



## North-South 400kV Interconnection Development



# Preferred Project Solution Report APPENDIX C

The Final Re-evaluation Public Engagement Report



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## 1. SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

EirGrid is grateful to stakeholders who took the time to provide their feedback during the structured engagement period on the *Final Re-evaluation Report*.

This appendix sets out a summary of the views, opinions and issues raised by stakeholders. **The opinions and views set out in the following sections are those expressed by stakeholders who provided feedback and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of EirGrid.**

All submissions made by stakeholders either in writing, on-line, at the information centres, open days or over the phone have as far as possible been captured, logged and reviewed by the project team and are summarised in the following sections. Members of the project team, including technical, environmental and EMF experts were available at each open day to engage with members of the public and answer any queries or questions that arose. As far as possible the project team endeavoured to respond to and capture the views and feedback provided by stakeholders during these events. This report, together with the complete submissions, has been reviewed by the project team in the preparation of the *Preferred Project Solution Report*.

In the context of legal obligations in respect of data protection, the personal details of consultees and the submissions they have made to EirGrid have not been published.

The issues raised by stakeholders have been grouped having regard to the Terms of Reference for this engagement period, and as listed below:

- Submissions relevant to the *Final Re-evaluation Report*;
- Submissions relevant to the *Preferred Project Solution Report*;
- Submissions Relevant to the Environment Impact Statement (EIS);
- Submissions on Community Gain; and
- Feedback on Other Issues.

Where issues raised are relevant to the current stage of the project it is responded to in **Chapter 2** of the main report. Where feedback received is relevant to subsequent stages, for example during the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) stage, it will be considered and responded to at such future stage, as appropriate.

## 2. SUBMISSIONS RELEVANT TO THE FINAL RE-EVALUATION REPORT

A large proportion of submissions raised issues that were of relevance to, or in response to, the *Final Re-evaluation Report*. The issues are grouped under three main headings as follows:

- Project need/scope;
- Alternatives; and
- Study area, corridor identification and corridor evaluation.

### 2.1. PROJECT NEED/SCOPE

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

- Some stakeholders welcomed the project, acknowledged the need and requested information on potential employment opportunities and socio-economic benefits arising for the area. Other stakeholders advised that while they appreciated the need for the project, they were objecting to the technology proposed for this project.
- Other stakeholders did not accept the principle of the project. They advised that they did not believe that demand existed in Ireland for this project given the economic downturn and high levels of unemployment.
- A number of stakeholders raised concerns that the need for this project was driven to benefit and meet demand in the United Kingdom (UK), with some stakeholders referencing the export of wind energy to the UK market.
- Other stakeholders felt that there was no requirement for power transfer to Northern Ireland and advised that in their view, the project was proposed to fulfil the needs of the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). Others however referenced the recent outages in Northern Ireland and enquired about security of supply issues in Northern Ireland.
- General enquires were received regarding the ability of the project to improve competition. Specific points included:
  - How the transfer of electricity between jurisdictions would improve competition given that EirGrid is the system operator in both jurisdictions.
  - The relationship of the project with electricity supply/generation, tariffs paid for electricity generation and the source of the power to be transmitted through the proposed interconnector.

- A number of stakeholders noted that they would like to see a reduction in electricity prices and enquired as to how these savings were calculated and would be passed on.
  - Other stakeholders felt that the cost of undergrounding the line should be borne by all electricity consumers in Ireland.
- Expressions of support for renewable energy and the integration of renewable energy with the transmission network were received. Specifically support was shown for the generation of wind energy in Ireland. In addition, some stakeholders enquired as to how EirGrid plans to reduce its dependency on fossil fuels and how Ireland's plans to increase renewable energy are progressing.
- A number of stakeholders questioned why the substation at Kingscourt has been deferred and sought clarification of EirGrid's future plans in the area.
- Some stakeholders enquired what benefits the project would bring to their community and local businesses.

## **2.2. ALTERNATIVES**

Many of the submissions received questioned the alternatives which have been considered for the project, in particular the technical options considered.

The specific issues related to:

1. Environmental and cost comparison of underground cables (UGC) versus overhead lines (OHL);
2. Routing suggestions for UGC;
3. Reference to international examples and advance in technology; and
4. Other options to meet the need of the project.

