

Celtic Interconnector

Volume 2B

Public and Landowner Consultation Report

**Prepared in accordance with Article 9(4) of the TEN-E
Regulation (No. 347/2013)**

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1 Introduction and Overview

1.1 Purpose of Report

This Volume 2B Public and Landowner Consultation Report has been prepared to accompany a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) planning application, and a Project of Common Interest (PCI) Application file, made by EirGrid plc (EirGrid) to An Bord Pleanála (the Board) in respect of that portion of the overall proposed Celtic Interconnector project located in Ireland.

This report also fulfills the requirements of Article 9(4) of the TEN-E Regulation (No. 347/2013) which states that:

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

The purpose of this report is to document the extent and nature of public, stakeholder and landowner consultation and participation that has taken place in Ireland over the course of the project’s development. This report demonstrates that EirGrid has endeavoured to ensure the widest possible access by the public, stakeholder and landowners to information about the project at all stages of its pre-planning development.

In this regard, it is considered that the consultation undertaken in respect of the Celtic Interconnector fully meets the requirements of the Aarhus Convention, Codified EIA Directive and Irish national legislation.

1.2 Introduction to EirGrid

EirGrid is the Irish electricity Transmission System Operator (TSO), responsible for ensuring a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity, now and in the future.

EirGrid develops, manages and operates the electricity transmission grid. This brings power from where it is generated to where it is needed throughout Ireland. The grid supplies power to industry and businesses that use large amounts of electricity. The grid also powers the distribution network. This supplies the electricity used every day in homes, businesses, schools, hospitals and farms.

EirGrid is also mandated to explore and develop opportunities to interconnect the transmission grid with the transmission grids in other countries. In 2011 EirGrid completed the East West Interconnector, a 500 MW high-voltage connection between Ireland and mainland Great Britain. The North South Interconnector between Northern Ireland and Ireland is currently under development.

In addition, Ireland has an existing privately-owned and operated 500 MW interconnector linking Co. Antrim in Northern Ireland to Scotland. Furthermore, a proposed privately-owned interconnector is planned to link the South East of the country to Wales.

1.3 The Celtic Interconnector

The Celtic Interconnector is a proposed link between the Irish and the French electricity grids. It is being jointly developed by EirGrid and the French TSO, Réseau de Transport d'Électricité (RTE). When completed it will enable the movement of electricity between Ireland and France, and vice versa, and will be Ireland's sole interconnection with the European Union, following the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

The Celtic Interconnector consists of a proposed High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) 700 megawatt (MW) connection between the 400 kV substation at La Martyre (Finistère, France) and the existing 220 kV substation at Knockraha (Co. Cork, Ireland). The total cable length is approximately 575km, of which approximately 500km is subsea.

This project has been subject to collaboration and cooperation between the two project partners for many years, with a commitment from the outset to develop the project in close consultation and engagement with the many stakeholders involved.

As outlined in more detail in Volume 2A (Planning Report) of the application particulars, the Celtic Interconnector was designated in 2013 as a Project of Common Interest (PCI) for the North Seas Countries Offshore Grid Initiative ('NSCOGI') priority corridor under the TEN-E Regulation¹. The TEN-E Regulation seeks to modernise and expand Europe's energy infrastructure and to interconnect networks across borders to meet the European Union's core energy policy objectives of competitiveness, sustainability and security of supply. The project has retained its PCI designation during subsequent reviews on a bi-annual basis since 2013 and most recently in 2019.

The European Commission sees increased interconnection as a key step towards achieving a more integrated electricity system and, as a designated PCI, considers the Celtic Interconnector to be an important contributor to achieving such integration.

As also outlined in more detail in Volume 2A of the application particulars, the Irish Programme for Government states the Government's support for the Celtic Interconnector, which in addition to connecting Ireland to Europe's energy grid will also facilitate increased competition in the electricity market, enhance security of supply and help Ireland to reach its goal of sourcing at least 70% of electricity from renewable sources by 2030. This is a cornerstone of the Government's plans to meet Ireland's future climate commitments and the key driver behind EirGrid's corporate strategy.

