addressed in the application file. The minimum requirements applicable to this public consultation are specified in Annex VI.5”.*

Annex VI (5) of the *Guidelines for Transparency and Public Participation* states that in the context of the public consultation to be carried out before submission of the application file, the relevant parties shall at least:

*(a) publish an information leaflet of no more than 15 pages, giving, in a clear and concise manner, an overview of the purpose and preliminary timetable of the project, the national grid development plan, alternative routes considered, expected impacts, including of cross-border nature, and possible mitigation measures, which shall be published prior to the start of the consultation; The information leaflet shall furthermore list the web addresses of the transparency platform referred to in Article 18 and of the manual of procedures referred to in point (1);*

*(b) inform all stakeholders affected about the project through the website referred to in Article 9(7) and other appropriate information means;*

*(c) invite in written form relevant affected stakeholders to dedicated meetings, during which concerns shall be discussed.*

As is detailed in this document, the public consultation which has taken place to date, has gone beyond the above minimum requirements. Three stages of public engagement were carried out since the withdrawal of the previous application in June 2010, in addition to further rounds undertaken prior to that withdrawal. At all stages of the focused periods of consultation and public participation, information leaflets of less than 15 pages were published in advance of the consultation period. The consultation was widely publicised to ensure all stakeholders affected were aware of the consultation, and written submissions were sought from relevant stakeholders at each consultation stage.

### **2.3.4 Website**

Article 9(7) states that the project promoter, or, where national law so provides, the competent authority, shall establish and regularly update a website with relevant information about the Project of Common Interest, which shall be linked to the Commission website and which shall be in accordance with Annex VI(6). Commercially sensitive information shall be kept confidential.

Annex VI(6) of the *Guidelines for Transparency and Public Participation* states that project website shall make available as a minimum the following:

*(a) the information leaflet referred to in point (5);*

*(b) a non-technical and regularly updated summary of no more than 50 pages reflecting the current status of the project and clearly indicating, in case of updates, changes to previous versions;*

*(c) the project and public consultation planning, clearly indicating dates and locations for public consultations and hearings and the envisaged subject matters relevant for those hearings;*

*(d) contact details in view of obtaining the full set of application documents;*

*(e) contact details in view of conveying comments and objections during public consultations.*

EirGrid published details of the project on a project specific webpage on its own website as far back as 2007. It has been regularly updated as the project has evolved. The website includes a non-technical and regularly updated summary of no more than 50 pages (now in both on-line and report format) reflecting the current status of the project and clearly indicating, in case of updates, changes to previous versions. In addition, EirGrid has in the past and will continue in the future ensure that the matters contained in (c) to (e) are stated on the website when they arise. The current state of the project website is in compliance with the applicable requirements set out above.

### **2.3.5 Other Appropriate Information Means**

The second paragraph of Article 9(7) states that project promoters shall also publish relevant information by other appropriate information means to which the public has open access.

EirGrid has published information by a diverse range of means which include:

- Detailed reports on the project proposals and public consultation at each consultation stage
- Press Releases
- Local and National Press Advertisements
- Local Radio Advertisements
- Community Update Brochures
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Leaflets
- Video explaining the Project
- Leaflets on technical matters (e.g. EMF)

To demonstrate accordance with the *Guidelines* set out in Annex VI of the Regulation, refer to Part 2 and Part 3 of this report.

## 2.4 AN BORD PLEANÁLA MANUAL OF PERMIT GRANTING PROCEDURES

An Bord Pleanála ('the Board') was appointed the competent authority for PCI in Ireland, and thus became responsible under Article 9(1), in collaboration with other authorities concerned, to "*publish a manual of procedures for the permit granting process applicable to projects of common interest*". Article 9(1) states that the competent authorities' manual "*shall be updated as necessary and made available to the public. The manual shall at least include the information specified in Annex VI.1. The manual shall not be legally binding, but it may refer to or quote relevant legal provisions*". This manual was required to be published by 16<sup>th</sup> May 2014 and a Manual of Procedures was duly published by the Board on that date.

Public Participation is addressed in Section 5 of the Manual. Section 5.1 cites the principles for public participation set out in Annex VI(3) and notes that the Board shall operate by those principles. The Manual notes at section 5.2 that the Board will be requesting project promoters to inform and consult with the general public at the earliest possible time which may include the time prior to the project promoter formally notifying the Board. As noted EirGrid has extensively informed and consulted with the public with respect to the proposed North South Interconnector development prior to the formal notification of the project to the Board.

Section 5.3 concerns Public Participation before Submission of the Application File and cites Article VI(5) as to the details which relevant parties are required to provide. Again details of compliance with the same are contained in this document.

Section 5.4 is entitled "The Public Participation Concept" and cites Annex VI(4) as to the details which the concept shall at least include. Attention is drawn to the requirements of the *Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003*. As noted earlier EirGrid has had due regard to these requirements.

The Manual further states at section 5.4 that the Board generally intends to require the project promoter to publish the approved public participation concept on the project website as a further means of enhancing transparency and public participation. In the event that the Board approves EirGrid's public participation concept, EirGrid will comply with this stipulation, if required by the Board.

It is further stated that the Board considers that all submissions received as part of the public consultation process should be published on the project website unless the submitter has provided reasonable reasons for wishing that their submission be received in confidence. As regards the public consultations which have been carried out by EirGrid to date it may be noted that following each stage of consultation, the report produced for the subsequent consultation stage included a report on the nature of submissions received during the previous consultation. Private individuals who made submissions were not informed that their submissions would be published on the project website and therefore copies of submissions were not published on the website or elsewhere, but



instead all issues raised during the consultation were identified and stated in the report. These reports were published on the EirGrid website.

Section 5.5 concerns the Project Website and cites the requirements of Annex VI(6). It is further stated that the Board will expect that the website is maintained by the project promoter concerned and that all changes to the website content are documented so that the Board (competent authority) can trace what information was made available to the general public at specific times. The project website is maintained and updated by EirGrid on a regular basis and this will continue to be the case through the statutory permit granting process.

Section 5.6 concerns the statutory permit granting procedure and notes that as the competent authority under the Collaborative Scheme, the role of An Bord Pleanála is mainly to co-ordinate the issuing of the comprehensive decision and to ensure that it is made within the period set out in the Regulation. It further notes that insofar as a project comes before the Board as a planning application, the Board will follow its own public participation procedures. At Section 5.6.1 it refers to the *Guide to Public Participation in Strategic Infrastructure Development*.

As stated in the formal notification of the North South Interconnector project to the Board, the proposed development has separately been the subject of pre-application consultation (now formally closed) between EirGrid and the Board under the provisions of Section 182E of the *Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended* – An Bord Pleanála Ref. PL02.VC0054 applies. The notification further stated that EirGrid acknowledges that consent is required for the project as a strategic infrastructure project and that such an application will be lodged with the Strategic Infrastructure Division of An Bord Pleanála. This follows from the decision of An Bord Pleanála published on the 6th February 2014, finding that:

- the proposed development constitutes strategic infrastructure development,
- that an EIS is required to accompany the application, and
  - that significant effects are likely on the environment in a trans-boundary state (Northern Ireland).

A separate parallel consenting process is currently being undertaken in Northern Ireland in respect of that portion of the overall Interconnector within that jurisdiction. The letter of notification further stated that other than these (but without prejudice to other matters should they prove necessary and/or is required and/or desirable), EirGrid does not currently anticipate that other Statutory permits/approvals and licences, such as waste or foreshore licences, are required to realise the proposed North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development as per An Bord Pleanála Ref. PCI001.

## 2.5 TRANSBOUNDARY CONSULTATION

As noted 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 of Annex VI.3. Article 9(6) further states that for projects likely to have significant adverse cross-border impacts in one or more neighbouring Member States, where Article 7 of Directive 2011/92/EU and the Espoo Convention are applicable, the relevant information shall be made available to the competent authority of the neighbouring Member States. The competent authority of the neighbouring Member States shall indicate, in the notification process where appropriate, whether it, or any other authority concerned, wishes to participate in the relevant public consultation procedures.

### 2.5.1 Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment

The basic requirement of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process is to ensure that, before development consent is given, projects likely to have significant effects on the environment are made subject to an assessment with regard to their effects. This requires an assessment of effects regardless of their location or of national borders.

As early as 1972, at the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, the international community recognised that States are responsible for ensuring that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond their control. This was followed by work by an experts' group and the drafting of a Convention on EIA in a transboundary context, which was adopted at Espoo in Finland in 1991 (and amended in 2001 and 2004). The Espoo Convention entered into force on 10 September 1997 and has been ratified by the European Union, Ireland and the United Kingdom. Indeed, the provisions of the Espoo Convention are reflected to amendments which have been made to the EIA Directive and to national legislation. The Convention sets out the obligations of Parties to assess the environmental impact of certain activities at an early stage of planning. It also lays down the general obligation of States to notify and consult each other on all major projects under consideration that are likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact across boundaries.

The Espoo Convention is aimed at preventing, mitigating and monitoring environmental damage by ensuring that explicit consideration is given to transboundary environmental factors before a final national decision is made as to whether to approve a project.

The Convention defines the country in which the proposed activity takes place as the "Party of Origin" and the countries that are impacted as an "Affected Party". Because of the nature of the North South Interconnector as a transboundary project, Northern Ireland (UK) and the Ireland are both Parties of Origin and Affected Parties.

For most projects involving transboundary impacts, the ES/EIS that is prepared as part of the respective planning application fulfils the purposes of the Espoo Convention, insofar as the cumulative impacts are assessed and all parties are properly informed of the applications in the respective jurisdictions.

## 2.5.2 European Commission Guidance on Transboundary Projects

In May 2013, the European Commission published *Guidance on the Application of the Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure for Large-scale Transboundary Projects* (herein referred to as the 'EU Transboundary Guidance document'). The aim of the EU Transboundary Guidance document was to build on "*experience and the good practices identified so far*" in the EIA field and to provide greater clarification as to how to approach "*large-scale transboundary projects*". These types of project are defined in the EU Transboundary Guidance document as those which are "*physically located in more than one country*" (such as the North South Interconnector project).

The EU Transboundary Guidance document describes seven key steps in a Transboundary EIA for large-scale 'transboundary projects':

- "1. Notification and transmittal of information;*
- 2. Determination of the content and extent of the matters of the EIA information – scoping;*
- 3. Preparation of the EIA information/report by the developer;*
- 4. Public participation, dissemination of information and consultation;*
- 5. Consultation between concerned Parties;*
- 6. Examination of the information gathered and final decision; and,*
- 7. Dissemination of information on the final decision."* (Page 4)

The EU Transboundary Guidance document further states:

*"For large-scale transboundary projects, the developer must comply with the requirements of the national EIA requirements of each country in which the project will be implemented. The developer should prepare individual national EIA reports and a joint environmental report that covers the whole project and assesses its overall effects, in particular cumulative and significant adverse transboundary effects. (page 10)*

While the EU Transboundary Guidance document states that it "*in no way creates any obligation for the Member States or project developers*" (page i), it is considered a useful consolidation of current best practice for projects such as the North South Interconnector.

On project commencement, EirGrid and NIE established a project steering committee in order to facilitate the delivery of the project as efficiently as possible. The committee established close co-ordination in terms of design and consideration of impacts of the project and ensured an integrated approach was undertaken.

The relevant competent authorities for the project are the Planning Service in Northern Ireland and An Bord Pleanála in Ireland. Through pre-application consultations and discussions with these bodies, it was determined that an EIA would be required to be submitted with the application for development consent in each jurisdiction. Each competent authority was informed of the transboundary nature of the project and the potential for effects (as set out by the Espoo Convention and the EIA Directive as transposed into national legislation). These consultations, therefore, established that both jurisdictions were Parties of Origin and Affected Parties (as defined by the Espoo Convention).

As part of the process leading to the preparation of the ES and EIS, a review of all environmental aspects was undertaken by EirGrid and NIE's team of specialist advisors. The scoping process was confirmed by the Planning Service and the Board, whereby the respective authorities provided opinions as to the information to be provided in the ES and EIS respectively. In Northern Ireland, this was undertaken through the Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) process with Planning Service. In Ireland, this was undertaken by the provision of a formal Scoping Opinion by the Board. (December 2013)

In addition to the Environmental Statement (ES) and EIS, a Joint Environmental Report, has also been prepared and will be lodged as part of the planning application. This approach fully satisfies all recommendations in the EU Transboundary Guidance document.

# PART 1

## The Concept for Public Participation

## 3 CONCEPT AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

### 3.1 GENERAL

This chapter commences with an overview of the international best practice consultation principles adopted by EirGrid. These principles, based on the provisions of *The Aarhus Convention*, seek to achieve transparent and accessible public participation which is in line with the requirements of Annex VI(3). It then outlines how these principles were adopted for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development with the aim of creating dialogue with the public, landowners and stakeholders about the project. It further considers the statutory requirements for consultation under the same principles. Finally it outlines the project road map.

### 3.2 INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICE IN RESPECT OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public engagement and consultation is an important component of successful infrastructure development worldwide. Ensuring that stakeholders have appropriate access to relevant information and can influence the decision making process serves to broaden available knowledge / expertise and leads to higher quality decisions. Public consultation also provides stakeholders with the opportunity to access information providing a more transparent and robust project development process.

International experience points toward a number of principles of public consultation that lead to successful public participation. Recognition of the societal benefit of these principles is reflected in their adoption into the laws of many jurisdictions, most significantly through *The Aarhus Convention*. The Convention sets out three pillars:

- Access to information;
- Public participation in decision making; and
- Access to justice.

While these principles place responsibility on the relevant authorities (governments, regulators etc.) there is an onus placed on developers to ensure public consultation forms a part of developments and that information is fairly disseminated to all stakeholders.

Successful developers proactively engage in meaningful public consultation and seek to provide stakeholders with opportunities to influence the decision making process at key junctures. This process can only be effective when stakeholders are sufficiently knowledgeable to provide informed opinion; accordingly, the provision of appropriate information in the appropriate format and at the appropriate level, is crucial. Furthermore, there is a need to demonstrate the legitimacy of the



consultation process in order to be able to provide confidence to stakeholders, regulators and the general public that the process undertaken has been genuine.

International best practice therefore points to a need for public consultation to be accessible, meaningful and accountable to all stakeholders.

These principles are reflected and consistent with best practice approaches undertaken and promoted by the international transmission energy industry. In this regard, reference is made to CIGRE, the Council on Large Electric Systems (an international association for sharing knowledge and joining forces to improve electric power systems) Working Group B2.15 Report entitled *Consultation Models for Overhead Line Projects (June 2005)*.

### **3.3 CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION ADOPTED**

EirGrid's underlying or foundation pillars for consultation for the project are compatible with the requirements of Annex VI(3), *The Aarhus Convention* and industry best practice. All of the consultation activities to date were drawn up to adhere to each of these three pillar concepts and aimed to ensure that the public participation activities devised for the project were:-

- Accessible;
- Meaningful; and
- Accountable.

What is meant by each of these terms and an overview of the mechanisms by which they were / are and will be achieved, by EirGrid and as provided for in the statutory planning process, is provided in the following sections.

#### **3.3.1 Principle 1: Accessible Consultation**

##### **3.3.1.1 Meaning of Accessible Consultation**

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.

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).

### 3.3.1.2 Mechanisms Adopted to Achieve Accessible Consultation

The consultation approach for each stage of the project was drawn up in accordance with the guiding principles for achieving ready accessibility to information for all stakeholders, particularly on the environment, as required under *The Aarhus Convention* and *Espoo Conventions*. These are in accordance with the requirements of Article 9 of Regulation 347/2013.