### **2.2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL AND COST COMPARISON OF UGC VERSUS OHL**

A number of stakeholders stated that it is their preference that the line be placed underground. In this regard, some stakeholders referenced the conclusion of the IEC review that undergrounding is technically feasible for the project. Some stakeholders questioned if EirGrid has not accepted the findings of this report and whether it has completely ruled out undergrounding, including the use of partial undergrounding, as an option for this project.

The benefits and disadvantages in respect of financial costs and environmental impacts for both UGC and OHL were raised by stakeholders. This included requests for further independent studies on the option of undergrounding.

## **1. Cost of Undergrounding**

A number of stakeholders considered the key factor in deciding whether to propose OHL or UGC for this project is cost and suggested that the public would be willing to pay more for this project to be implemented using UGC. Some stakeholders advised that, as the project was funded by tax payer's money, they should have more input into the location and technology proposed for the project. Some stakeholders advised that, in their view, EirGrid would propose UGC if it was cheaper than OHL.

Other stakeholders referenced the different cost comparisons for OHL and UGC referred to by EirGrid since 2007 and suggested there was a lack of consistency. In doing so, stakeholders referenced continuing advances in technology and suggested that the cost differentials between the two technologies would likely decrease further in the future.

General enquires were received as to the basis of the cost comparison, including whether impacts on land value had been included in the comparison made, whether a detailed costing on UGC had been undertaken and how this compares with the projected cost savings to be achieved by the project.

Some stakeholders requested that the cost differential be provided in the context of an average projected increase on an electricity supply bill so they could establish the context.

## **2. Comparison of Environmental Impact**

A number of stakeholders advised that they felt that placing the lines over ground would cost more in the long-term than undergrounding, due to its environmental impacts, community impact, health effects (particularly in respect of children) and/or property/land devaluation. Specific issues included:

- Stakeholders advised that unlike in the case of a road project, there is an alternative that they consider has a lower environmental impact, particularly in relation to visual impact and health.
- A number of landowners advised that they would have no concern with the construction of underground cabling through their land.
- Some stakeholders felt that the project was being progressed at the expense of their community, particularly in relation to health.
- Other stakeholders advised that, in their view, EirGrid has not adequately undertaken a comparative assessment of the impact of OHL versus UGC including the completion of an exhaustive study on the feasibility of an underground High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) option.

### **2.2.2 UGC ROUTING SUGGESTIONS**

A number of stakeholders suggested potential routing options for an UGC. The majority of these suggested co-location with existing infrastructure. Specific locations suggested include:

- Disused railway lines in Meath, Cavan and Monaghan.
- A 25m sterile corridor from Monaghan town to Aughnacloy along the N2. Stakeholders advised that landowners could provide additional land alongside the road.
- Investigation of an off-shore option or a route closer to the east coast.
- Existing linear corridors e.g. motorways or the route should have been combined with the recent gas pipeline project.

### **2.2.3 REFERENCE TO INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES AND ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY**

A number of stakeholders referenced international examples where UGC was used and referenced advances in UGC technology. Specific issues raised include:

- Some stakeholders made general enquiries regarding new electricity infrastructure in other countries and referenced recent projects in Spain, Denmark, Germany, the United Kingdom and Canada where UGC was selected as the technology of choice.
- Some stakeholders felt that EirGrid has and is continuing to ignore technological advances that would allow high capacity electrical infrastructure to be undergrounded with particular reference to VSC HVDC cable.
- General enquires were received as to why the United Kingdom can include longer sections of UGC than is feasible in Ireland and whether using lower voltage cables, e.g. 220 kV, rather than 400 kV would overcome any difficulties.

### **2.2.4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS TO MEET THE NEED OF THE PROJECT**

A number of stakeholders questioned why other options such as the construction of new electricity generators between Dublin and Tyrone or additional wind farms along the west coast could not provide the same benefits of this project.

## **2.3. STUDY AREA, CORRIDOR IDENTIFICATION AND CORRIDOR EVALUATION**

A number of submissions made observations and comments on the project study area and the corridor identification and evaluation processes.