¹ Regulation (EU) No. 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2013 on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure and repealing Decision No. 1364/2006/EC and amending Regulations (EC) No 713/2009, (EC) No 714/2009 and (EC) No 715/2009. The TEN-E Regulation can be accessed at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32013R0347>

2 Context for Public, Stakeholder and Landowner Engagement

2.1 Public and Landowner Engagement in Context

EirGrid is committed to public and landowner engagement as an integral part of its project development process. This approach is informed by national and European requirements and enhanced by EirGrid's organisational commitment to best practice in this area.

Throughout the project development process for the Celtic Interconnector, EirGrid has consulted with National, regional and local stakeholders, communities, landowners, and members of the public concerned, all in accordance with legislative and formal guideline requirements for best practice, including:

- The Aarhus Convention;
- The Project of Common Interest Process;
- The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive; and,
- Irish legislation.

2.2 The Aarhus Convention²

The Aarhus Convention is an international treaty which both the EU and Ireland signed up to in 1998. More specifically, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters was adopted on 25th June 1998 at the Fourth Ministerial Conference as part of the "Environment for Europe" process.

The EU ratified the Aarhus Convention in February 2005. Ireland ratified the Convention in June 2012. Prior to ratification, Ireland had fully implemented the provisions of the Aarhus Convention and the related EU Directives, Directive 2003/4/EC on Public Access to Environmental Information and Directive 2003/35/EC on Public Participation.

The Aarhus Convention lays down a set of basic rules to promote citizens' involvement in environmental matters and improve enforcement of environmental law. The Aarhus Convention comprises three pillars:

- Access to environmental information,
- Participation in the environmental decision-making process, and
- Access to justice in environmental matters.

² The Aarhus Convention was adopted in Aarhus, Denmark on 25 June 1998. It entered into force on 30 October 2001. The European Union became a signatory and a Party to the Convention in 1998 and since 2005 it has applied to all EU Institutions. By April 2013 there were 45 countries Parties to the Convention, plus the European Union.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) document, *The Aarhus Convention: An Implementation Guide* (Second Edition, 2014) represents best practice in respect of how to consult with members of the public on major projects. This document was central to the consultation process developed by EirGrid in 2017 and applied by the Celtic Interconnector project (please refer to EirGrid's Six-Step Grid Development Process in Section 2.7 below).

2.3 Projects of Common Interest (PCIs)

Projects of Common Interest (PCIs) are key cross-border infrastructure projects that link the energy systems of EU countries. They are intended to help the EU achieve its energy policy and climate objectives: affordable, secure and sustainable energy for all citizens, and the long-term decarbonisation of the economy in accordance with the Paris Agreement³.

The regulations regarding designation of PCIs were adopted on 21st March 2013 and entered into force on 1st June 2013. Under Article 3(4) of the Regulation, the European Commission is empowered to adopt delegated acts to establish the union list of PCIs. This list forms an Annex to the Regulation.

The Commission Delegated Regulation 1391/2013, issued on the 14th October 2013, identified the projects forming part of the first union list of PCIs⁴ which included the Celtic Interconnector in the Annex to the Delegated Regulation under the heading "1. Priority electricity corridor Northern Seas offshore grid ('NSOG')"⁵.

As a PCI, and without prejudice to any requirements under the Aarhus and Espoo Conventions and relevant Union law, all parties involved in the permit granting process for a PCI project are obliged to follow the principles for public participation set out in the Guidelines in Article 9 of the TEN-E Regulation, and specifically Annex VI(3) thereof. EirGrid's activities to fulfil these needs are detailed in a Concept for Public Participation document shared with and accepted by the PCI Competent Authority in Ireland in July 2020 – see Section 2.4 below.

2.4 Concept for Public Participation (CPP)

The Concept for Public Participation (CPP) document sets out the public participation measures for the Celtic Interconnector project's permit granting and public participation phase in Ireland in reference to, and in accordance with, the PCI requirements. It should be noted that this CPP applied to the PCI project in Ireland - the public participation

³ The Paris Agreement is a **legally binding international treaty on climate change**. It was adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 in Paris, on 12 December 2015 and entered into force on 4 November 2016. It can be accessed at: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/international/negotiations/paris_en

⁴ TEN-E Regulation

⁵ "1.6 PCI France – Ireland interconnection between La Martyre (FR) and Great Island or Knockraha (IE)"

measures relating to the overall Celtic Interconnector project in the UK and France are detailed by way of separate CPPs for those jurisdictions.