To achieve this, a variety of mechanisms were used as follows:-

- Provision of project information in a wide variety of formats and locations, including the following:
  - A project website that was regularly updated in particular prior to the announcement of each stage of the project development process. This enabled ready access to maps, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), brochures and press releases summarising activity and reports in a digital format to those who required or preferred that method;
  - Hard copy information was also available to those who may not have internet access or those who prefer to receive hard copies of information, be that maps or reports. To this end, the information offices were open within the study area, initially in 2008 in two locations (Carrickmacross and Navan) and a third office location was added subsequent to requests from stakeholders for both events and an office at Kingscourt (April 2013). This request was facilitated in an effort to increase accessibility to those potentially affected or interested in the project;
  - Information Open Days were held around each of the consultation phases;
  - To assist those to locate events, information centres and access to information on the project, a dedicated project lo-call project phone line (1890 25 26 90), which commenced in 2007 and which remains open to this day, was available between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday to field calls from stakeholders and to answer their queries;
  - A dedicated email service was included on all consultation literature and widely publicised through press releases to the media. Prior to the withdrawal of the 2009 application two dedicated and region specific email addresses were advertised, these

were [meathcavanpower@eirgrid.com](mailto:meathcavanpower@eirgrid.com) and [cavantyroneinterconnector@eirgrid.com](mailto:cavantyroneinterconnector@eirgrid.com). Since then a single combined email address [northsouth@eirgrid.com](mailto:northsouth@eirgrid.com) has been advertised. The old email addresses are still operable and emails that are received there are automatically forwarded to the new address;

- Direct mailings;
  - One-to-one meetings on request;
  - Small group meetings; and
  - Strategic stakeholder meetings (elected representatives, action groups, etc.)
- Going forward to the statutory consultation phase, the website will be updated to contain information about the application process and a link to the Board's website from where the documents can be viewed and downloaded.

### 3.3.1.3 Statutory Process

The requirements of the planning approval process under the *Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2014*, make provision for 'accessible consultation' during the statutory process in the following ways:-

#### Awareness of the Project

There are statutory provisions in place to ensure public notification of when an application for approval is being lodged. In this regard, 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.

These notices will indicate *inter alia* the nature and location of the proposed development, the times and places where the application can be inspected, and that submissions may be made to the Board by the public and others e.g. prescribed bodies. The Board will also include notice of receipt of the application in its weekly list of new cases and post it on its website.

As it has been determined that the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development will have significant transboundary effects on Northern Ireland, measures to notify and inform the Department of the Environment (DOE) Planning Northern Ireland, will be implemented.

In cases where further information is sought in the course of consideration of the application by the Board, further public notification procedures again apply to ensure the public and prescribed bodies are fully aware of any revised proposals or additional information provided in the course of the application process.

## **Use of Multiple Communications Tools**

While the statutory notification requirement is to publish newspaper notification of the lodgement of the application, it is also the case in most applications that site notices will also be required. It is the intention in the case of the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development that site notices will also be erected.

The statutory process provides for the lodgement of written submissions to the Board. However the legislation also makes provision for the holding of an oral hearing and in the case of strategic infrastructure proposals these are generally convened. When making a written submission, third parties have the right to request that the Board hold an oral hearing. When 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.

## **Physical Accessibility**

EirGrid will make a hard copy of the application and the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) available for inspection and for purchase (for the reasonable cost of making the copy) for a period of at least six weeks. The documents will 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 also intends to make it available to view in its Project Information Centres in counties Monaghan, Cavan and Meath.

A dedicated website will be set up for the statutory application process and will include all the planning application documentation submitted to the Board. All information will be available for view and download. In the case of the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development there will be a link to this new website provided from the project webpage on the EirGrid website which hosts all of the information on the project and consultation to date. Application documentation, such as the EIS, will also be available on the dedicated website in the Irish language.

## **Information is Clear, Meaningful and Uncomplicated**

The information provided on the public notices must follow a specified format and provide essential information to clearly inform the public of how they make submissions, and within what timeframe, to the Board.

The content of the application itself will comprise clear drawings/ maps of the proposal and will be supported by an EIS, Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and other documentation. While the EIS is a technical document there is a statutory requirement that it contain a Non-Technical Summary (NTS) which will explain the likely and significant impacts of the proposed development in non-technical and unambiguous language.

## 3.3.2 Principle 2: Meaningful Consultation

### 3.3.2.1 Definition of Meaningful Consultation

This 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.

### 3.3.2.2 Mechanisms Adopted to Achieve Meaningful Consultation

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, EirGrid devised Terms of Reference (ToR) 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.

Therefore, ToRs, along with a conceptual project road map (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 ToRs were widely available so that at all stages members of the public were kept fully aware of what stage the project was at. This is in accordance with the requirements of Article 9 of Regulation 347/2013.

The consultation undertaken for the project has comprised two separate but parallel strands:

- 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.

### 3.3.2.3 Statutory Process

The requirements of the planning approval process under the *Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2014*, make provision for ‘*meaningful consultation*’ during the statutory process in the following ways:-

#### Distinct Periods of Consultation

There are distinct statutory requirements for consultation during both the application preparation and the application consideration periods. These apply in different ways to different stakeholders.

##### Pre-Application Consultation

In the application preparation period, there are various statutory provisions for pre-application consultation. For the purposes of the EIS process and the planning approval process there is a requirement to consult with the Board, prescribed bodies, statutory agencies, interested parties, the public and other representative organisations. This consultation stage provided the consultees with details of the proposal and it provides them with an opportunity to inform the nature and extent of the proposed development, the scope of the environmental assessment process and the nature of the documentation which will ultimately support a planning application for approval.

In this regard, EirGrid has actively engaged in pre-application consultation in respect of the proposed development. This has taken the form of *inter alia* consultation during the previous application for approval (which was subsequently withdrawn), the publication of the *Re-evaluation Report* and *Preferred Project Solution Report*, undertaking an informal scoping exercise (part of the ToR of the latter report), transboundary consultation and a range of correspondences, briefings, meetings and open days which focused on both public and landowner consultation.

It is also noted that the Board consulted with various parties (including local and prescribed bodies and certain statutory agencies in Northern Ireland) pursuant to a formal request from EirGrid to provide a scoping opinion in respect of the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development.

##### Consultation during the Application Consideration Period

Prior to lodgement of the application there is a requirement for the applicant to advise prescribed bodies that the application is to be lodged, to provide them with copies of the EIS and application documentation, and to advise them that they may make submissions on the application to the Board when it is lodged and within a specified time period. EirGrid will meet these requirements in due course.

When lodged any interested parties may make submissions to the Board on the proposed development within a specified time period (as clearly set out in the statutory public notices). These submissions can relate to the principle of the development or to details of the proposal. They may also relate to the detail of the information provided with the application.

In cases where significant further information is sought and received the Board in the course of its consideration of the application, a further period of public consultation and submissions will be provided for.

### 3.3.3 Principle 3: Accountable Consultation

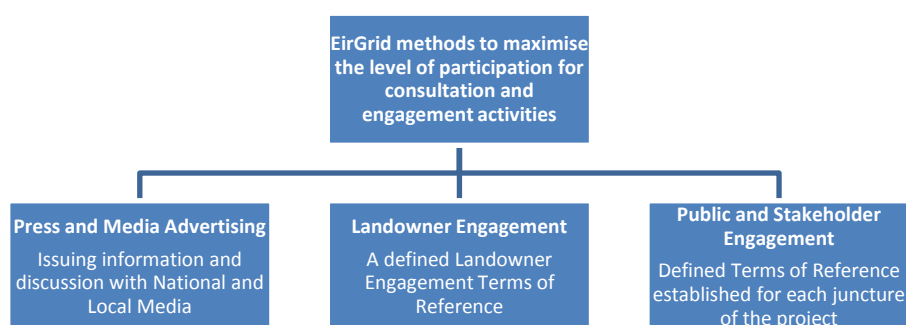
#### 3.3.3.1 Definition of Accountable Consultation

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.

#### 3.3.3.2 Mechanisms to Achieve Accountable Consultation

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 3.1**.

Feedback provided by stakeholders during each phase of public consultation was captured and recorded by the project team in a dedicated project database. This information was disseminated and reviewed to ensure that it was considered by the project team as part of the decision making process.



**Figure 3.1: EirGrid's Distinct Strands for Consultation and Engagement for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development**



The project team, therefore, were 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 as part of subsequent reporting published for the project. This provided for clear and accountable consultation throughout. This will continue to be achieved in the final planning application to be prepared for the project where the issues raised by stakeholders will be addressed and responded to as part of the application documents.

### 3.3.3.3 Statutory Process

The requirements of the planning approval process under the *Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2014*, make provision for ‘accountable consultation’ during the statutory process in the following ways:-

There are a number of stages within the consideration and decision making process by the Board which support the principle of accountable consultation.

As an application is being considered by the Board there will be a period in which submissions may be lodged by prescribed bodies and various interested parties. The Board also have the authority to request additional information in respect of the application from the applicant in the course of its consideration. Where additional information is sought and received the Board will advise all parties who have made submissions that such information has been lodged and that it is available for inspection and that further submissions may be made. These measures will ensure that all submissions in the course of the statutory consultation are given appropriate consideration and responses as appropriate by the applicant

The Board has procedures in place for transparent decision making which will also account for consultation during the statutory process. In the first instance, the inspector will prepare a detailed report of all submissions, further information and responses received in the course of the decision making period. The inspector will also prepare a report on the oral hearing if held. Again this will also provide detail on issues of concern raised by any interested parties and the applicant. The report will contain a detailed assessment of the development proposed and the supporting documentation. It will also contain a recommended decision, reasons for same and conditions of the approval as appropriate.

The report and recommendations of the inspector (including details of all issues raised in the statutory consultation process) will in turn be considered by the Board members and the proposal will be determined. On foot of their decision the Board will issue a Direction for the determination of the application. The final decision of the Board must state the main reasons and considerations on which the decision was based. While the Board must have regard to the report and recommendation of its

inspector, it is not obliged to accept the recommendation. In any case where the Board does not accept a recommendation to grant or refuse, it is required to state the reason(s) for not doing so.

### 3.3.4 Project Roadmap

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 project has been iterative and in this respect refer to **Figures 3.2 - 3.6**, which provide details of how the timeline has been visually communicated over the duration of the project to date:

**Table 3.1: Project Roadmap**

| Figure     | Roadmap Iteration  |
|------------|--|
| Figure 3.2 | The roadmap image as published in the Community Update brochure in April 2009      |
| Figure 3.3 | The roadmap image published for the preliminary re-evaluation phase (May 2011)     |
| Figure 3.4 | The image used in the brochure for the final re-evaluation phase (April 2013)      |
| Figure 3.5 | The roadmap published in the preferred project solution phase brochure (July 2013) |
| Figure 3.6 | The roadmap published in the most recent Community Update brochure in July 2014    |

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

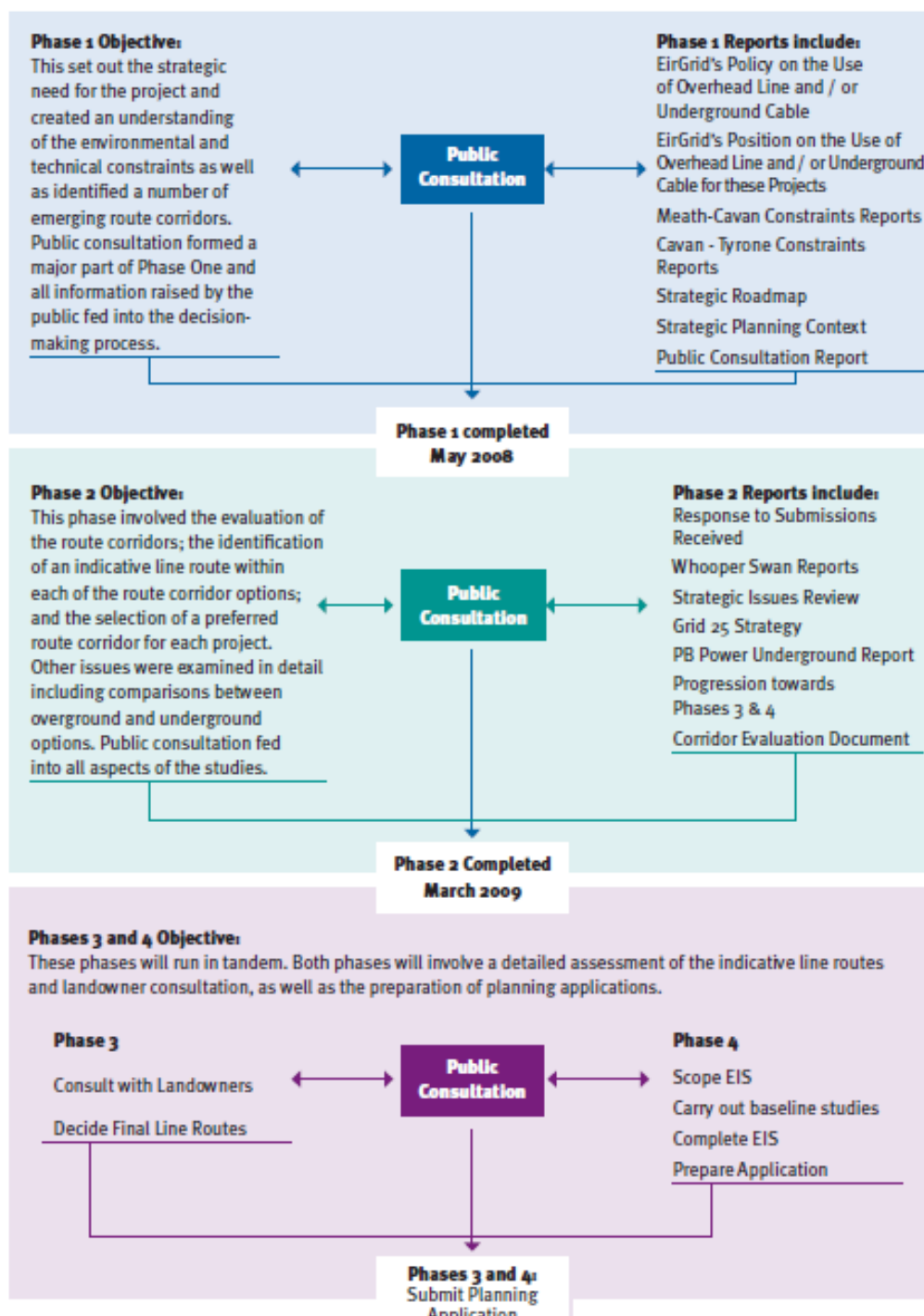
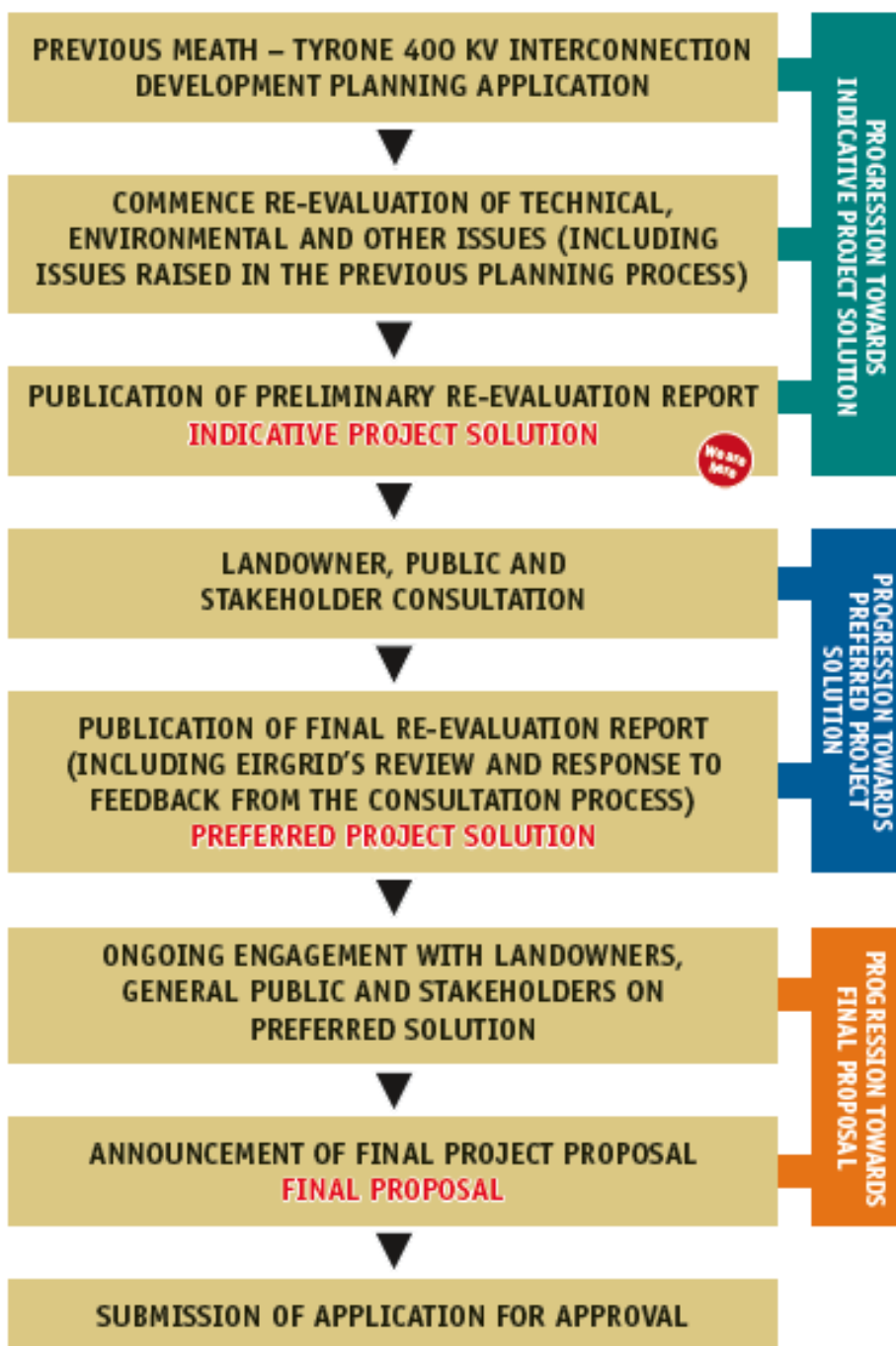


