

- BROADCASTING
- ENERGY
- COMMUNICATIONS
- NATURAL RESOURCES

## Statement by the Independent Expert Panel

Dublin 1 July 2014

The Independent Expert Panel (the Panel) considering EirGrid's Grid West and Grid Link projects has held six meetings between 10 February 2014 and 30 June 2014. The Panel was appointed by Mr. Pat Rabbitte, TD, Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, on foot of a Government decision. In line with the Government decision, the Panel was asked to oversee the integrity of a process to be undertaken by EirGrid to report on the Grid West (GW) and Grid Link (GL) projects. That process is now underway and the Panel expects to be in a position to provide an opinion to the Minister on the GW project in January 2015. An opinion on the GL project is not expected to be provided until around end-July 2015.

While the North South Transmission Line project (N/S) is not covered by the Government's decision, the Panel agreed, on foot of a request by the Minister, to 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 N/S project.

The Panel has, since early May, been mainly focussed on the N/S project. Specifically, the Panel, on 7 May 2014, requested EirGrid to submit to the Panel an assessment of the extent to which, in EirGrid's view, the methodologies to be employed on the GW and GL projects are compatible with what has already been done on the N/S project. EirGrid submitted a report to the Panel on 29 May 2014. Having considered the report, the Panel then met with EirGrid on 10 June 2014 to discuss the report and relevant matters. Various matters requiring additional written material arose and EirGrid were requested to submit supplementary written material in response to those matters. EirGrid's supplementary material was submitted to the Panel on 19 June 2014. The Panel met to discuss the supplementary material on 30 June 2014.

Having considered and discussed all of the material, 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 Panel also notes that the N/S project 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.

Having provided this opinion to the Minister today, the Panel has now completed its consideration of the N/S project.

**ENDS**

Share

[Tweet](#)  
[Follow @DCENR](#)