In fulfilment of the requirements of Article 9(3) and Annex VI of the TEN-E Regulation, the CPP sets out the necessary information and measures that EirGrid has undertaken prior to the submission of the CPP, and further planned public consultation on the project in Ireland in order to ensure a high level of public participation in the project.

Under the TEN-E Regulation, EirGrid was required to submit a CPP to An Bord Pleanála (as competent authority for PCI in Ireland), and this was done on 24th April 2020. An Bord Pleanála approved the CPP on 6th July 2020. A copy of the CPP is available on the EirGrid's project specific website and is also contained in Appendix A of this report⁶.

A copy of the information leaflet that was produced in accordance with Annex VI (5) of the TEN-E Regulation is contained in Appendix B of this report.

2.5 The EIA Directive

As a member of the EU, Ireland has been obliged to comply with the EIA Directive since 2005. Under the EIA Directive 2011/98/EU, it is necessary to carry out an assessment of the likely impacts of a project on human beings.

The EIA Directive 2014/52/EU amended the provisions of the EIA Directive 2011/98/EU. The amendments that were introduced to the text of the EIA Directive reflect the Aarhus Convention public participation requirements. For example, the definitions of *'the public'* and *'the public concerned'*⁷ as set out in Articles 2(4) and 2(5) of the Aarhus Convention are incorporated into the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU by Articles 1(2)(d) and (e), respectively. In addition, amendments made to Article 6 of the EIA Directive set out the minimum requirements for effective public participation.

The aim of Articles 6(2) and 6(3) of the Directive is to ensure that the public will be informed of matters early in the environmental decision-making procedure, and that the relevant information and documents are made available to the public concerned. This includes making information available electronically as well as by public notices or by other appropriate means.

The substantive provisions ensure that the public concerned will be given *"early and effective opportunities to participate"* in environmental decision-making procedures for consent to projects and, for that purpose, the public concerned is entitled to express comments and opinions when all options are open to the competent authority, before the decision on the request for development consent is taken.

⁶ <https://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-Project-Concept-for-Public-Participation-EirGrid-2020.pdf>

⁷ The 'public concerned' means the public affected or likely to be affected by, or having an interest in, the environmental decision-making; for the purposes of this definition non-governmental organisations promoting environmental protection and meeting any requirements under national law shall be deemed to have an interest.

2.6 National Law and Best Practice

As a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID), prospective applicants must enter the pre-application consultation with An Bord Pleanála in relation to a proposed development, as stipulated under Section 182E of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). In this process, the Board can advise the prospective applicants, and gather information and clarifications as the development matures.

EirGrid attended a number of such pre-application consultation meetings with the Strategic Infrastructure division of the Board.

The requirements of the Public Participation Directive (2003/35/EC) in relation to applications for development consent for proposed electricity transmission projects are reflected in Irish law by, *inter alia*, section 182A(4) of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as inserted, and Article 212 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001, as amended. These provisions require a notice of the nature and location of the proposed development to be published and prescribe the contents of such notice, which include an invitation for submissions and observations to be made to the Board relating to:

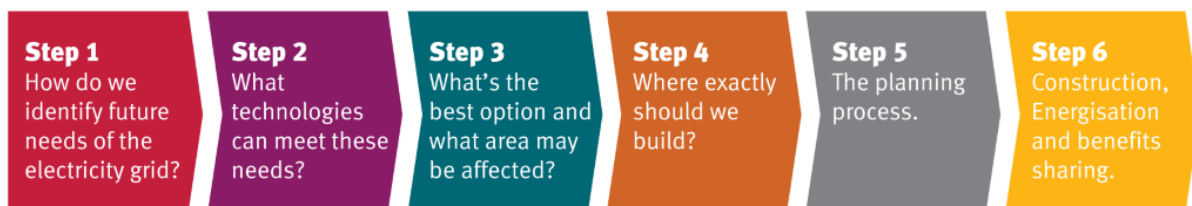
- The implications of the proposed development for proper planning and sustainable development in the area or areas concerned; and,
- The likely effects on the environment or adverse effects on the integrity of a European site, as the case may be, of the proposed development.