Figure 3.2 Indicative Roadmap Image published in the Community Update brochure (April 2009)



**Figure 3.3** Roadmap Image published in the Community Update brochure for the Preliminary Re-evaluation Phase (May 2011)



**Figure 3.4 Roadmap Image published in the Community Update brochure for the Final Re-evaluation Phase (April 2013)**





Figure 3.5: Roadmap Image published in Preferred Project Solution Community Update Brochure July 2013



Figure 3.6 Roadmap image published in Community Update Brochure July 2014



# PART 2

Public Consultation and Participation to Date (2007 - 2014)

## **4 PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION TO DATE**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the public consultation and public participation events which were undertaken in respect of the project since 2007.

It firstly outlines the project development, route and technology selection and consultation processes undertaken prior to the submission of the application for planning approval of the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development and subsequently in respect of that previous application. This was undertaken between 2007 and 2010. In December 2009, EirGrid submitted an application to An Bord Pleanála (“the Board”) for development consent of that portion of the proposed interconnector located within Ireland under An Bord Pleanála Ref. VA0006. In May 2010, the Board commenced an oral hearing in respect of the proposed development. However, in June 2010, the EirGrid application was withdrawn.

The chapter then describes the project re-evaluation, project development and refinement and consultation undertaken during the period from 2011 to the present. It therefore outlines the activities undertaken following the withdrawal of the original application to the Board.

The chapter also describes the re-evaluation process adopted by EirGrid. This re-evaluation process used all of the information available, including most significantly the outcome of previous public consultation and participation. This public consultation was an integral part of the re-assessment of the project. This in turn has and will inform the proposed application.

As provided for under Article 9(3) of the Regulation, the Board shall take into consideration any form of public participation and consultation that took place before the start of the permit granting process, to the extent that such public consultation has fulfilled the requirement of Article 9. In this regard and with reference to the particular evolution of this project, the consultation and public participation undertaken from 2007 to 2014 is of relevance.

This includes the consultation with prescribed bodies including the three local authorities that occurred prior to the submission of the application for planning approval of the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development and that has also occurred in respect of the proposed application; however, it is not specifically detailed in this report.

## 4.2 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN DURING THE PERIOD 2007 TO 2010

Various pre-application consultation and public engagement phases were undertaken to inform the application made to the Board in December 2009.

Two series of open day events were undertaken in October 2007 and November 2007.

The purpose of the first series in October 2007 (3 No open days – details in **Table 4.2** below) was to introduce the public to the project, the route corridor options and how they were decided upon (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.

A second series of open day events was held in November 2007 (3 No. open days – details in **Table 4.2** below) in response to stakeholder feedback for more events. It is noted that concerns regarding opposition to the project resulted in some of the local hotels in Meath and Cavan subsequently cancelling the event bookings and so two events were held in County Monaghan in November 2007.

In addition to these two main series of public events, a further series of small group meetings were held in January 2008 to accommodate any stakeholders who had attended the open day events in October and November 2007 but who were unable to engage due to the very large crowds.

A public information brochure was published in October 2007 in advance of the open days. This brochure provided maps of the three identified 1km wide corridor options. It included a feedback form inviting stakeholders to submit their written comments and responses in relation to the proposed development. The brochure provided details for submissions to be made in hard copy via post or via e-mail. Verbal submissions or further information could be obtained at open day events or via a lo-call phone line (1890 25 26 90), details of which were also provided on the brochure. A copy of the brochure published in October 2007 is provided in **Appendix A** of this report. A range of other written documentation was published during the pre-planning stage of the 2009 application in various formats to ensure wide accessibility to the public.

A summary of the measures adopted for the public consultation and participation on the previous application is presented in **Table 4.1** below. **Table 4.2** provides details of the open day and group meeting events held in October and November 2007 and January 2008. **Table 4.3** provides information on the brochures, leaflets and reports produced and made available to the public prior to the lodgement of the previous application in 2009.

**Table 4.1: Summary of the Public Consultation and Landowner Engagement Methods Adopted by EirGrid Prior to the Lodgement of the Previous Application in 2009**

| 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 ( <a href="mailto:meathcavanpower@eirgrid.com">meathcavanpower@eirgrid.com</a> and <a href="mailto:cavantyroneinterconnector@eirgrid.com">cavantyroneinterconnector@eirgrid.com</a> ). 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  |
|---------------------|---|
| 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 ( <a href="http://www.eirgrid.com">www.eirgrid.com</a> ) 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 their queries raised (Frequently Asked Questions) and technical reports on the project.  |

**Table 4.2 Details of Open Day and Group Meeting Events Held in October and November 2007 and January 2008 in respect of the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development**

| Event               | Date         | Purpose  |
|---------------------|--------------|--|
| <b>Open Days</b>    |              |  |
| Open Days, Series 1 | October 2007 | <p>Three open days were held to introduce people to the proposal. This had the following aims:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the public with information on the project and to facilitate public participation with an opportunity to have questions answered by the EirGrid project team who attended the events.</li> <li>• Identify concerns surrounding the project;</li> <li>• Allow stakeholders to provide feedback for consideration by the project team.</li> </ul> <p>Information materials were provided at these events and included mapping and brochures, display panels of the 1km identified corridor options and how they were derived and other project information.</p> |

| Event                | Date          | Purpose   |
|----------------------|---------------|---|
| Open Days, Series 2  | November 2007 | <p>Three open days were scheduled, although only two events took place due to hotels cancelling the bookings, These again sought public participation on three identified 1km wide corridor options, in addition to their views on overhead lines versus underground cables and health concerns.</p> <p>The aims of these events were the same as those for Series 1 and the events took the same format. In addition, small "Break Out" sessions on the following topics were hosted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health; and</li> <li>• Over ground versus underground power lines.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Meetings</b>      |               |   |
| Small Group Meetings | January 2008  | <p>As it was not possible to accommodate all interested stakeholders at the open days (series 2), EirGrid arranged a series of small round table meetings to facilitate those who were unable to attend the open days.</p> <p>These meetings were held between members of the public and the EirGrid project team.</p>  |

**Table 4.3 Information on Brochures, Leaflets and Reports Produced and Made Available to the Public Prior to the Lodgement of the Previous Application in 2009**

| Publication Name                         | Date Issued   | Purpose   |
|--|---------------|---|
| <b>Brochures and Leaflets</b>            |               |   |
| Proposed Route Corridor Options Brochure | October 2007  | <p>This brochure introduced the project to the public and included a feedback form where members of the public could submit their comments and responses.</p> <p>This brochure provided maps of the three identified 1km wide corridor options, as well as general introductory information on the power lines.</p> |
| Leaflet for Householders                 | November 2007 | This leaflet was distributed as a follow up to the brochures issued in October 2007.  |

| 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 electric and magnetic fields and in particular the various field strengths that occur on different overhead lines and underground cables. 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 available at the information centres and distributed to members of the public at meetings and open day events.</p> |
| Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)   | January 2008  | <p>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 produced a <i>Preliminary Briefing Note Overhead and Underground Energy Transmission Options</i> prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff.</p> <p>The briefing note was available at the information offices, on the EirGrid website and posted on request to stakeholders.</p>  |
| Phase 1 Publications               | May 2008      | <p>Reports were issued by EirGrid on technical issues and letters were sent to stakeholders to advise them of the publication of these reports.</p> <p>This included the Cavan-Tyrone Constraints Report and Meath-Cavan Constraints Report which detailed corridor options for an overhead line route in both study areas, including baseline studies of key environmental constraints such as socio economic, land use, landscape, flora &amp; fauna, water, soils and cultural heritage.</p>   |
| Project Information Offices        | August 2008   | <p>EirGrid opened project information centres in Navan and Carrickmacross to give local people the opportunity to discuss plans for the proposed 400 kV power line.</p>   |



| Publication Name  | Date Issued   | Purpose   |
|---|---------------|---|
| Phase 2 Publications  | December 2008 | Reports were issued by EirGrid which responded to issues raised by stakeholders. These reports were made available on the EirGrid website at information offices and provided to stakeholders on CD request.  |
| Response to Submissions and Reports Received since May 2008 | December 2008 | EirGrid published a number of reports in relation to Phase 2 of the 400 kV project including a <i>Response to Submissions and Reports received since May 2008</i> .   |
| PB Power Summary Brochure                                   | February 2009 | <p>EirGrid produced a summary of the PB Power Report (<i>Comparison of High Voltage Transmission Options Report</i>) following an extended series of public consultation meetings at the information offices and following extensive research by EirGrid.</p> <p>This report provided the public with a non-technical summary of the report to clarify some misunderstandings and discrepancies arising in the undergrounding debate.</p> <p>The PB Power Report and the Summary was available at the information offices, on the EirGrid website and posted on request to stakeholders.</p>  |
| Moving to Phases 3 and 4 Brochure                           | April 2009    | <p>EirGrid produced this brochure which announced the preferred route corridors and indicative line routes to the public and was entitled <i>EirGrid Progresses 400 kV Power Line Projects to Next Phase</i>.</p> <p>In this brochure, EirGrid provided details on how the preferred route corridor was decided upon, the technical criteria used and how the consultation process informed the conclusion.</p> <p>The brochure included a full map of the preferred 1km corridor and indicative line route. EirGrid sought public and landowner participation on this route and invited stakeholders to continue to engage with EirGrid in its consultation process.</p> |
| EirGrid Position on NEPP Askon Study                        | June 2009     | EirGrid issued a report entitled <i>EirGrid Position on Askon Study</i> , which was a response to the NEPP-commissioned <i>Study on the Comparative Merits of Overhead Lines and Underground Cables as 400 kV Transmission Lines for the North-South Interconnector Project</i> (Askon Study). The EirGrid response report was made available on the EirGrid website and publicised via an EirGrid press release. The aim of this EirGrid Report was to provide stakeholders with a full review of the Askon Study.   |

| Publication Name                 | Date Issued  | Purpose  |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Railroad Report                  | July 2009    | <p>The <i>Locating 400 kV cables in or Adjacent to Rail Beds</i> report (Railroad Report) was released in July 2009 in response to queries from stakeholders on the possibility of using disused railway lines to provide a route for an underground cable.</p> <p>The publication of this report was publicised through a media press release issued by EirGrid, was made available online and in addition was emailed to stakeholders.</p>   |
| Close of Phases 3 and 4 Brochure | July 2009    | <p>EirGrid produced this brochure entitled <i>EirGrid is moving Towards the Final Preparation of the Planning Application</i> and invited public participation so that the opinions of the public concerned could be considered and taken into account, where appropriate, prior to the preparation and submission of the planning application.</p> <p>In addition, this brochure summarised the 'Questions and Answers' document issued in July 2009 and provided answers to new questions on the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The planning process;</li> <li>• Undergrounding;</li> <li>• Indemnification and compensation;</li> <li>• Property; and</li> <li>• Construction.</li> </ul> |
| Questions and Answers            | July 2009    | <p>This document was produced by EirGrid and provided written responses to a large volume of correspondence received from stakeholders concerning issues which included heritage, bloodstock and angling.</p> <p>EirGrid encouraged stakeholders to avail of a face-to-face meeting with the project team to answer any further queries they may have.</p>   |
| Questions and Answers            | January 2010 | <p>This document was produced by EirGrid and provided written responses to 'follow up' questions that seek clarification on some of the answers given in the FAQs (July 2009).</p>   |

#### 4.2.1 Statutory Consultation Period - 2010

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 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.

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.

In addition, as part of the statutory consultation process, a number of prescribed bodies made observations on the content of the application for approval (including the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)) to the Board.

In total, approximately 940 written submissions or observations were received in respect of the application.

In May 2010, the Board commenced an oral hearing in respect of the proposed development. Both prescribed bodies and interested parties (to include new parties to the application) had the opportunity to make an oral submission to the Hearing.

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

Following the withdrawal of the application in 2010, EirGrid produced a document entitled “*Circumstances Leading to the Withdrawal of the Planning Application for the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development*” which was made available on the EirGrid website in September 2010.