With regard to the project study area, a number of stakeholders advised that in their view the re-evaluation process should have looked at the broad area again. Others advised that the study area should have been extended to the east to include the option of co-location along the existing M1 corridor and the east coast.

A number of stakeholders made general enquiries regarding the removal of the proposed substation at Moyhill and how this affected the study area and resulting corridors.

A number of stakeholders had general enquires on the corridor identification and evaluation processes. This included suggestions for the co-location of the project along existing infrastructure corridors such as routing of the project along the N2. Other stakeholders advised how they considered there was a lack of transparency in route corridor and indicative line route selection and requested information on how constraints were evaluated including the determination of priority constraints during corridor evaluation.

Some stakeholders also felt that there was no significant difference between EirGrid's original findings as they relate to the CMSA and the findings detailed in the *Final Re-evaluation Report*.



### 3. SUBMISSIONS RELEVANT TO THE PREFERRED PROJECT SOLUTION REPORT

#### 3.1. LINE DESIGN

A large number of submissions raised specific concerns or enquiries in respect of the alignment of the planned circuit, including potential localised modifications to, or siting of, the alignment as well as access during the construction phase.

The issues are grouped under the following headings:

- Modifications;
- Information on the structure design and locations;
- Proximity to dwellings and other receptors;
- Construction and access to lands; and
- Operation of the line.

##### 3.1.1 MODIFICATIONS

A number of submissions received from stakeholders related to the modifications made to the indicative line route since the last phase of landowner engagement in July 2011 and proposed further modifications to the line route.

Specific requests and issues raised include:

- Information was requested on the modifications, including the rationale for modifications, made since the previous round of landowner engagement.
- Some stakeholders felt that these modifications had resulted in a greater impact on their landholding or dwelling house; others felt that their previous concerns had been taken into account; others raised concerns that the modifications meant that the line would no longer cross their land.
- In particular, some stakeholders felt that the modifications in the vicinity of Doohamlet as set out in **Table 3.2** of this report, has resulted in a greater impact on their landholding or dwelling house and requested additional options are considered to make the required diversion.
- Information was requested on whether any further details could be provided on the proposed location of towers at this stage and what future input stakeholders can have in the modification of tower locations.

- Concerns were raised about the potential impact on farming activities in particular where the line route traverses the centre of a field or a small field. Some landowners advised of locations within their land that would either be unsuitable for locating structures or would significantly impact upon their farming practices or woodlands.
- Requests for minor adjustments to the proposed alignment over specific landholdings.
- Request that partial undergrounding be considered from the intersection with the existing Oldstreet-Moneypoint line into Woodland substation.

### **3.1.2 INFORMATION ON THE LINE ROUTE AND LOCATION OF TOWER STRUCTURES**

Many submissions raised concerns regarding the proposed line route and the location of the tower structures.

Queries from stakeholders in relation to line design included a number of site specific issues relating to the location and footprint of towers, the distance between towers, the required clearance from the ground and the route crossing agricultural landholdings.

A number of stakeholders had queries and concerns relating to the line route selection process. These included:

- Ecology and other environmental constraints have been prioritised over dwelling houses and impact on communities.
- EirGrid has kept the line away from houses and picked a route with the least number of houses so that there would be fewer objectors.
- Why the line route is not straighter and what is the rationale for changes in direction within the line.
- Whether the tower locations can be amended after planning is granted.

Stakeholders enquired as to how the proposed line design will compare with existing lines in the area citing the existing interconnector and the Flagford-Louth 220 kV line as examples.

Other stakeholders requested information on the proposed tower design and advised that monopole structures, wooden pole structures or twin pole structures would be preferable.

Queries regarding whether the proposed conductor would be insulated, the material it would be composed of and its proposed diameter.

A number of stakeholders questioned the rationale for the siting of angle structures away from field boundaries and requested information on how towers are located.

### **3.1.3 PROXIMITY TO DWELLINGS AND OTHER RECEPTORS**

Many submissions expressed concerns relating to the proximity of the line route to dwelling houses or other receptors. A large number of the attendees at the project open days requested measurement of the exact distance from their dwelling house or other receptor to the indicative line route. A number of submissions received concerned the proximity of the line route to dwelling houses and other receptors, such as community facilities and schools. A number of stakeholders raised concerns regarding the proximity of these receptors to the line route on the basis of visual impact and stated their concern about health impacts.