This is provided for in the application particulars and the SID application process.

2.7 EirGrid's Six-Step Grid Development Process

In reference to the provisions of the TEN-E Regulation and the Aarhus Convention, and in compliance with industry best practice, EirGrid has developed a six-step approach to public participation and stakeholder engagement in the development of its projects.

Figure 2.1: EirGrid's Six-Step Grid Development Process



Source: EirGrid

This approach is based upon values of honesty, social responsibility and integrity. EirGrid undertakes to ensure that our consulting process:

- Communicates proposals clearly in an understandable way, both online and on paper (using Plain English);
- Allows sufficient time for respondents to consider information and provide comment,

- Ensures that anyone who wishes to comment is able to do so;
- Provides clear opportunities to engage with EirGrid;
- Provides an explanation of the decisions that are made;
- Communicates with everyone who has engaged with EirGrid and provides feedback on how their feedback was considered, as well as the outcome of our decision;
- And that EirGrid staff treat everyone on every project with honesty and respect; and,
- This approach is intended to deliver open and transparent engagement and consultation with EirGrid's stakeholders and communities.

2.7.1 EirGrid's approach to engagement

EirGrid's approach to engagement is tailored to suit a particular project or initiative. A bespoke engagement plan is used for each key project or initiative, identifying the channels to be used to provide information and notification to the stakeholders and facilitating the evolution of these methods as the project develops. These methods can include email contact, project brochures and updates, targeted social media content, advertising in local and national press, letters to landowners and statutory bodies, providing spokespeople for discussions on public radio, providing phone lines and conducting webinars.

The process also typically includes promotion in public locations and open days in the local area where members of the public can meet the experts and have their queries addressed. Stakeholders are invited to provide feedback in multiple formats including feedback forms online and at open days, through fora and webinars and by email or letter. Stakeholders can also engage directly with Community Liaison and Agricultural Liaison Officers.

As illustrated by Figure 2.1 above, Step 1 to Step 4 of a project's development is the period when EirGrid proactively engages and consults with all stakeholders to develop informed decisions. Step 5 aligns with the planning process for an SID application to An Bord Pleanála. As per the requirements of Section 182A(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, EirGrid is required to inform the public of the intention to lodge the application and detail how submissions can be raised on the application.

All of the public engagement documentation published to date is available on EirGrid's project specific website for the Celtic Interconnector project⁸ – please refer to Appendix E which sets out the contents of this website. Table 2.1 summarises the number of views on this website over the project development steps 3 – 5 which demonstrates its effectiveness as a consultation tool. EirGrid continues to engage and inform the public and stakeholders during Step 5 through their project specific website.

⁸ <https://www.eirgridgroup.com/the-grid/projects/celtic-interconnector/related-documents/>

Table 2.1 Summary of No. of Views on EirGrid’s Dedicated Celtic Interconnector Website

https://www.eirgridgroup.com/the-grid/projects/celtic-interconnector/the-project/
1st Jan 2018 to 31st Dec 2018
- Total page-views: 7,826 - Spike in May 2018: 1,720
1st Jan 2019 to 31st Dec 2019
- Total page-views: 12,260 - Spike in May 2019: 1,541 - Spike in Oct 2019: 1,890 - Spike in Nov 2019: 1,656
1st Jan 2020 to 31st Dec 2020
- Total page-views: 9,047 - Spike in Nov 2020: 1,162
https://www.eirgridgroup.com/the-grid/projects/celtic-interconnector/whats-happening-now/
1st Jan 2018 to 31st Dec 2018
- Total page-views: 2,525 - Spike in May 2018: 309
1st Jan 2019 to 31st Dec 2019
- Total page-views: 6,933 - Spike in Nov 2019: 1,497
1st Jan 2020 to 31st Dec 2020
- Total page-views: 4,452 - Spike in May 2020: 538 - Spike in Nov 2020: 709

The “.eu Website” for the project (<https://www.celticinterconnector.eu/>) (see Section 8.2.1) also facilitates the provision of international communications regarding the project. In addition, a dedicated SID project website has been created for the SID planning application (<https://eirgridcelticinterconnector.ie>). EirGrid will continue to consult and engage with project stakeholders throughout the planning application process, and subsequently throughout the construction phase (Step 6), to ensure that any impacts to local communities during construction are minimised as far as possible.