### 4.3 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN DURING THE PERIOD 2011 TO PRESENT DAY

Following the withdrawal of the previous application, the evolution and consultation for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development has comprised three key stages as follows:-

- **The Preliminary Re-evaluation Phase** – 1<sup>st</sup> stage of a two stage Re-evaluation approach. The formal consultation period was from 9<sup>th</sup> May 2011 to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011.
- **The Final Re-evaluation Phase** – 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of a two stage Re-evaluation approach. The formal engagement period was from 16<sup>th</sup> April 2013 to 27<sup>th</sup> May 2013.
- **The Preferred Project Solution Phase** – Consultation on the preferred project solution. This consultation period was from 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013 to 9<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

All of these three stages are in accordance with EirGrid's Concept for Public Participation as set out in **Chapter 3** of this document and comply with the principles for public participation set out in the *Guidelines* in Annex VI(3) insofar as they ensured in advance information and dialogue with the public. In this respect:

- The stakeholders affected by a Project of Common Interest, including relevant national, regional and local authorities, landowners and citizens living in the vicinity of the project, the general public and their associations, organisations or groups, were extensively informed and consulted at an early stage, when potential concerns by the public could still be taken into account and in an open and transparent manner.
- Each public consultation stage covered all subject matters relevant to the particular stage of the process.
- Feedback was admissible from the beginning of the focused period of consultation until the expiry of any deadline.

To address the specific concerns of landowners, a separate and tailored parallel consultation process for landowners was provided by EirGrid.

In addition to these three stages of public engagement EirGrid also published a *Final Project Proposal* in December 2013.

The measures adopted for each of these phases, including events held are outlined in brief in the following sections.

## 4.4 THE PRELIMINARY RE-EVALUATION PHASE (2010 – 2011)

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 9<sup>th</sup> May 2011 to 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

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.

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 (ToR) below).

### 4.4.1 Terms of Reference for the Preliminary Re-evaluation Consultation Stage

The TOR for 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 overhead line? 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 was anything else that they thought should be looked at?
- Are there any other key issues that EirGrid need to consider before submitting a new planning application?

Members of the public and stakeholders were therefore invited to make submissions on the issues raised in the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report*. The period for making submissions was between 9<sup>th</sup> May 2011 and 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011.

#### 4.4.2 Participation Methods

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

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.

#### 4.4.3 Measures Adopted for Consultation during Preliminary Re-evaluation Phase

**Table 4.4** provides a summary of measures adopted for consultation during the preliminary re-evaluation stage.

**Table 4.4: 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 concerned (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 <sup>5</sup> . |
| Information centres  | 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.  |

<sup>5</sup> The Lo-Call project phone remains in place to this present day.

| Method                            | Communications Activity   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Consultation Information Brochure | / A <i>Community Update</i> brochure / leaflet 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 TOR 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 <i>Consultation Brochure</i> were issued in a mail-out to stakeholders.   |
| Website                           | All project information was provided on one new website:<br><a href="http://www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/NorthSouth400kVInterconnectionDevelopment/">http://www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/NorthSouth400kVInterconnectionDevelopment/</a> |

### Community Update Brochure (May 2011)

This information leaflet was a total of 9 pages, including covers and route corridors insert. It 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.

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.

The information brochure outlined the findings of the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report*. It invited feedback on any of the findings of the report and also specifically requested feedback on three key questions as outlined in the ToR at **section 4.4.1** above. Details of the EirGrid website were provided along with a dedicated project e-mail address, Lo-call phone number, postal address and locations and opening hours of information centres at Navan and Carrickmacross.

This information provided accords with the requirements of Annex VI 5(a).

A copy of the brochure is provided in **Appendix B** of this report.

### Media Activity and Advertising

To enhance awareness and public participation in the consultation for the preliminary re-evaluation consultation, EirGrid issued a number of news releases that are listed in **Table 4.5**.

**Table 4.5: Press Releases Issued by EirGrid to Local and National Media as Part of Communications Activity for the Publicising of the Preliminary Re-evaluation of the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development**

| Date         | Title  |
|--------------|--|
| 09 May 2011  | EirGrid Begins Consultation for 400 kV North-South Interconnection Development         |
| 16 May 2011  | EirGrid Reports Significant Response to North-South Public Consultation                |
| 17 June 2011 | EirGrid Extends Public Consultation for North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development |

### Project Information Centres

The Project Information Centres in Navan and Carrickmacross (which had been used for the previous application) were re-opened to the public in May 2011. These were each open for one day a week – Tuesdays and Wednesdays respectively. Copies of the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* and the Community Update Brochure were available at the 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. Hours of opening were 1pm to 7pm to facilitate people both during and outside of normal working hours.

Landowners were directly engaged with during this period. Details are contained in **section 4.8** below.

## 4.5 THE FINAL RE-EVALUATION PHASE (2011 – 2013)

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 Independent Expert Commission (IEC) to consider the case for and cost of undergrounding all or part of the Meath-Tyrone 400kV line, including a review of all of the other reports carried out in respect of the North-South Project. The findings of the IEC were published in January 2012 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.

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.

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.

The findings and proposals presented in this *Final Re-evaluation Report* were in turn subject to a further round of public participation from 16<sup>th</sup> April 2013 to 27<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

#### **4.5.1 Terms of Reference for Public Engagement on the Final Re-evaluation Report**

The ToRs 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?
- To provide feedback on how best to adopt community gain within transmission project developments and the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development.

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 16<sup>th</sup> April 2013 to 27<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

#### **4.5.2 Participation Methods**

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

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.

### 4.5.3 Measures Adopted for Public Engagement during Final Re-evaluation Phase

Table 4.6 provides a summary of the measures adopted for public engagement on the *Final Re-evaluation Report*.

**Table 4.6 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 <i>Final Re-evaluation Report</i> 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.<br><br>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. |
| Lo-Call Phone Line               | Continuation of the project Lo-Call phone line service.   |
| Information centres              | EirGrid re-opened the two project information centres in Navan and Carrickmacross from 16 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 4.9 below.   |
| 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monaghan County Council on 4 June 2013;</li> <li>• Monaghan Anti-Pylon Group in Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan on 12 April 2013;</li> <li>• North East Pylon Pressure Group (NEPP) in Trim, Co. Meath on 3 April 2013;</li> </ul>   |
| Community Brochure Update        | 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, on the project which addressed the following issues: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The North South 400 kV Interconnection Development</li> <li>2. Current situation</li> <li>3. Timeline and design</li> </ol>   |

| Method           | Communications Activity  |
|------------------|--|
|                  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. EirGrid and Grid25</li> <li>5. Why is the project needed?</li> <li>6. Public consultation</li> <li>7. Economic downturn</li> <li>8. Renewable energy</li> <li>9. Moyhill substation</li> <li>10. Overhead v underground</li> <li>11. Substation, lines and tower types</li> <li>12. Technical information</li> <li>13. EMF</li> <li>14. Local impact</li> <li>15. Landowner access and compensation</li> </ol> |
| Letters/Mail-out | Letters and the <i>Community Update Brochure</i> were issued in a mail-out to stakeholders   |

### Community Update Brochure, April 2013

This information leaflet was a total of 7 pages, including covers and map insert. It 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.

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.

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.

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

### Media Activity and Advertising

EirGrid issued a number of press releases prior to the commencement of the engagement on the *Final Re-evaluation Report*. Details of the press releases issued are listed in **Table 4.7**.

**Table 4.7: Press Releases Issued by EirGrid to Local Media as part of Communications Activity for the Promotion of the Final Re-evaluation Stage**

| Date          | Title   |
|---------------|---|
| 16 April 2013 | EirGrid Publishes Key New Report on Proposed North South Interconnector |
| 20 May 2013   | EirGrid holds Additional Information Days                               |

The 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.

A total of seven advertisements were placed in local press by EirGrid to inform members of the public (and landowners) with details of the *Final Re-evaluation Report*, the stage of the project and how the public could participate in the public engagement on the *Final Re-evaluation Report*. Refer to **Table 4.8**.

**Table 4.8: Details of Print Advertisements placed by EirGrid as Part of Final Re-evaluation Engagement on the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development**

| Date                 | Media Outlet                 |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 20 and 27 April 2013 | <i>Irish Farmers Journal</i> |
| 20 and 27 April 2013 | <i>Meath Chronicle</i>       |
| 18 and 25 April 2013 | <i>Northern Standard</i>     |
| 18 April 2013        | <i>Anglo Celt</i>            |

In addition, 80 advertisements were placed by EirGrid on local radio stations, LMFM and Northern Sound at this time of the project.

### Project Information centres

As part of the public engagement on the *Final Re-evaluation Report*, EirGrid opened a third project information centre in Kingscourt, Co. 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). The information centres at Navan and Carrickmacross continued to open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays respectively. Hours of opening were 12 noon to 7pm to facilitate people both during and outside of normal working hours.

## Open Day Events

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. Technical specialists and the project team were on hand to discuss the issues of concern with stakeholders.

A list of the open day events held by EirGrid during the engagement on the final re-evaluation is provided in **Table 4.9**.

**Table 4.9: 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 April 2013, 1.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.   |
| Town Hall, Cavan Town                             | Wednesday, 24 April 2013, 1.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m. |
| The Workhouse, Shercock Road, Carrickmacross      | Thursday, 25 April 2013, 1.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.  |
| The Workhouse, Shercock Road, Carrickmacross      | Friday, 26 April 2013, 1.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.    |
| Navan Education Centre, Athlumney, Navan          | Monday, 29 April 2013, 1.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.    |
| Navan Education Centre, Athlumney, Navan          | Wednesday, 1 May 2013, 1.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.    |
| Additional Open Days                              |   |
| Cremartin GAA Centre, Castleblayney               | Tuesday, 21 May 2013, 4.30 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.     |
| Aughnamullen GAA Social Centre, Carrickmacross    | Wednesday, 22 May 2013, 4.30 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.   |
| Corduff-Raferagh Community Centre, Carrickmacross | Thursday, 23 May 2013, 4.30 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.    |

## Proactive Engagement with Stakeholders

Organisations were contacted to inform them about the engagement on the *Final Re-evaluation Report* and information was again circulated to the County librarians for dissemination.

## 4.6 PREFERRED PROJECT SOLUTION REPORT (2013)

Following review of all feedback received during the re-evaluation periods, EirGrid published a *Preferred Project Solution Report (PPSR)* 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. EirGrid held an eight-week period of formal public consultation (between Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013 and Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2013).

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 at **section 4.9** below.

### 4.6.1 Terms of Reference for Consultation during the Preferred Project Solution Phase

The ToR 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.

Members of the public and stakeholders were therefore provided with an opportunity to make submissions on the matters addressed in the *Preferred Project Solution Report* during the consultation period from 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013 to 9<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

### 4.6.2 Participation Methods

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

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.

### 4.6.3 Measures Adopted for Consultation during Preferred Project Solution Phase

Table 4.10 below provides a summary overview of the measures adopted for consultation during the preferred project solution phase.

**Table 4.10 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                       | 8 No. 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.  |
| 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.  |
| 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 Update Brochure         | 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> .  |
| Preferred Project Solution Report | In addition to being available on the website, at project information offices and at Public Open Day Events, copies of the <i>Preferred Project Solution</i> reports were also disseminated to the County Librarians for public display and to any interested stakeholders on request (i.e. maps and reports). |

### Community Update Brochure (July 2013)

This information leaflet was a total of 6 pages, including covers. It 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.

The information brochure requested feedback on the issues addressed in the *Preferred Project Solution Report*. Details of 3 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.

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

### Landowner Brochure (July 2013)

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.

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

### Media Activity and Advertising

A list of the news releases and advertisements placed by EirGrid is provided in **Table 4.11** below.

**Table 4.11: Press Releases Issued by EirGrid to Local and National Media as part of Communications Activity for the Promotion of the Preferred Project Solution Report Consultation stage**

| Date         | Title  |
|--------------|--|
| 16 July 2013 | North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development |



**Table 4.12: Names of Media Outlets Issued with Press Releases by EirGrid as Part of Public Consultation on the Preferred Project Solution Report**

| Media Outlet Name        |                              |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Local Press              | National Press               |
| <i>Anglo Celt</i>        | <i>Irish Examiner</i>        |
| <i>Meath Chronicle</i>   | <i>Irish Independent</i>     |
| <i>Northern Standard</i> | <i>Irish Times</i>           |
|                          | <i>Irish Farmers Journal</i> |
| Local Radio              | National Radio               |
| LMFM                     | RTE                          |
| Northern Sound           |                              |

A list of the advertisements placed by EirGrid is provided in **Table 4.13**.

**Table 4.13: List of Advertisements placed by EirGrid as Part of Public Consultation on the Preferred Project Solution Report**

| Date     | Media Outlet   |
|----------|--|
| 18.07.13 | <i>Anglo Celt</i> - Public Consultation on Preferred Project Solution Report Open Days   |
| 18.07.13 | <i>Northern Standard</i> - Consultation on Preferred Project Solution Report Open Days   |
| 25.07.13 | <i>Anglo Celt</i> - Consultation on Preferred Project Solution Report Open Days          |
| 25.07.13 | <i>Northern Standard</i> - Consultation on Preferred Project Solution Report Open Days   |
| 27.07.13 | <i>Meath Chronicle</i> - Consultation on Preferred Project Solution Report Open Days     |
| 05.09.13 | <i>Anglo Celt</i> - Consultation on Preferred Project Solution Report Ending Soon        |
| 05.09.13 | <i>Northern Standard</i> - Consultation on Preferred Project Solution Report Ending Soon |
| 07.09.13 | <i>Meath Chronicle</i> - Consultation on Preferred Project Solution Report Ending Soon   |

## Information Service

EirGrid continued to operate an information service during this time. This service was available:

- Through the project phone line, (Lo-call 1890 25 26 90), which continued to be operated between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday;
- Online to [northsouth@eirgrid.com](mailto:northsouth@eirgrid.com); and
- Via traditional mail to c/o EirGrid NS Project Manager, Block 2, Floor 2, West Pier Business Campus, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.

## Proactive Engagement

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 (NEPP) and the County Monaghan Anti-Pylon Committee (CMAPC) were briefed by EirGrid in advance of the publication of the *Preferred Project Solution Report*.

## Project Information Centres

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. Hours of opening were 12 noon to 7pm to facilitate people both during and outside of normal working hours.

## Open Days

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;
- 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
- Reinforce the need for the project.

Concerns were raised by stakeholders in County Cavan during the public open day on the *Final Re-evaluation Report* (23 April and 24 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.

**Table 4.14: Summary of Public Information Materials Available in Hard Copy/Printed Paper Format at the Open Days and throughout the Consultation Period on the Preferred Project Solution Report**

| Title   | Date of Publication |
|---|---------------------|
| <b>EirGrid Publication</b>  |                     |
| The <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i>  | July 2013           |
| Community Update Brochures  | April and July 2013 |
| <i>Landowner Information Brochure</i>   | July 2013           |
| North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development Project FAQs   | July 2013           |
| The Final Re-evaluation Report.   | April 2013          |
| The Preliminary Re-evaluation Report.   | May 2011            |
| 'EMF and You' Public Information Guide.   | 2011                |
| Grid25 Implementation Programme 2011-2016 and associated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).  | May 2012            |
| EirGrid's " <i>Approach to the Development of Electricity Transmission Infrastructure</i> ".  | 2012                |
| EirGrid's Ecology Guidelines for Electricity Transmission Projects.   | 2013                |
| <b>External Publications of Relevance to the Project</b>  |                     |
| Cavan-Tyrone and Meath-Cavan 400 kV Transmission Circuits. Technology and Costs Updates. PB Power Report. Addendum to the 2009 Report and Supplementary Note. Parsons Brinckerhoff. | July 2013           |
| IEC Review for the case for, and undergrounding all or part of the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development.   | January 2012        |
| Joint Oireachtas Commission Review by the IEC.  | June 2012           |
| Government Policy Statement on the Strategic Importance of  | July 2012           |

| Title  | Date of Publication |
|--|---------------------|
| <b>EirGrid Publication</b>   |                     |
| Transmission and other Energy Infrastructure.  |                     |
| Cavan-Tyrone and Meath-Cavan 400 kV Transmission Circuits. Technology and Costs Updates. 2011 Parsons Brinckerhoff.          | 2009                |
| ESB/IFA Code of Practice for Survey, Construction and Maintenance of Overhead Lines in Relation to the Rights of Landowners. | October 1985        |
| McGill Research on EMF and Dairy Cattle: Summary of Findings and Significance of Results.                                    | December 2008       |

#### 4.7 THE FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL PHASE (2013 TO PRESENT DAY)

In December 2013 following the public consultation with respect to the *Preferred Project Solution Report* EirGrid published on the project website, its *Final Project Proposal* which is intended to form the basis for an application for planning approval to An Bord Pleanála. A Community Update Newsletter was also issued in December 2013 (**Appendix E** of this report) to publicise this and to advise stakeholders on how they could view and seek information on the details of the Final Project Proposal.