Specific feedback included:

- The stakeholders most concerned about the proximity of their dwelling houses were typically within 500m of the indicative line route. These stakeholders stated that they were concerned about the visual impact of the project and raised concerns about the health impact on their communities, their families and their neighbours.
- Stakeholders referenced the distance from the line route advising that the 50m aspirational distance used by EirGrid was insufficient and referred to practices in other countries where greater distances were achieved citing examples in Scotland and Holland where they advised that a 100m separation distance is used.
- Some stakeholders expressed concern about the proximity of the line route to other receptors including:
  - Doohamlet National School - concerns were raised that the school could see a reduction in numbers as a result of the proximity to the indicative line route;
  - Raferagh National School;
  - Annyalla National School;
  - Clontibret Goldmine;

- Clogher GAA pitch;
- Local alternative health clinic;
- Lough Egish Rod and Gun Club;
- Unmarked graveyard Corduff; and
- Flax mill in close proximity to the line route in Benagh.

## **3.2. CONSTRUCTION AND ACCESS TO LANDS**

The construction process and land access were raised in a number of submissions and during the project information days a number of stakeholders requested additional information on these topics.

### **3.2.1 CONSTRUCTION ACCESS**

A number of stakeholders made enquiries in respect of the legal rights of EirGrid to enter private lands. They queried what steps EirGrid can take in the event of consent for access not being granted by landowners. Some stakeholders enquired whether EirGrid's rights extend to stringing towers over land without landowner permission and asked what rights the landowner maintains.

A number of submissions by landowners advised that they did not want EirGrid to enter their land while others advised that they would only grant access if the project was undergrounded.

Specific queries and concerns raised include:

- Enquires regarding shared and private access tracks, how these will be utilised and how would owners be compensated;
- Concerns that the local roads were not suitable to support the construction traffic for this project;
- Enquires regarding the assessment of land damage during construction, how this would be undertaken and compensated;

- Concerns that a number of lanes and tracks in the vicinity of the line route currently experience difficulty with access for farm machinery and are not suitable for construction traffic;
- Enquiries relating to proposed traffic control measures to be implemented for the duration of the project and concerns about the impact of any additional traffic on local road users particularly cyclists and pedestrians; and
- Enquiries relating to the maintenance of the road network during the construction phase and reinstatement thereafter.

### **3.2.2 CONSTRUCTION PROCESS**

A number of stakeholders requested information on the construction phase and provided feedback on this. Specific queries, feedback and requests for further information included:

- Requests for information on the cost of construction and how it would be funded;
- Requests for information on who is responsible for undertaking the construction, with some stakeholders advising of their negative experience with ESB during construction.
- Requests for information on the area required for construction (i.e., working area), and the approximate timeline for commencement and completion of the construction phase;
- The nature and extent of construction equipment and precautionary steps to avoid the spread of disease between farms;
- Concerns about damage to land during construction and requests for information regarding how tenants operating land will be compensated. Information was also requested on the timeline for land reinstatement following the construction phase;
- The storage of excavated soil and measures proposed to prevent contamination;
- The steps to be taken to prevent soil slippage;
- Details of the temporary construction site facilities that will be required and the number of construction workers on site at any one time; and
- The provision of security on site and details of insurance in the event an accident on site.

### 3.2.3 OPERATION

A number of submissions raised concerns about the operation and maintenance of the line following construction. Specific concerns included:

- Clearance from the ground:
  - A number of landowners raised concerns that the sag on the line would increase in wet weather and that this would lead to those working under the line being more susceptible to shocks; and
  - One stakeholder advised of being aware of persons receiving a “shock” from a disconnected electric fence and from a metal trailer which were close to an existing 400 kV overhead line. Also mentioned that it was possible to light a fluorescent tube by holding it up underneath a 400 kV line.
- The towers would attract lightning strikes;
- Safety concerns regarding the lines falling and in particular enquiries as to who is responsible if there is an accident due to a falling line;
- The health and safety of anglers using carbon fibre rods under the line;
- Whether there is heat generated from the line and how this would impact trees;
- Enquiry regarding the impact on radio frequency once the line is energised; and
- Enquiries as to how the pylons would be secured to prevent climbing on them.