2.7.2 Receipt of Irish Planning Institute Award 2018 for the Six-Step Process

In February 2018, EirGrid received an Award from the IPI in the ‘Participation and Engagement’ category for the Six-Step Process. While winning this award demonstrates that the process is highly regarded by industry, it was developed in order to set out EirGrid’s desire to develop the national grid in a transparent and inclusive manner with communities and stakeholders.

2.7.3 The Impact of COVID-19⁹

In 2020, the required public response to COVID-19 saw limitations placed on EirGrid’s teams in their ability to engage face to face with stakeholders. In response, supplementary engagement activities took place including print advertisements, additional online project information material and increased use of contact via letter together with the addition of new online methods to the toolkit for engagement. These included the use of online meetings and public webinars in order to continue stakeholder engagement. Printed media advertisements were taken out in local and national press in May 2020 and again in November 2020, and replicated on social media platforms in order to maintain public awareness of the project and invite direct contact from stakeholders¹⁰.

2.8 Project’s Receipt of the ‘2020 Renewables Grid Initiative Good Practice of the Year Award’ for Communication and Engagement

In October 2020, the Celtic Interconnector project received the Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI) Good Practice Award in the Communication and Engagement category. Figure 2.2 was taken the day that the CEO of EirGrid accepted this award.

The Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI) is a unique collaboration of NGOs and TSOs from across Europe united to promote fair, transparent, sustainable grid development to enable the growth of renewables and to achieve full decarbonisation in line with the Paris Agreement.

The award recognised how EirGrid applied its bespoke Six-Step Grid Development Process to the project, which allowed the approach to stakeholder consultation for the Celtic Interconnector project to be continuously evaluated and improved upon in line with stakeholder needs. Of particular note by the jury panel was the commencement of engagement and consultation with stakeholders at an early stage of project development.

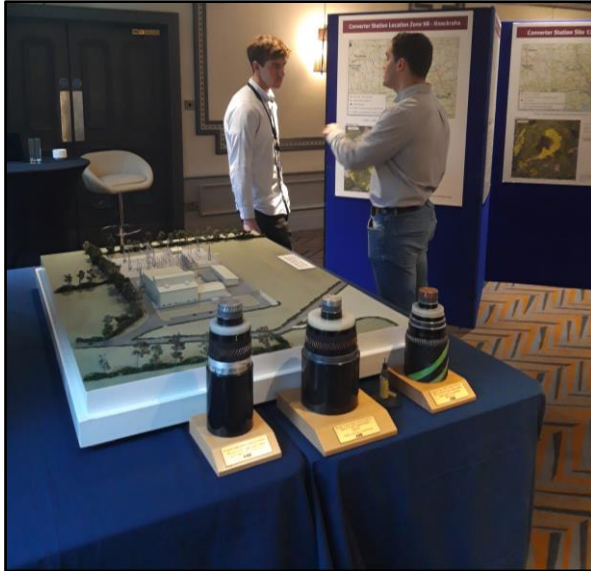
This early commencement allowed for good levels of feedback which was responded to by the development of a holistic communication and engagement approach. This

⁹ i.e. Coronavirus is an infectious disease that emerged in December 2019 and became a global pandemic.

¹⁰ See Appendix C Advertisements

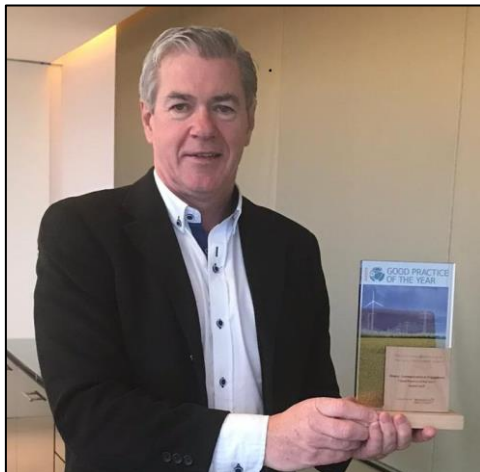
approach evolved to include a diverse set of high-quality measures such as 3D visualisation technology and architectural models.