EirGrid has also recently published a further Community Update brochure in July 2014 (**Appendix F** of this Report) to ensure continued awareness of the project prior to the lodgement of the application. It advises on the timelines associated with the PCI notification procedures currently being undertaken by EirGrid and the lead up to an application lodgement. This brochure also contains an overview of the project and the national grid development strategy (Grid25) and identifies key areas of potential impact of the project and associated mitigation measures and provides the web addresses of the EU Commission's transparency platform and An Bord Pleanála's Manual of Permit Granting Procedures.

#### 4.8 CONSULTATION ON AN UNDERGROUND OPTION

A further element of the public consultation process is that since the commencement of the project numerous studies have been undertaken regarding options for overhead lines (OHL) and underground cables (UGC). The studies are:

**Table 4.15: Overview of Alternative Options Studied (2007 – 2013)**

| Study   | Year          | Remit  | Consultant  | Commissioned by  |
|---|---------------|--|---|--|
| Cavan-Tyrone Constraints Report and Meath-Cavan Constraints Report And associated Addendum            | 2007 and 2008 | Corridor options for an overhead line route in both study areas, including baseline studies of key environmental constraints such as socio economic, land use, landscape, flora & fauna, water, soils and cultural heritage.   | ESBI<br><br>Socoin and Tobin Consulting Engineers | EirGrid  |
| Ecofys Study: Comparative Merits of Overhead Electricity Transmission Lines Versus Underground Cables | 2008          | Its stated objective was “ <i>to contribute in a constructive way to the on-going discussions between the various stakeholders in Ireland related to specific projects (Tyrone – Cavan - Meath connection)</i> ”. It includes a technical, economic and environmental comparison of the options. |   | Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources (DCENR) |
| TEPCO Technical Study   | 2009          | A system wide study that considered the implications, for transmission system reliability and stability, of incorporating very long lengths, and large quantities, of High Voltage Alternating Current (HV AC) UGC transmission infrastructure on the all-island AC transmission network.        | Tokyo Electric Power Company of Japan (TEPCO)     | EirGrid and Northern Ireland Electricity                         |
| PB Power Report   | 2009          | To ‘ <i>apply a set of environmentally based routing principles to identify at least one corridor within which the use of Underground Cable (UGC) could be technically and environmentally feasible as an alternative to the proposed OHL</i> ’.   | PB Power, now Parsons Brinckerhoff                | EirGrid & Northern Ireland Electricity                           |
| TransGrid Study   | 2009          | A system wide study that considered the implications for transmission system reliability and stability of incorporating HVDC circuits into the integrated all-island AC transmission network.  | TransGrid Solutions, Canada                       | EirGrid & NIE  |
| International Expert Commission   | 2012          | A review of the case for and cost of undergrounding all or part of the Meath-Tyrone 400kV line, including a review of all of the other reports   | Mr. Bo Normark, Chair (Sweden);                   | Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources         |

| Study                                       | Year | Remit  | Consultant  | Commissioned by                        |
|---|------|--|---|--|
| (IEC) Report                                |      | carried out in respect of the North-South Project.   | Mr. Odd-Håkon Hoelsæter (Norway);<br>Mr. Ronnie Belmans (Belgium) | (DCENR)                                |
| PB Power Technology and Costs Update Report | 2013 | Update of the initial 2009 PB Power study, in line with other recent publications in the UK and the IEC report; and updated comparative costs for UGC and OHL. | PB Power  | EirGrid & Northern Ireland Electricity |

It is of note in this regard that in January 2014 the Government appointed an Independent Expert Panel to review EirGrid's evaluation of underground routes for the proposed Grid West and Grid Link projects. On 07<sup>th</sup> May 2014 the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR) published Terms of Reference drawn up by the Independent Expert Panel (the Panel) which are to be applied by EirGrid in its consideration of the "*most suited*" overhead line and underground cable options for the proposed Grid Link (GL) and Grid West (GW) projects. It was also announced at that time that the Panel "*would provide an opinion to the Minister on the compatibility of the methodologies to be employed on the GW and GL projects with what has already been done*" on the proposed North-South 400kV Interconnection Development (referred to as the N/S project by the Panel).

On 01 July 2014 DCENR published a statement by the Panel on the matter. It stated that "*the Panel is unanimously of the opinion that, in all material respects, what has already been done on the N/S project is compatible with the methodologies now being employed on the GW and GL projects. While the Panel acknowledges that no two grid infrastructure projects are identical, and that some non-comparabilities are likely to arise when assessing the potential environmental impacts, technical efficacy and cost factors, the Panel is of the opinion that no material differences in the methodologies arise*".

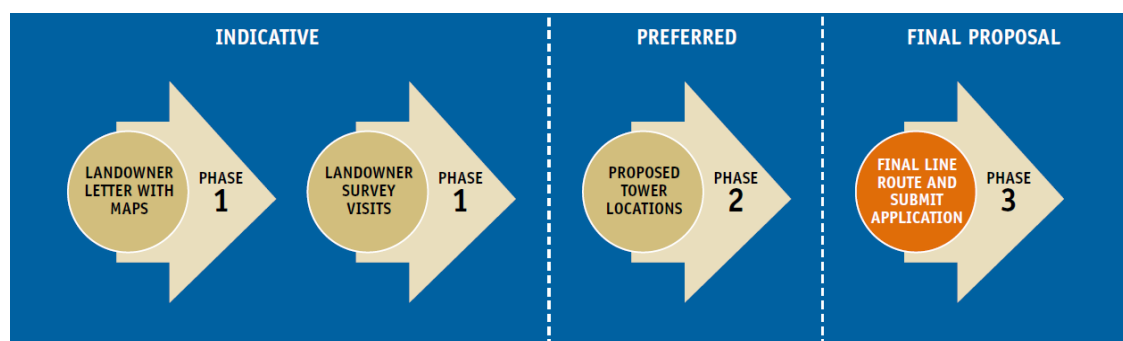
The statement also noted that this overall interconnector "*is part of an on-going process which, the Panel expects, will be subjected to a rigorous assessment as part of the planning processes in both jurisdictions (Ireland and Northern Ireland). It is also the case that such planning processes allow potential objectors to the N/S project to register their objections and to have them considered by the planning authorities*". It concluded by stating that "*the Panel has now completed its consideration of the N/S project*".

## 4.9 LANDOWNER CONSULTATION

EirGrid devised a separate and parallel consultation strategy to consult with landowners affected by the proposal.

EirGrid commenced engagement with landowners on the indicative route in May 2011 in parallel with the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* consultation phase. As part of this round of engagement all landowners were issued letters that enclosed a landowner ToR for landowner engagement for this project. Further phases of landowner engagement occurred in parallel with the following consultation phases for the project.

The ToR 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 4.1**.



**Figure 4.1: EirGrid's Phased Approach to Landowner Engagement for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development**

### 4.9.1.1 Overview of Landowner Consultation Approach

#### Phase 1- Indicative Route

EirGrid commenced engagement with landowners in May 2011 by sending them letters and maps informing them of the project and how it might impact on their lands and advising them that an EirGrid appointed landowner agent would be calling on them to discuss the project further. Phase 1 was completed by July 2011.

As part of that phase, all landowners were issued with maps showing the indicative route of the line as then envisaged on their property.

A proactive approach to landowner engagement was undertaken as part of this round of engagement and landowner agents attempted to visit each landowner on the indicative line route. The team made

at least three attempts to visit / meet with each landowner. Where this was not successful, a letter detailing the visit / meeting attempts was issued to the landowner in question requesting that they contact the landowner team.

The objectives of this proactive engagement was to meet with each landowner to obtain their feedback, confirm ownership, discuss the line route and possible positioning of towers and gain access for environmental and/or technical surveys where applicable.

## Phase 2 – Preferred Line Route

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.

The following were the objectives of this phase of engagement:

- Confirm landholdings;
- Request access to survey land;
- 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; and
- Identify any local constraints not already known.

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 Landowner Information Brochure (See **Appendix G** of this report) which set out the following information:

- Background and context;
- The landowner engagement TOR;
- 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 information centres where landowners could meet the project team;
- Details of the guidelines for the design of overhead lines 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 from the proposal;
- Reference to the movement of towers from hedgerows;

EirGrid also proactively engaged with the identified landowners along the route to get their inputs on the preferred proposal and to carry out further environmental surveys. This resulted in approximately 60 change requests in relation to line design and access routes being submitted by individual landowners, of which, over 50% were incorporated into the final design.

The landowner information brochure invited all landowners to engage with EirGrid during this phase using a variety of methods as follows:

- Contacting a dedicated landowner agent – details of which were provided in their landowner letter;
- Submitting a change request via the change request form provided in the brochure;
- Attending a public open day event for the general public and landowners to provide their feedback;
- Attending one of the project information centres located at Navan, Carrickmacross and Kingscourt; and
- Submitting their feedback via post or by email.

### **Phase 3 – Final Proposal**

In Phase 3, following the assessment of all of the modification requests received, landowners were informed (in writing) of the Final Line Design, 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 12<sup>th</sup> December 2013 by certified post.

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.

# PART 3

Overall delivery of public consultation requirements under Article 9 and *Guidelines* in Annex VI of Regulation 347/2013

## 5 INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS UNDER ANNEX VI(4)

### 5.1 GENERAL

Paragraph 4 of Annex VI of the Regulations, sets out the minimum amount of information which shall be included in the Concept for Public Participation document:

- (a) *The stakeholders concerned and addressed*
- (b) *The measures envisaged, including proposed general locations and dates of dedicated meetings.*
- (c) *The timeline*
- (d) *The human resources allocated to the respective tasks.*

Information in respect of the above four matters are contained throughout this document. However for the sake of clarity (albeit at the risk of repetition) it is proposed to address each of these four matters in this chapter in terms of:

1. Public consultation and participation undertaken to date in respect of the Meath-Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development and the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development;  
and
2. Further public consultation to be undertaken in respect of the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development during the permit granting process.

Much of the details relating to public consultation have been described in the previous **Chapter 4** and so specific regard may be had to that chapter.

### 5.2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION TO DATE

#### 5.2.1 The Stakeholders Concerned and Addressed

There are a number of key stakeholder groups that have been encouraged to participate in the non-statutory and statutory consultations to date, in relation to the previous application for approval (2007-2010), and the current proposed application which re-commenced with the re-evaluation process in 2010 (2011 – 2014). At all stages of the project, EirGrid has maintained a database of stakeholders and this database is updated on a regular basis.

These stakeholders include national, regional and local authorities, landowners and people living in the vicinity of the project, the general public and their associations, organisations and groups in accordance with the requirements of Annex VI(3)(a). The stakeholder groups include:

- Landowners;

- Landowner Representative Groups;
- Previously Affected Landowners (of the previous application and of preliminary and working versions of the current proposal) who are no longer affected by the final project solution;
- Landowners with a property boundary within 50m of the preferred line route;
- Stakeholders within 5km of the preferred line for the project;
- Elected Representatives and Strategic Stakeholders;
- Local Authorities;
- Regional Authorities;
- Statutory Stakeholders;
- SI Observers from the previous planning application; and
- General Public.

By identifying and including stakeholders in a comprehensive, appropriate, and timely manner during the development of the project, EirGrid sought to maximise awareness of the project. In this regard:

- 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;
- Impact on local communities was minimised, early public and community participation thought to help EirGrid understand matters of local importance, interest or concern, and identify constraints not already identified.

The stakeholder groups and means of engaging with them are described in further detail below. In this regard, while the focus is on more recent consultation i.e., post 2010, it remains the fact that EirGrid commenced engagement with all stakeholders during the route selection and line design process in respect of the previous application i.e., the Meath – Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development, between 2007 – 2010. This is addressed in **Chapter 4**.

#### **5.2.1.1 Landowners**

These are landowners who are directly affected by the routing of the line, or whose lands are traversed by access routes. At all stages of the project, EirGrid has kept a database of landowners which continues to be updated on a regular basis. Throughout the process some landowners were removed from the database and others were added, due to revisions in the indicative line along with land purchases and sales.

EirGrid commenced engagement with landowners during the route selection and line design process in respect of the Meath – Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development. Refer to **Chapter 4**.

In the more recent phase of the project (i.e. pre-application project development stage of the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development) landowner engagement took place on publication of the indicative line route (May 2011). As part of that round of engagement, all landowners were issued with letters that enclosed a ToR for landowner engagement. This set out a three-phased approach to this landowner engagement and explained the opportunities for landowners to participate in each phase.

At final re-evaluation stage the landowners were provided with maps showing the indicative route of the line as then envisaged, along with the *Community Update Brochure April 2013*. At the preferred project solution phase they were again issued with detailed maps of the preferred route, tower locations, temporary access routes and work areas for construction. At this time they were also issued with a *Landowner Information Brochure July 2013* which set out the context of the application and its progression towards a planning application along with details of design issues, agronomist assessments, construction information and the process for making and assessing line design change requests.

Landowners were issued this information directly by mail, unless EirGrid was requested by the landowner that they not be contacted directly, but rather through a landowner representative group. In such cases any correspondence for these individual landowners was undertaken through the representative group and only statutory or other formal notices relating to the landowners lands were sent directly to the landowner (see **section 5.2.1.2**).

EirGrid identified a landowner agent within the project team for each landowner affected to deal directly with them and to meet with them as appropriate, and having regard to the requests of the individual landowner with regard to representative groups. Landowner agents called to each landowner affected unless specifically requested not to do so.

EirGrid also made an agronomist available to meet with concerned landowners and to discuss any issues affecting specific landholdings.

### 5.2.1.2 Landowner Representative Groups

There are two groups which represent a number of landowners in the study area as follows:-

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

EirGrid commenced engagement with landowner representative groups during the route selection and line design process in respect of the Meath – Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development. Refer to **Chapter 4**.

More recently, as a result of forms of authority and legal instructions, EirGrid and its agents were precluded from having direct communications with landowners who were represented by these two landowner representative groups. As a consequence of this, EirGrid only provided statutory or other formal notices relating to their lands directly to these landowners. All other communications had to be issued via NEPP or via the solicitors appointed by CMAPCLG and thus EirGrid could not proactively contact landowners represented by these groups during the consultation. These representative groups were briefed in advance of the publication of the *Final Re-evaluation Report* and *Preferred Project Solution Report*.