## **4. SUBMISSIONS RELEVANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

Feedback of relevance to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) stage in the project development process was received during this round of engagement. The majority of these relate to the potential impact of the proposed development on environmental concerns broadly covered by the following topics:-

- Agronomy;
- Community and Socio Economic Impact;
- Cumulative Impact;
- Cultural Heritage & Archaeology;
- Ecology;
- Health;
- Landscape & Visual Impact; and
- Noise;

### **4.1. AGRONOMY**

A number of landowners raised concerns about potential farming restrictions that will apply to their land following the construction of the project. These stakeholders were concerned that the project would result in the sterilisation of farmland beneath and adjacent to the pylons and their lines.

Specific concerns included:

- Restrictions on slurry spreading under the line;
- Restrictions on the use of machinery in fields;
- Restrictions to growing crops and trees under the line and around the base of the structure, with one stakeholder referencing a study in England that found that an OHL influenced the quality of crops grown in proximity to them.
- Impact of the pylons and the line on grazing animals; and
- Restrictions on the construction of new farm buildings.

Other concerns included the potential impact on animal health. Specific concerns included:

- Impact on chicken houses - a number of stakeholders advised they understood that chicken houses could not be built within a specified distance of a 400 kV line;
- Impact on cows from the noise of the line and EMF with some stakeholders expressing particular concerns that the line would impact the fertility of their dairy cattle;
- Impact on fertility of pedigree cattle using artificial insemination; and
- Impact on bloodstock arising from EMF and the noise from the line.

Other stakeholders raised concerns about the proximity of the line to farm buildings including hen houses, sheep houses and cattle sheds.

## **4.2. COMMUNITY AND SOCIO ECONOMIC IMPACT**

A number of submissions raised concerns that the project will give rise to unrest within their communities with some advising that any landowner who allows a pylon will be in opposition to their community and that the project will result in divisions amongst neighbours.

Other stakeholders advised that the receiving community was not benefitting directly from the project. They raised specific concerns including the potential loss of students to schools in close proximity to the line and the impact on their communities during the construction phase, particularly referencing construction traffic.

A number of stakeholders expressed concerns that the project would negatively impact the businesses in the vicinity of the line route in particular those that depend on tourists. Furthermore, some stakeholders raised concerns about how the project could impact upon community and tourism amenities including fishing, clay shooting and camping.

Other stakeholders enquired how this project would benefit the local communities particularly during the construction phase and whether any employment arising from same would benefit their communities.



### **4.3. CUMULATIVE IMPACT**

Stakeholders raised concerns regarding the substation in Moyhill and the future development of lines in the area.

Other stakeholders raised concerns regarding the development and extension of wind farms in proximity to the line route.

### **4.4. CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

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

- 12<sup>th</sup> Century cemetery in Cruicetown;
- The Hill of Tara;
- Bective Abbey;
- Telltown;
- The Brittas Demesne;
- Archaeological sites in the vicinity of Muff;
- Local archaeological sites such as monuments and ringforts; and
- Sites of industrial heritage such as a flax mill.

Other stakeholders queried the diversion around the site of the Battle of Clontibret, advising that this does not attract tourists and that they felt that this diversion resulted in a greater environmental impact.

## 4.5. ECOLOGY

General concerns regarding wildlife in proximity to the line were expressed, in particular birds, bats and fisheries. Specific ecological sites and features that stakeholders felt should be considered by the project team included:

- The impact on hedgerows during the construction phase;
- The impact on birds, with stakeholders advising of their concerns for:
  - Whooper Swans and their flight patterns;
  - Impact on Curlew in the vicinity of the line;
  - Black Lake is a cormorant roosting site;
  - Swan flight paths from Borraghy to Lough Egish;
  - Lakelands including Lough Egish;
  - Claderagh Bog and associated Woodcock and its ability to attract birds given its high ecological value. The stakeholder advised that in their view this bog was of higher ecological value than the Cashel Bog, which the line route now avoids.
- Noise impacts on bats – referencing the Nicholls and Racey (2007) paper on the impact of OHL on bats; and
- The impact on a locally important brown trout fishery and spawning beds of Lough Mourne.