During phase 3 of the landowner engagement, EirGrid received and accommodated a request from NEPP to provide duplicate copies of the letters and / or maps to be issued to their landowners. Copies of the letters and maps in respect of this request were issued by EirGrid in December 2013 in accordance with the instruction by the relevant landowners.

### 5.2.1.3 Previously Affected Landowners

As modifications were made to the originally proposed Meath – Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development line design, both prior to and during the re-evaluation process, a number of previously affected landowners were no longer on the route. However, they were informed of the project updates.

### 5.2.1.4 Landowners within 50m of the line

There are a small number of people who own land within 50 metres of the indicative route but who are not directly impacted by the proposal. This group of people have been identified as “landowners” in order to cater for the possibility that the route might be modified and affect their landholding or to accommodate activities such as hedge-trimming. A landowner pack was sent to these landowners and a landowner agent called to them to discuss the project.

### **5.2.1.5 Stakeholders within 5km of the Preferred Line Route for the Project**

EirGrid defined a 10km catchment in the vicinity of the project and proactively contacted relevant community organisations within that area providing information at re-evaluation and preferred project solution phases. They were advised of how they could access information, meet with the project team and participate in the consultation process if wished. They were provided with details of the information centres, website, phoneline, open days, offers of a briefing and supporting information (e.g. copies of maps, reports etc).

### **5.2.1.6 Elected Representatives and Strategic Stakeholders**

Throughout the consultation process and for each key phase of the project, EirGrid has made direct contact with elected representatives and strategic stakeholders within the areas affected and provided them with information on the proposed development. EirGrid also issued invitations to elected representatives and strategic stakeholders in the region to meet and be briefed by the project team.

### **5.2.1.7 Local Authorities**

Throughout the project and as part of the consultation process for each key phase of the project, EirGrid has contacted the local authorities within the project area and offered peer-to-peer briefings to relevant county council staff.

In respect of the North – South 400 kV Interconnection Development a number of key topics were agreed with the particular county council in advance and the briefings specifically sought to address concerns raised in each of their submissions made to the previous oral hearing. The engagement then focused on the following key questions:

- How EirGrid set the issues out in the EIS that accompanied the 2010 application;
- What remaining concerns county council had; and
- How they might be addressed in the next application.

### **5.2.1.8 Regional Authority**

Since the inception of this project both the Border Regional Authority and the Greater Dublin Area Regional Authority have been provided with information on the project.

### **5.2.1.9 Statutory Stakeholders**

Statutory stakeholders were involved in the project consultation in accordance with the European EIA Directive (85/337/EEC as amended by 97/11/EC and 2003/35/EC). Since the commencement of this project the following stakeholders have been provided with information and have been met with as requested and appropriate:



- Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
- Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (including NPWS)
- Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (National Monuments Service)
- The National Roads Authority
- Failte Ireland
- The Heritage Council
- Irish Aviation Authority
- Údarás na Gaeltachta
- Irish Wildlife Trust
- Railway Safety Commission
- Iarnrod Eireann
- An Taisce
- Geological Survey of Ireland
- Health Services Executive
- Health and Safety Authority
- Teagasc
- Irish Farmers Association
- Commission for Energy Regulation
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- BirdWatch Ireland
- Environmental Protection Agency

#### **5.2.1.10 SI Observers from the Previous Planning Application**

EirGrid contacted all stakeholders who made a submission to the Board (either written as part of the statutory consultation phase or who made a submission at the oral hearing) in respect of the Meath – Tyrone 400 kV Interconnection Development in order to give them the opportunity to engage with the EirGrid Project Team about the concerns they raised and how these have progressed since the oral hearing.

A standard letter, together with the first Community Update Brochure in respect of the re-launched North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development, was sent to each person shortly after the project was re-launched in May 2011. The letter offered the stakeholder the opportunity to meet with the project team in order to discuss their concerns. EirGrid made every effort to reach out to these stakeholders, to provide them with access to experts, as necessary, and attempted to address their issues.

### 5.2.1.11 General Public

Throughout the project and as part of the consultation process for each key phase of the project, the general public were invited to access project information and participate in the consultation process at open days, project information centres, through the information telephone line and in written correspondence (mail or email). They were made aware of the project through advertisements in local media, interviews with senior EirGrid personnel on local radio, press releases to local media, posters in the communities and the project website.

## 5.2.2 The Measures Envisaged, Including Proposed General Locations and Dates of Dedicated Meetings

The measures which were adopted at each of the five consultation phases to date are outlined in greater detail in **Chapter 4**. The main measures however which have been adopted for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development since 2011 are summarised in **Table 5.1** below.

**Table 5.1: Summary of the Consultation and Engagement Tools Used by EirGrid in the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development**

| Tool                     | Detail  |
|--------------------------|---|
| Brochures                | EirGrid issued an information leaflet at each of the three consultation phases – A <i>Consultation Brochure</i> at the beginning of the process (Preliminary Re-evaluation phase and a <i>Community Update Brochure</i> at each of the following stages (Final Re-evaluation Phase and Preferred Project Solution Phase).   |
| Phone line               | EirGrid operated a project phone line (1890 25 26 90) from the commencement of the first phase of consultation where members of the public and public concerned 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 | 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                      | EirGrid has maintained a project website where all key project materials, including reports and maps, could be accessed, since the commencement of the project. Recently the format of the information presented on the website has been modified to ensure compliance with the detail of website information presentation requirements of the Regulation.  |
| Information centres      | EirGrid opened local information centres 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 local phone line, email 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. |

| Tool      | Detail   |
|-----------|--|
| Media     | 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.  |
| Reporting | EirGrid reported on project progress of the project through its publications, including the <i>Preliminary Re-evaluation Report</i> (May 2011), <i>Final Re-evaluation Report</i> (April 2013) and the <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i> (July 2013). |
| Briefings | For interested stakeholders, EirGrid provided technical briefings and presentations to present information on the project.   |

Throughout each consultation phase a range of meetings were held with various stakeholders in respect of both the proposal in general and also the particular consultation phase underway at the time. These ranged from one-on-one meetings with landowners and other interested members of the public and public representatives to meetings with community groups and landowner representative groups. It also included meetings with local authorities and prescribed bodies. Meetings were arranged to suit the consultee and were held, if appropriate, in the project information offices or some alternative suitable agreed location. In the case of landowners, meetings were often held on site.

The main dedicated public events however were the open days held at both the re-evaluation phase and also the preferred project solution phase. These are discussed in **Chapter 4**.

## 5.2.3 Timeline

### 5.2.3.1 Project Roadmaps

As noted in **Chapter 3**, EirGrid has used graphical roadmaps to present timeline and the context of the project to the public and other stakeholders in a simplified and accessible manner. The essential purpose of the roadmaps published has been to demonstrate the evolution of the project within a clear and structured process. Publishing roadmaps ensures transparency insofar as a member of the public and stakeholder have a clear idea of the proposed stages of the process for the project from inception to completion. In keeping with the Guidelines set out in Annex VI of Regulation 347/2013, this approach facilitates transparency for project stakeholders in terms of understanding the progress of evolution of a project, and the issues and feedback that has shaped the development. In addition, **Table 5.2** provides a summary of the periods of consultation for the project since 2007, however, it should be noted that in between these focused periods of consultation EirGrid was always engaging and open to take calls and meet people on request

**Table 5.2: Timelines of Project Development, Consultation and Public Engagement (2007-2014)**

| Stage  | Dates                           | Purpose  |
|--|---------------------------------|--|
| Proposed Route Corridor Options Brochure   | October 2007 – November 2008    | This phase introduced the public to the project, the route corridor options and how they were decided upon (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, as well as on the principle of overhead lines (OHL) versus underground cables (UGC) for consideration by the project team.  |
| Moving to Phases 3 and 4   | March 2009                      | This phase focused on the announcement of the preferred route corridors and indicative line routes to the public.  |
| Preliminary Re-evaluation  | 9 May 2011 – 1 July 2011        | <p>A review of the previous proposal, previous consultation and feedback from public and stakeholders was undertaken 2010 - 2011. This included a re-evaluation of technical, environmental and cost-effectiveness of the proposals. Preliminary draft development proposals were generated and the draft proposals and review process were published in a <i>Preliminary Re-evaluation Report</i>.</p> <p>A formal consultation phase between May 2011 and July 2011 was held in respect of <i>The Preliminary Re-evaluation Report</i> published in May 2011, which detailed the proposal and re-evaluation process. Public and stakeholder feedback was sought.</p> |
| Final Re-evaluation  | 16 April 2013 – 27 May 2013     | <p>On foot of the feedback from the preliminary re-evaluation, further environmental and technical assessments with key stakeholders the re-evaluation stage was finalised and the design proposals modified. This occurred between July 2011 and April 2013.</p> <p>A further period of formal engagement and public participation which sought feedback on the findings of <i>The Final Re-evaluation Report</i> took place from April 2013 to May 2013.</p>   |
| Preferred Project Proposal   | 16 July 2013 – 9 September 2013 | From May 2013 to July 2013 the proposals for the project were further refined on foot of the final re-evaluation consultation phase, and EirGrid published a <i>Preferred Project Solution Report</i> in July 2013. An 8 week consultation period was then held between July 2013 and September 2013.  |
| Final Project Proposal   | December 2013                   | The landowner engagement and public consultation which occurred during the preferred project proposal consultation allowed for the final refinement and modification of the proposals. The final project proposal was published in December 2013 and forms the proposal on the basis of which the EIS and planning application documentation will be completed.  |
| Current Activities – PCI Notification and Submission of Concept for Public Participation | June 2014 - Ongoing             | Following the decision of An Bord Pleanála on the 22nd May 2014 that the transitional provisions of Regulation 237/2013 did not apply to project in the South, EirGrid issued a Notification under Article 10.1(a) to An Bord Pleanála on 3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2014 and an acknowledgement of the notification was received by EirGrid from the Board on 2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2014. An Bord Pleanála will consider this concept for public participation and approve or modify as appropriate. An Bord Pleanála  |

| Stage   | Dates | Purpose   |
|---|-------|---|
|   |       | will identify the scope of material and level of detail of information to be submitted by EirGrid and will further issue to EirGrid a schedule for the permit granting process. |
| Submission of Application to An Bord Pleanála |       | The date of submission of the application will be determined on foot of the response of An Bord Pleanála and its schedule for the permit granting process.                      |

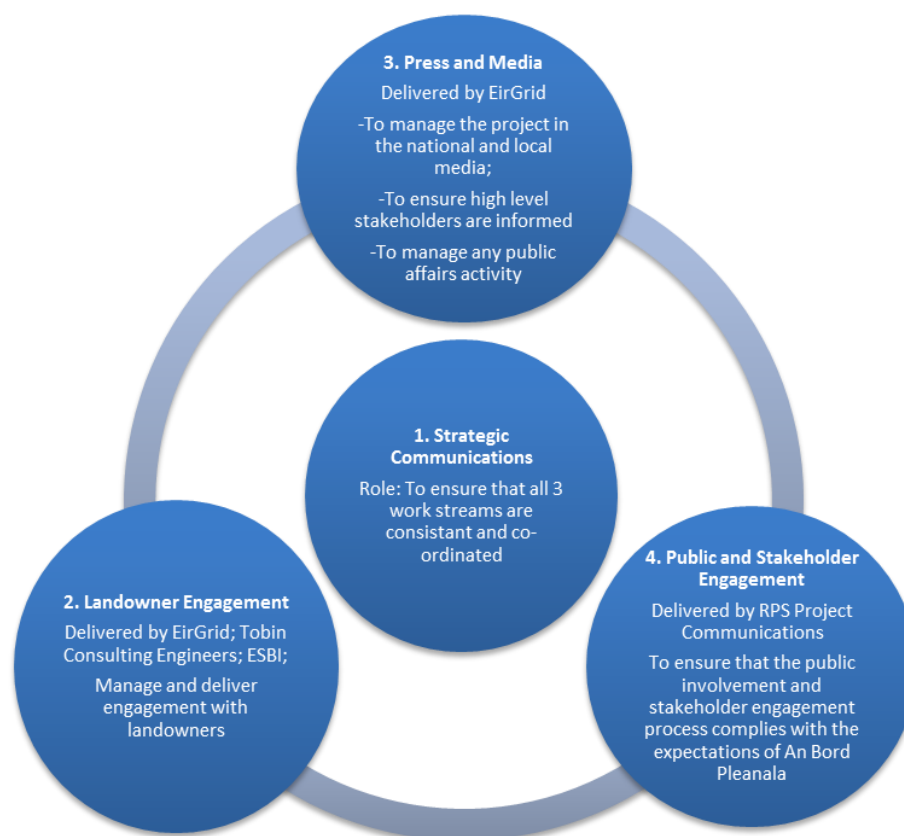
## 5.2.4 Human Resources

In accordance with the *Guidelines* set out in Annex VI,(4)(d) of Regulation 347/2013, that the concept for public participation shall include information about “*the human resources allocated to the respective tasks*”, the following information may be noted:

There are three distinct work streams that have 'owners,' in terms of responsibility. These are:

- Public Affairs, Press, and Media - EirGrid;
- Landowner Engagement – EirGrid with Landowner Agents from ESB International and Tobin Consulting Engineers; and
- Public / Stakeholder Engagement – RPS Project Communications.

**Figure 5.1** sets out the objective of each work-stream and where the disciplines interact.



**Figure 5.1 North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development - Team Structure**

#### 5.2.4.1 Public Affairs, Press, and Media

EirGrid has a dedicated communications team to deal with all matters of public affairs, press and media associated with the project. This has ensured that the consultation phases undertaken for this project have received considerable press and media coverage, thereby maximising public knowledge and awareness of the consultation process.

#### 5.2.4.2 Landowner Engagement

Landowner engagement has been led by EirGrid personnel with supporting Landowner Agents from ESB International and Tobin Consulting Engineers.

ESB International and GNFE with Tobin Consulting Engineers as sub-contractor are the designers of the scheme and have managed the specialist environmental assessments being undertaken. They are therefore in an ideal situation to liaise directly with landowners to ensure a direct and clear channel of communication between landowner, designers and environmental assessors. This has maximised the opportunities to address and accommodate change requests, if and as, appropriate.

EirGrid as the proposer of the project deals with landowners on all legal and statutory issues.

#### **5.2.4.3 Public / Stakeholder Engagement**

A dedicated team within RPS Project Communications has been responsible for the management and co-ordination of public and stakeholder engagement. They have been responsible for the preparation of public information documentation including the Consultation Brochure and Community Updates. They have co-ordinated and issued correspondence to landowners and other interested stakeholders. RPS Project Communications has been responsible for establishing and managing a database of stakeholders, including any submissions received, from the outset of the consultation process.

Project Information offices and public open days were staffed by personnel from EirGrid and RPS Project Communications and were supported as appropriate and necessary at these events by technical and environmental specialists.

#### **5.2.4.4 Human Resources at Open Day Events**

Members of the EirGrid Project Team were available at each open day to directly engage with members of the public concerned (and landowners) and to answer any queries or questions that arose. Technical specialists in the fields listed below answered questions from participants who attended the open days:

- Technology options;
- Electric and magnetic fields (EMF) (provided interactive EMF demonstrations);
- Planning;
- Various environmental specialisms including ecology and archaeology;
- Line design; and
- Landowner and farming considerations.

#### **5.2.4.5 Human Resources at Information Centres**

Members of the RPS Project Communications' team manned the local project information centres, in Navan, Carrickmacross and Kingscourt. These team members provided information to the public, landowners and other stakeholders, answered queries and recorded verbal submissions. In the event that a stakeholder had a detailed or technical query in respect of the project which required the response of a technical member of the project team the query was relayed to, and subsequently responded to, by the appropriate technical person. As necessary and as relevant, technical members of the team also attended the information centres for pre-arranged meetings with stakeholders. This included line designers and environmental specialists as well as EirGrid personnel.



## 5.3 FURTHER PUBLIC CONSULTATION IN PERMIT GRANTING PROCESS

### 5.3.1 The Stakeholders Concerned and Addressed

Further public consultation will take place in the context of the requirement and procedures for the proposed strategic infrastructure application. In addition, EirGrid will also focus on providing factual information and briefings relating to the application particulars and process.

#### 5.3.1.1 Prescribed Bodies

All prescribed bodies will be advised of the application lodgement in advance as required under the Planning legislation and Regulations applicable to strategic infrastructure applications. These are:

- Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
- Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Meath County Council
- Cavan County Council
- Monaghan County Council
- National Roads Authority
- An Chomhairle Ealaíon / The Arts Council
- Fáilte Ireland
- An Taisce
- The Heritage Council
- The Irish Aviation Authority
- Údarás na Gaeltachta
- Health Service Executive
- Commission for Energy Regulation
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Iranród Éireann
- Coras Iompair Éireann
- Railway Procurement Agency
- Railway Safety Commission
- Border Regional Authority
- Mid-East Regional Authority
- Irish Water
- BirdWatch Ireland
- Irish Peatland Conservation Council
- Department of Environment (Northern Ireland)

#### 5.3.1.2 Key Stakeholders

A number of strategic stakeholders will be briefed on the planning application prior to its lodgement. These include the DCENR, CER, ESRI, IFA, ICA, SEAI, ICMSA, Macra na Feirme, Teagasc and

Udarás na Gaeltachta. This is in addition to the invitation to make written submissions to the Board in respect of the application, once submitted.

### **5.3.1.3 Politicians**

EirGrid will brief the special advisor to the Minister for Communications, Energy & Natural Resources prior to the submission of the planning application.

Political representatives from the constituencies of Meath East, Meath West and Cavan-Monaghan; local Senators and MEPs; and members of the Oireachtas Sub-Committee on Communications, Energy & Natural Resources will be advised by EirGrid in the days before the application is being submitted.

County Councillors from Cavan, Meath and Monaghan will also be contacted by EirGrid and briefed on the application prior to its lodgement.

### **5.3.1.4 Persons / Bodies who have Previously Engaged in Consultation for the Project**

All those who have engaged with the project and provided their contact details will be issued with a letter advising of the latest update on the project and this will be accompanied by a community update brochure that will include a guide to the statutory process and how they can participate.

### **5.3.1.5 General Public**

The general public will be advised of the lodgement of the application through the statutory notification process and through a media and advertising campaign.

## **5.3.2 The Measures Envisaged, Including Proposed General Locations and Dates of Dedicated Meetings**

There are no dedicated meetings or public consultation events proposed by EirGrid during the statutory consultation process. However, it is a matter for the discretion of the Board as to whether to hold an oral hearing and/or other meetings for any strategic infrastructure development application which would include the proposed North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development. EirGrid will however adopt a number of measures to ensure widespread awareness of the application, how and where it may be viewed, what the statutory process will involve and how and when submissions may be made to the Board. A number of different measures are proposed to be implemented by EirGrid to achieve this. They are described below along with timings relative to the lodgement date as appropriate.

### 5.3.2.1 Statutory Notice

The statutory notice for the application will appear in the local newspapers, a national newspaper and an Irish language newspaper, specifically:

- The Irish Independent on a Wednesday (or the Wednesday before the application is lodged);
- The Meath Chronicle & Anglo Celt on a Wednesday (or the Wednesday before the application is lodged);
- The Northern Standard on a Thursday (or the Thursday before the application is lodged);
- “Seachtain” (Irish language newspaper published with the Irish Independent) on a Wednesday (or the Wednesday before the application is lodged).

### 5.3.2.2 Advertising

Additional local print and radio advertising promoting the project information centres (where the application will be made available for public viewing) will be placed over four weeks from the start of the statutory consultation phase to the end, to ensure that the public is aware of the availability of the documents in the centres and the opening hours of same. **Table 5.3** details the proposed radio advertising schedule.

**Table 5.3: Advertising schedule for Promotion of Information Centre Opening Hours during Statutory Public Consultation**

| Week 1 – Opening of Information centres<br>(or the week before the Info Centres open)                                     | Week 2 – 3<br>(or the week that the info centres open)   | Week 4  | Week 5 - 6   |
|---|--|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Anglo Celt</li> <li>2. Northern Standard</li> <li>3. Meath Chronicle</li> </ol> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LMFM</li> <li>• Northern Sound</li> <li>• Anglo Celt</li> <li>• Northern Standard</li> <li>• Meath Chronicle</li> </ul> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Anglo Celt</li> <li>2. Northern Standard</li> <li>3. Meath Chronicle</li> </ol> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LMFM</li> <li>• Northern Sound</li> <li>• Anglo Celt</li> <li>• Northern Standard</li> <li>• Meath Chronicle</li> </ul> |

### 5.3.2.3 Media

The submission of the planning application by EirGrid to the Board will be notified to the media to ensure full awareness among the wider public who are not engaged with the project.

EirGrid will provide material to local radio and newspapers in Meath, Cavan and Monaghan. Media interviews will be facilitated upon request.

The press material will comprise:-

- A press release announcing that the planning application has been submitted to the Board; where it is on view; and how and when to make submissions.
- A new community update brochure.

The press release will also be issued to the national media.

### 5.3.2.4 Access to the Application

In addition to the statutory requirements for public display of the application file, it will also be available to view by the public in the following ways:

- Placing the application on view in the project information centres in Monaghan, Cavan, Meath (i.e. Kingscourt, Navan, and Carrickmacross) and with staff on hand to assist stakeholders to locate information within the application;
- Requests from stakeholders for printed / CD copies of the EIS Non-Technical Summary (NTS) to be met at no charge;
- Publishing a link to the dedicated planning website ([www.eirgridnorthsouthinterconnector.ie](http://www.eirgridnorthsouthinterconnector.ie)) from the EirGrid North-South project webpage;
- Posting a community update brochure to guide stakeholders through the application (posted to circa 1,300 stakeholders, County Councillors and the County Managers of the three local authorities);
- Providing Monaghan Anti-Pylon Committee (MAPC) and the North-East Pylon Pressure Group (NEPP) with copies each of the application which they can display locally to their members.

The above measures will ensure all stakeholders who have engaged in consultation thus far and have an interest in the project are provided with easy and full access to the project information.

### 5.3.2.5 Project Information Centres

The project information centres in Navan, Carrickmacross and Kingscourt will be re-opened and the application will be on public display in each throughout the statutory consultation period.

The centres will each open for two full weeks (Monday – Friday, 12 noon to 7pm); the week after the planning application has been lodged and the week before the statutory consultation closes.

Outside of those two weeks, the centres will open for the other five weeks of the consultation period for one day per week each (12 noon to 7pm) as follows:

- Tuesdays: Navan;
- Wednesdays: Carrickmacross; and
- Thursdays: Kingscourt.

Each information centre will be staffed by one RPS staff member to facilitate discussion, take notes and manage the database, and one member of the project team from EirGrid and/or the technical consultants who is familiar with the mapping and can efficiently direct stakeholders to appropriate sections of the application and particular areas/maps of interest.

During the two weeks when the centres are open fulltime they will be staffed by technical consultants, EirGrid and RPS, i.e. 3 personnel.

### 5.3.2.6 Community Update Brochure

A community update brochure will be produced as a user's guide to the application. The brochure will draw upon information contained within the approved NTS of the EIS and will include the following:

- 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 guide to the application and the statutory process being undertaken;
- Details on how to make submissions or observations to the Board with details of the closing date;
- Details of where and when the application and EIS are on display;
- Summary of the EIS, including proposed mitigation measures;
- Information centre opening hours, dates, locations; and
- How to obtain a digital copy of the application.

The community update brochure will be uploaded to the project website and copies will be available at the project information centres.

A letter with the brochure will be issued to all project stakeholders, including landowners.

### **5.3.2.7 EIS Non-technical Summary**

The full planning application is likely to be a substantial printed document that will need to be charged for, if stakeholders request a hard copy. However, a CD of the full planning application will be available free of charge and additional copies, if requested, will be charged at €5 each.

### **5.3.2.8 Application for Planning Approval Website**

A copy of the application will be made available on a new and dedicated website which will contain all public documentation in relation to the statutory process. This will be updated in the course of the application process if any further information requests are issued / responded to. Web page content, and application documentation, including the EIS will also be provided in Irish.

### **5.3.2.9 Project Website**

The existing project information webpages hosted on the EirGrid website will continue to be accessible and will be updated in respect of the status of the project. It will provide a link to the dedicated planning website ([www.eirgridnorthsouthinterconnector.ie](http://www.eirgridnorthsouthinterconnector.ie)).

## **5.3.3 Timeline**

It is not possible to give a specific date for the date of lodging the application as this will depend on the completion of the pre-application procedures under Regulation 347/2013. The exact dates of activities to be undertaken will depend on this lodgement date. The relevant timelines for each of the measures to be adopted have been outlined above as relevant.

Regulation 347/2013 sets out certain maximum periods during which certain procedures must be completed. Article 9(3) provides that the competent authority shall request modifications or approve the concept for public participation within three months. Furthermore, Article 10(1)(b) states that the statutory permit granting procedure, covering the period from the date of acceptance of the submitted application file until the comprehensive decision is taken, shall not exceed one year and six months. In addition, Article 10(2) states that the combined duration of the pre-application procedure and the statutory permit granting procedure shall not exceed a period of three years and six months.

The display period requirements (of the application for public inspection) will be established in consultation with the Board. The documentation is to be made available for a minimum of seven weeks at least 5 days after the date of the publication of the statutory notice. However, it is agreed, subject to the Board's approval, that the documentation will be made available from a Monday in order to maximise the opportunity for promoting the project information centre opening hours (as the local press is published on Wednesdays and Thursdays).

While it is not possible to say when the proposed strategic infrastructure application will be determined by the Board there are a number of provisions of section 182A and 182B of the Act which have implications for the duration of the decision making process. These are as follows:-

- Initial display / submission period – minimum 6 weeks. In this case it will be placed on display for 7 weeks.
- The Board may under section 182A(5) seek further information on effects on the environment or the proper planning and development of the area or may seek revisions / alterations to be made to the project proposal and accordingly also to the accompanying EIS / NIS as appropriate.
- In the event that further information or revised proposals are deemed to be significant by the Board it may request the applicant to publish a new newspaper notice and place the additional information / revised EIS on public display for a period of not less than 3 weeks. Submissions may be made by the public during this period again.
- The Board may also decide to hold an oral hearing in respect of the project. In this case it is considered to be a likely scenario.

These various statutory functions and provisions of the Board in the course of the decision making process will influence the length of time in which a decision will ultimately be made.

### **5.3.4 Human Resources**

As with the consultation process undertaken to date, there will again be three work streams that have different owners within the overall project team:

- Public Affairs, Press, and Media – EirGrid will prepare and issue press release and advertise the project information centres, as described above.
- Landowner Engagement – Technical staff from ESB International and Tobin Consulting Engineers will be available at information centres, as described above.
- Public / Stakeholder Engagement – RPS Project Communications will prepare and issue a community update brochure and notify stakeholders on the lodgement of the application. RPS and technical team members will also staff information centres during the statutory consultation period to assist stakeholders in finding information in the documents.

## 6 PUBLIC CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS UNDER ARTICLE 9 AND THE ASSOCIATED GUIDELINES IN ANNEX VI GUIDELINES OF REGULATION 347/2013

Paragraphs 4, 5, 6 and 7 of Article 9 of Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 set out specific requirements for the nature of the public participation process to be undertaken for PCI projects. These have been considered and applied through this document and regard may be had to this document as a whole. However, again for the sake of clarity and by way of summary it is proposed to consider each of these items below and assess their application to the current project and how the consultation undertaken to date on the current project complies or otherwise with these requirements.

### 6.1.1 Article 9 Paragraph 4 and Annex VI (5)

Article 9 Paragraph 4 sets out a number of requirements. These are discussed in turn hereunder.

***“At least one public consultation shall be carried out by the project promoter, or, where required by national law, by the competent authority, before submission of the final and complete application file to the competent authority pursuant to Article 10(1)(a)”***

***“The public consultation shall inform stakeholders referred to in Annex VI.3(a) about the project at an early stage and shall help to identify the most suitable location or trajectory and the relevant issues to be addressed in the application file.”***

As outlined in summary in **Chapter 4**, EirGrid has undertaken 5 No. main phases of consultation for the project since 2007. Each of the phases of development has comprised multiple events and engagement methods for extended periods of time, ensuring accessible, meaningful and accountable consultation throughout. EirGrid is of the view that the public consultations carried out exceed this minimum requirement.

In this regard, a roadmap for the entire consultation process was set out and advised to the public and to all relevant stakeholders to ensure widespread understanding of how the project would be developed and the critical periods along the way in which stakeholders could engage.

In respect of the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development the preliminary re-evaluation stage of the project commenced in 2010 and a *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* was published in 2011. Consultation has been on-going across three key stages in total as the project became more defined and a detailed design emerged.



A description of the stakeholders which have engaged in the public participation process to date is contained in **section 5.2.1** of this report. These include relevant national, regional, and local authorities, landowners and citizens living in the vicinity of the project, the general public and their associations, organisations or groups in accordance with the guiding principle in Annex VI(3)(a).

***“The minimum requirements applicable to this public consultation are specified in Annex VI.5”***

In this regard, the *Guidelines* set out in Annex VI.5 require that the promoter shall:

***“Publish an information leaflet of no more than 15 pages, giving, in a clear and concise manner, an overview of the purpose and preliminary timetable of the project, the national grid development plan, alternative routes considered, expected impacts, including of cross-border nature, and possible mitigation measures, which shall be published prior to the start of the consultation; the information leaflet shall furthermore list the web addresses of the transparency platform referred to in Article 18 and of the manual of procedures referred to in point (1);”***

During all stages of the project EirGrid has published information about the project. Consultation / information / community update brochures sought to ensure members of the public were fully aware of the project and sought to encourage them to provide feedback on the relevant stage in the project’s development, or in relation to any other queries. These were supplemented by published FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) which provided answers to the most commonly asked questions on the project.

During the initial phase (2007 – 2009) the following brochures / information leaflets were published by EirGrid in respect of the proposed development. These addressed matters such as the role of EirGrid, alternative route options, constraints and impacts and the important role of careful route corridor selection to mitigate same.

- Proposed Route Corridor Options, Public Consultation (October 2007);
- FAQ’s Leaflet (January 2008);
- Community Update Brochure (April 2009) in relation to the route corridor selection process and identification of preferred route corridors;
- Community Update Brochure (July 2009);
- North East Power Line Projects FAQ’s (July 2009);
- Community Update Brochure (December 2009) in relation to submission of planning application to An Bord Pleanála.; and
- North East Power Line Projects FAQ’s (January 2010)

Each brochure listed above (also included in **Appendix H**) includes specific detail relevant to the specific phase of the project and the stakeholders concerned. The 2007 consultation brochure on route corridor options for example provided detail on the approach and methodology adopted to determine specific route corridors including a description of the types of constraints considered and specific maps for each route option. A Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) leaflet in 2008 provided feedback on a range of issues raised during the 2007 consultation process to allow quick access to issues raised; these included health and EMF, approach and mitigation against potential impact on farmland and overhead versus undergrounding. Subsequently, additional publications were released as appropriate and as listed above.