## 4.6. HEALTH

General concerns about the health impacts due to the presence of overhead powerlines, specifically in relation to Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF), cancer, childhood leukaemia, and the impact on mental health including stress and depression, and human fertility were expressed. These concerns were typically raised in the context of the proximity of the proposed line route to the stakeholder's dwelling house or other receptors such as community facilities and schools.

A number of stakeholders suggested that health impacts could be avoided by putting the project underground.

Specific queries and concerns raised include:

- Requests for information on the health impacts of the existing 400 kV with some stakeholders advising that they felt that EirGrid has not adequately assessed the health impact and that the receiving community has not been provided with any assurances as to the long term safety of living in proximity to a high voltage OHL.
- Concerns were raised by certain members of the public regarding studies which they understand to show an impact of power lines on the health of communities particularly in terms of cancer, dementia and the incidence of miscarriage.
- Advised that they understood that EirGrid staff and other workers in Ireland and the UK could only spend a limited amount of time working under a powerline for health and safety reasons.
- A number of stakeholders raised concerns about the impact of the project on children with autism, and suggested that the cumulative effects of EMF in areas should be taken into account.
- A number of stakeholders raised concerns about the impact of overhead powerlines on pacemakers and requested information on restrictions for individuals with pacemakers in place in the vicinity of the proposed project.
- Reference was made to a paper by Dr. Neil Cherry on the Impact of EMF on melatonin production in humans.
- Stakeholders living in the vicinity of the existing 400 kV line from Moneypoint to Woodland advised that they had observed an increased incidence of health issues, including miscarriages, increase in cancer, and mental health issues amongst their families and across the wider community.

#### **4.7. LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT**

General concerns regarding visual impact and how the project would impact upon visual receptors, views of the countryside and the landscape quality of areas in proximity to the line were expressed by a number of stakeholders.

Stakeholders felt the line and associated structures would be unsightly and spoil the scenic views of the countryside resulting in adverse impacts on their community.

Specific concerns relating to landscape and visual impact received included:

- Stakeholders advised how they believed opposition to the project was due to the visual intrusiveness of the lines;
- Enquiries regarding the height of the structures were made;
- Numerous stakeholders expressed their specific concern regarding the potential proximity of structures to their dwelling houses and some advised how the project will be visible to them from all viewpoints from their dwelling house and/or farm;
- Adverse impacts on stakeholders panoramic views of the countryside which they stated will be affected by the tower structures;
- Stakeholders felt that EirGrid should look at the viewpoints from their dwelling house and requested EirGrid to visit their property. Furthermore, some stakeholders requested that a photomontage be produced by EirGrid from their property;
- Visual impacts on properties in the area of Drumlane;
- Some stakeholders felt that Monaghan was not a suitable location for the project given its elevated position and presence of hilly areas;
- Concern was raised from some stakeholders that structures would be positioned on the highest viewpoints within their area, with the highest peak near Shanco provided as an example; and
- Stakeholders enquired why planning applications for dwelling houses within the area had to be well buried within the landscape yet the proposed structures would be situated on elevated areas.

#### **4.8. NOISE**

Stakeholders expressed concerns regarding to the potential noise they felt the project would introduce to the areas in proximity to the line and associated structures.

Specific feedback relating to the issue of noise included:

- Stakeholders advised that they currently experience adverse noise impacts from 110kV lines close to their dwelling house, in particular during periods of rainfall when buzzing sounds are audible from their dwelling house.