Consultation since the withdrawal of the previous application addressed the following stages of the project:

- The Preliminary Re-evaluation Phase
- The Final Re-evaluation Phase
- The Preferred Project Solution Phase

Community Update information leaflets were published by EirGrid in connection with each of the three key phases of consultation. EirGrid also published advertisements in connection with each stage of the consultation. A main report was also produced at each of these stages which detailed the reviews undertaken to that time, project progression, indicative / preferred routes, consultation events and feedback.

Following the formal consultation phases a Newsletter was published in December 2013 which presented information on the Final Project Solution which is the proposal for which EirGrid intends to seek planning approval from An Bord Pleanála (the “Board”).

EirGrid has also published a recent Community Update brochure in July 2014 to ensure continued awareness of the project prior to the lodgement of an application.

The information leaflets produced at each of the stages for the North-South 400 kV Interconnection Development are described in the relevant sections of **Chapter 4**. The content of each of these are assessed hereunder with reference to the *Guidelines* set out in of Annex VI(5)(a).

#### *Community Update Brochure May 2011 – The Preliminary Re-evaluation Phase.*

This brochure which comprised 9 pages provided an overview of the purpose and preliminary timetable of the project. It outlined the background and context of the project, the findings of the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* regarding the need for the project, the best identified technical

solution and conclusion of the preferred corridor. It included a programme for the project development and associated consultation phases up to lodgement of an application, but did not have defined dates attached to this. The brochure noted that the project was part of the Grid25 development strategy and that the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* concluded that each of the three previously identified route corridors remained viable options for the development but identified a route within both the Meath Study Area and the Cavan Monaghan Study Area which would achieve the best balance against all assessment criteria.

#### *Community Update Brochure April 2013 – The Final Re-evaluation Phase*

This brochure which comprised 7 pages 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 outlined the entire project progression from preliminary re-evaluation to the submission of an application. The brochure identified that the project was part of the Grid25 development strategy and its key drivers including the objective to enhance security of supply throughout the island of Ireland and to improve efficiency and competition of the all-island electricity market. The brochure also referred to the Independent Expert Commission (IEC) report which had been commissioned by the Government in relation to the possibility of undergrounding this project. The brochure noted that the *Preliminary Re-evaluation Report* had included identification of corridor options and a preferred corridor as well as an indicative line within that corridor. It also identified how the indicative line route differed from the previously proposed route which had been the subject of the previous application to the Board. This brochure also sought feedback on how best to adopt community gain within transmission projects. The brochure outlined details for the public open days and other methods for engaging with EirGrid and its project team in respect of this phase of the project.

#### *Community Update Brochure July 2013 – Preferred Project Solution Report*

This brochure which comprised 6 pages outlined the reasons for the project and the key project drivers. It explained the history of the project, how it had progressed recently and what was happening during the current round of consultation. The brochure set out EirGrid's Project Development and Consultation Roadmap and identified where the progress of the project currently sat in the context of this roadmap. The brochure identified that the project was part of the Grid25 development strategy. The brochure also noted that the *Preferred Project Solution Report* had now identified a preferred line design for the project along with proposed locations for towers and sought feedback on this. The brochure also identified that the *Preferred Project Solution Report* included an outline of the environmental issues to be addressed in the EIS which would accompany the future application for planning approval with reference to legislation and relevant guidelines. In this regard, the public were also invited to identify environmental issues that should be considered in the EIS. The brochure outlined details for the public open days and other methods for engaging with EirGrid and its project team in respect of this phase of the project.

### *Landowner Brochure (July 2013)*

This Landowner Brochure which comprised 7 pages 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. It also provided information on the guidelines for overhead line design, tower positioning and identifying construction access routes. It provided information on how landowners could engage with EirGrid and its project team and included a landowner request form in respect of landowner proposals to modify the line route / tower locations.

### *Community Update Brochure July 2014*

This brochure provides a concise description of the development and its current status. It outlines the reasons for the project and the key project drivers. It explains the history of the project, how it has progressed through route and technology selection to a final proposed solution. It advises that EirGrid is now preparing an EIS in accordance with the scoping opinion that was provided by An Bord Pleanála and which was informed by the feedback received during public consultation and participation. It also provides an update on the opinion of the Independent Expert Panel (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 sets out EirGrid's updated Project Development and Consultation Roadmap and identifies the stage which has currently been reached in terms of the roadmap. The brochure also describes the Project of Common Interest (PCI) procedures being undertaken by EirGrid in association with the Board prior to the lodgement of an application.

### *Future Community Update Brochure*

A Community Update Brochure will be prepared to inform stakeholders of the lodging of the planning application with An Bord Pleanála. This brochure will be produced as a user's guide to the application and will draw upon information contained within the non-technical summaries of the EIS including information relating to impacts and mitigation measures.

In conclusion, overall these information leaflets address the content requirements of the *Guidelines* set out in Annex VI(5) and furthermore the purpose of such leaflet as envisaged under Annex VI(5). They reflect the extensive project development process which has applied and applies to this project. This process commenced a considerable number of years prior to the publication of Regulation 347/2013). Therefore even if the format for the provision of information in these leaflets which were published prior to the public consultations may not have been precisely the same as if it were contained in a single information leaflet (if this is envisaged under Annex VI(5)) although it noted that it does not specify the same), it is clear that the substance and purpose of Annex VI(5) has been satisfied. In this regard it should further be observed that Annex VI(5) is contained in Annex VI which

is entitled “*Guidelines for Transparency and Public Participation*” which implies an element of flexibility in meeting the substantive requirements. However overall it is considered that the work undertaken to date has ensured that the intent of Annex VI (5) is met and exceeded. In this respect attention may again be drawn to Article 9, Paragraph 3 where it states that: “*the competent authority shall take into consideration any form of public participation and consultation that took place before the permit granting process, to the extent that such public participation and consultation has fulfilled the requirement of this article*”.

***“Inform all stakeholders affected about the project through the website referred to in Article 9(7) and other appropriate information means;”***

Since 2007, EirGrid has used the project webpages of its website ([www.eirgrid.com](http://www.eirgrid.com)) as a medium for publishing information on the project online, these project specific webpages can be accessed at <http://www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/NorthSouth400kVInterconnectionDevelopment/>. This project website has been used since 2007 to “make available” *inter alia*: summary updates to stakeholders on the changing status of the project; Community Update Brochures, newsletters and leaflets; details and locations of public open days and other public consultation and engagement activities; contact details for obtaining further documentation / information on the project and contact details for providing feedback during public consultation periods. In this regard, it is also in accordance with the guidelines set out in Annex VI(6).

***“Invite in written form relevant affected stakeholders to dedicated meetings, during which concerns shall be discussed.”***

EirGrid proactively contacted in written form stakeholders, stakeholder groups, landowners and elected members to offer them briefings on the project. The information centres were opened to also cater for those who would like to come into the office in person and meet to discuss the project.

EirGrid hosted and attended a significant number of meetings to discuss and present the project. Information on the key open day events held is provided in **Chapter 4** and **Chapter 5** above.

***“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 the comprehensive decision.”***

This requirement is for the purposes of the application file to be submitted to the Board and so it does not arise at the juncture. It is not therefore a requirement of this concept plan. Nevertheless, it is

noted that **Chapter 4** and **Chapter 5** of this concept document records a comprehensive description of all consultation activities undertaken to date. In due course EirGrid shall submit a report summarising the results of activities related to the overall consultation process for the project together with the application file to the competent authority.

### 6.1.2 Article 9 Paragraph 5

Article 9 Paragraph 5 requires that:

***“For projects crossing the border of two or more Member States, the public consultations pursuant to paragraph 4 in each of the Member States concerned shall take place within a period of no more than two months from the date on which the first public consultation started.”***

The portion of the proposed North-South Interconnector which is located in Northern Ireland falls within the scope of the transitional provision contained in Article 19 of the Regulations and so it is not subject to the Chapter III requirements, which includes the public consultation requirement contained in paragraph 4. This arises from the fact the application file was submitted in Northern Ireland before 16 November 2013, having been submitted to the Planning Service in 2009 (refer to DECC’s *Manual of Procedures: The Permitting Process for Projects of Common Interest in the UK* (May 2014)). Moreover, the application in Northern Ireland has gone beyond any equivalent pre-application stage. This provision is therefore not applicable.

### 6.1.3 Article 9 Paragraph 6

Paragraph 6 of Article 9 relates to projects likely to have significant adverse cross-border impacts in one or more neighbouring Member States, where Article 7 of Directive 2011/92/EU and the Espoo Convention are applicable. It requires that:

***“The relevant information shall be made available to the competent authority of the neighbouring Member States. The competent authority of the neighbouring Member States shall indicate, in the notification process where appropriate, whether it, or any other authority concerned, wishes to participate in the relevant public consultation procedures.”***

This is addressed in Chapter 2. As noted, consultation has taken place with both the Planning Service of Northern Ireland and An Bord Pleanála in Ireland. Through pre-application consultations and discussions with these bodies, it was determined that an EIA would be required in each jurisdiction. Each competent authority was informed of the transboundary nature of the project and the potential for effects (as set out by the Espoo Convention and the EIA Directive as transposed into

national legislation). As part of the process leading to the preparation of the ES and EIS, a review of all environmental aspects was undertaken by EirGrid and NIE's team of specialist advisors. The scoping process was confirmed by the Planning Service and An Bord Pleanála, whereby the respective authorities provided opinions as to the information to be provided in the ES and EIS respectively. In Northern Ireland, this was undertaken through the Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) process with the Planning Service. In Ireland, this was undertaken by the provision of a formal Scoping Opinion by An Bord Pleanála (December 2013). In addition to the ES and EIS, a Joint Environmental Report, is being prepared and will be lodged as part of the planning application. This approach fully satisfies all recommendations in the EU Transboundary Guidance document.

With reference to the specific provision of paragraph 6 as noted above, the Planning Service of Northern Ireland did not request to participate in the public consultation procedures in Ireland. An Bord Pleanála did not participate in the public consultation procedures undertaken in Northern Ireland.

#### **6.1.4 Article 9 Paragraph 7**

Paragraph 7 has two main requirements.

***“The project promoter, or, where national law so provides, the competent authority, shall establish and regularly update a website with relevant information about the project of common interest, which shall be linked to the Commission website and which shall meet the requirements specified in Annex VI.6.”***

EirGrid has operated a website for the project since 2007 and used it as a forum to provide information about the project, including all of the project updates, information and publications (e.g. Community Update Brochures, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and Reports) were available for viewing and download and all of the information uploaded to date for the project remains accessible via the web link provided below:

<http://www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/NorthSouth400kVInterconnectionDevelopment/>

The project website is linked to the Commission website as appropriate and as required under Article 9(7).



***“Project promoters shall also publish relevant information by other appropriate information means to which the public has open access”***

Information during the pre-application consultation phases has been provided in hard copy format at various locations throughout the study area and also on-line on the project website. Information issued has been tailored as required in the course of this process to the relevant stakeholders being addressed, and in line with the level of information that they requested. EirGrid has also endeavoured to ensure maximum awareness of each stage of the consultation process and advice on locations and access to information by way of a comprehensive advertising schedule which involved both print media and radio.

A summary of the methods of information publication and issue for each of the three consultation phases is provided in **Table 6.1**, **Table 6.2** and **Table 6.3** hereunder.

**Table 6.1: Summary of Information Publications and Communications Activities Undertaken by EirGrid during Public and Landowner Consultation on the Preliminary Re-evaluation Report**

| <b>Method</b>         | <b>Communications Activity</b>  |
|-----------------------|---|
| Press Releases        | Press releases were issued by EirGrid to media to ensure that the public concerned (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.  |
| Information centres   | Information centres at Navan and Carrickmacross (which had been used for the previous application) re-opened to the public in May 2011.   |
| Consultation Brochure | A <i>Consultation Brochure</i> was prepared and issued by EirGrid 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 study area.   |
| Letters/Mail-out      | Letters and the <i>Consultation Brochure</i> were issued in a mail-out to stakeholders.   |
| Website               | All project information was provided on one new website:<br><a href="http://www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/NorthSouth400kVInterconnectionDevelopment/">http://www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/NorthSouth400kVInterconnectionDevelopment/</a> |



**Table 6.2 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 <i>Final Re-evaluation Report</i> 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.<br><br>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 from the County Monaghan Anti Pylon Committee for additional events. for additional events.  |
| Lo-Call Phone Line               | Continuation of the project Lo-Call phone line service.  |
| Information centres              | EirGrid re-opened the two project information centres in Navan and Carrickmacross from 16 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.   |
| 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.  |
| Website                          | All project information was provided on one new website:<br><a href="http://www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/NorthSouth400kVInterconnectionDevelopment/">http://www.eirgridprojects.com/projects/NorthSouth400kVInterconnectionDevelopment/</a>  |
| Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) | EirGrid produced an updated FAQ on the project website, in April 2013, on the project which addressed the following issues:<br><br>1. The North South 400 kV Interconnection Development<br>2. Current situation<br>3. Timeline and design<br>4. EirGrid and Grid25<br>5. Why is the project needed?<br>6. Public consultation<br>7. Economic downturn<br>8. Renewable energy<br>9. Moyhill substation<br>10. Overhead v underground<br>11. Substation, lines and tower types<br>12. Technical information |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>13. EMF</p> <p>14. Local impact</p> <p>15. Landowner access and compensation</p> |
|--|---|

**Table 6.3 Summary of Information Publications and 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                       | Advertisements were placed in local press to heighten awareness of the Preferred Project Solution engagement phase. Radio advertising was also used   |
| Lo-Call Phone Line                | Continuation of the project Lo-Call phone line service from 9am to 5pm Monday - Friday.   |
| Information centres               | EirGrid re-opened the three project information centres in Navan, Carrickmacross and Kingscourt from the week of 16 July 2013.  |
| Open Day Events                   | A total of three open day events were undertaken during this stage.   |
| Community Update Brochure         | 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> , its key findings and the Terms of Reference for the engagement. 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. |
| 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> .   |
| Preferred Project Solution Report | In addition to the being available on the website, at Information Offices and at Public Open Day Events, copies of the <i>Preferred Project Solution</i> reports were also disseminated to the County Librarians for public display and to any interested stakeholders on request (i.e. maps and reports).  |

The application file itself will be available in hard copy at the offices of the Board and the offices of the county councils of Meath, Cavan and Monaghan.

It will also be available for viewing on the dedicated project application website, EirGrid project website and at each of EirGrid's public information centres, where staff will be on hand to assist stakeholders to obtain the information that they wish to view.

For those who wish to view the application file through the Irish language, the application documents will be posted online in the Irish language.

## 7 CONCLUSION

Having regard to the foregoing, EirGrid is of the view that the extensive public consultation which has taken place meets the public engagement requirements under Regulation 347/2013 which are required to take place before the submission of the final and complete application file. In particular EirGrid is of the view that the public 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, achieves, and indeed well exceeds, these requirements under Regulation 347/2013

This document also outlines further public engagement which will be carried out by EirGrid in particular as part of the proposed strategic infrastructure application in respect of the project

More generally it is submitted that matters described in this document reflect EirGrid's Concept for Public Participation as set out in **Chapter 3** of this document, and satisfies the requirements under the Regulation.