- A number of stakeholders raised concerns about the impact of the project on children with autism, advising that a number of autistic children live in close proximity to the line route. The key concern raised in relation to autism was the impact of noise with specific reference to the impact of existing powerlines in the area.
- Some stakeholders requested further information to be provided to them including:
  - The noise chapter of the EIS;
  - Details on the noise levels of the project;
  - Details of the corona affect with some stakeholders advising how they felt noise would be audible from distances as far away as over 1km from the line route; These stakeholders queried what distances the noise would potentially be audible from;
- A number of stakeholders expressed their concerns relating to potential adverse noise impacts on their family, particularly when combined with the noise they already experience from existing lines in proximity to their dwelling house. The impact on autistic children in this context was particularly raised as a concern.
- Some stakeholders were concerned about the potential noise impacts particularly during night-time periods.
- One stakeholder who expressed concern regarding noise impacts also raised a concern relating to air quality issues.

## 5. SUBMISSIONS ON COMMUNITY GAIN

As set out in the *Final Re-evaluation Report*, EirGrid is actively considering how best to adopt community gain within transmission project development and the Grid25 programme in general. As part of this consideration, EirGrid is currently engaging with key stakeholders including the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG), Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR) and An Bord Pleanála (ABP).

A number of stakeholders provided feedback relating to community gain. In particular this feedback related to who should receive community gain and how it should be administered. Specific feedback received included:

- The community living in close proximity to the proposed line route should receive the community gain rather than large towns that are typically 10km away from the line route.
- The fund should not be managed by the local authorities; suggested alternative administrators of the fund included the Leader initiative, local community groups and the Heritage Council.
- The system of community gain in operation by another developer was suggested as a successful model for EirGrid to follow. Other community gain initiatives identified by stakeholders included restoration of monuments and funding of community publications.
- A community gain fund would not be required if the project was put underground
- It was suggested that all 110 kV lines should be undergrounded in compensation for this project

That community gain would lead to them accepting the project.

## **6. FEEDBACK ON OTHER ISSUES**

### **6.1. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

A number of stakeholders requested additional information about the project and provided feedback on the participation process. The majority of project information requests related to mapping. In particular, a number of stakeholders requested specific maps detailing the indicative line and the distance from their dwelling house or other receptors.

A number of stakeholders also provided feedback relating to the public information events, the promotion of the engagement period, and the ability of stakeholders to influence the project development.

Specific points raised by stakeholders included:

- A request that EirGrid consider using text messages to provide updates on the project to stakeholders.
- A request that EirGrid hold additional events in local communities along the indicative line route. In addition Kingscourt, County Cavan was suggested as a more appropriate venue for future public information days in County Cavan.
- A number of stakeholders felt that EirGrid has already made its decisions, is undertaking a public relations exercise and is not interested in listening to the views of their community.
- A number of stakeholders advised that they were previously unaware of the project or had not been sent information on the project previously.
- Other stakeholders felt that the consultation undertaken to date was not valid as the indicative route is broadly similar to the previous application.
- Some stakeholders felt that communities affected by this project had not had the same opportunities to participate when compared with the other EirGrid projects (e.g., Grid Link and Grid West).

## **6.2. PLANNING**

A number of stakeholders enquired as to the planning process and who would determine whether the application would be granted or refused. Feedback was also provided on the previous application. A number of stakeholders felt that if the community objects to the project, ABP should not grant planning permission. A number of stakeholders felt that it was unfair that they had paid the fee to make a submission to ABP and that this was not refunded by EirGrid following the withdrawal of that application. Enquiries were also made about the planning process in Northern Ireland with some stakeholders suggesting that this project should be put on hold until NIE secures planning for the northern section of the line.

## **6.3. COMPENSATION**

A number of stakeholders enquired as to the amount of, and structure of, the compensation arrangements for this project. Some stakeholders considered that the current compensation arrangement - whereby only directly impacted landowners are compensated - was unfair and suggested that a compensation package should be available to residents in close proximity to the line. Other stakeholders suggested that an inconvenience payment be made to landowners to facilitate access to the lands. Enquiries were also made as to the compensation package on the Northern Ireland section of the line and it was also suggested that the compensation package for all landowners and residents on the entire project should be the same.

## **6.4. PROPERTY**

Stakeholders expressed concerns regarding impact on property values, loss of development potential and future development restrictions which may arise as a result of the project. Specifically some stakeholders requested clarification as to whether the project would impact their ability (and that of their family members) to obtain planning permission in the future. A number of stakeholders advised that as they felt that their property would be devalued, EirGrid should provide compensation.