Figure 2.2: Cable Samples and Architectural model of EWIC Converter station and 3D visualisation technology sample area



These were used to show the project's visual impact in the community. Other methods used to enhance consultation included the appointment of a dedicated Community Liaison Officer and demonstration of Electro Magnetic Frequencies (EMF) as experienced in traditional household settings, with a view to addressing people's concerns, and providing information in the context of the project at public open events.

Figure 2.3: Mark Foley, CEO EirGrid Group accepting the 2020 Renewables Grid Initiative Good Practice of the Year Award' for Communication and Engagement for the Celtic Interconnector project



2.9 Project Communications Team

In recognition of the strategic importance of the project and the importance of local communication and engagement, EirGrid appointed a dedicated Community Liaison Officer (CLO) to the project in 2018. This helped establish good communication channels between communities and other stakeholders and the project team. In addition, the project continues to be supported by the internal communications and public engagement team at EirGrid.

In addition to the CLO, the project also benefits from the focus of EirGrid's experienced Agricultural Liaison Officers (ALOs). ALOs have the expert knowledge to facilitate them in liaising with landowners, in particular those engaged in farming, as well as any landowner whose property is directly impacted by the project development. ALOs have been engaging with stakeholders throughout the project development, but in particular since 2018 within Step 3 and 4 of the Six-Step process.

To ensure best-in-class consultation and engagement analysis and methodologies, EirGrid appointed Traverse in 2019, an independent consultancy specialising in consultation analysis, to assist with the consultation process, analyse responses to the consultation and report on their findings.

Other agencies and internal personnel are used on an ad hoc basis in response to project requirements.

3 Public Participation and Stakeholder Engagement

3.1 Approach to consultation and public participation

Our approach to consultation and public participation is driven by EirGrid's commitment to the Six-Step grid development process, as outlined in Section 2.7 above.

At each step, a series of activities are carried out in order to inform, engage and consult with stakeholders and facilitate their participation in the project development process.

3.2 Step 1

The objective in Step 1 is for the project need to be confirmed and explained to representatives and interest groups.

3.2.1 Project Actions

In November 2009, EirGrid published the '*Interconnector Economic Feasibility Report*'¹¹. This report identified an interconnector with France as a viable opportunity to connect to Europe and initiated the project concept that was to evolve into the Celtic Interconnector.

In 2011, the PCI status of the Celtic Interconnector under Delegated Regulation (EU) 1391/2013 was granted by the EU. Over the next five years feasibility studies were completed and supported financially by the EU Commission.

The first PCI list was published in October 2013, and the Celtic Interconnector was included. This inclusion would mean that the project would benefit from:

- Defined planning and permit granting procedures (capped at 3.5 years),
- A single national competent authority that would act as a one-stop-shop for permit granting procedures,
- Fewer administrative costs for the project promoters and authorities due to a more streamlined environmental assessment procedure, whilst respecting the requirements of EU law,
- Increased transparency and improved public participation,
- Increased visibility and attractiveness for investors thanks to an enhanced regulatory framework where costs are allocated to the countries that benefit most from a completed project, and
- The possibility to receive financial support under the €5.85 billion Connecting Europe Facility.

¹¹ www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Interconnection_Economic_Feasibility_Report.pdf

A marine route investigation was conducted in 2014 / 2015 with further feasibility studies completed in 2016. These studies were published on the EirGrid website and reported on in the media¹². The initial studies considered the viability of linking the two previously unconnected markets through a long-distance subsea cable that would link La Martyre in Brittany with either the Great Island 220 kV substation in Co Wexford or the 220 kV substation at Knockraha, Co Cork.

The studies were awarded almost €4 million in funding by the European Commission. Following their successful completion, in July 2016, a Memorandum of Understanding between RTE and EirGrid was signed to develop further the cooperation between France and Ireland on this project¹³. It was signed by President Francois Hollande and An Taoiseach Enda Kenny and reported on in the Irish and European media.

Figure 3.1: 21st July 2016 François Hollande and An Taoiseach Enda Kenny signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)



3.2.2 Stakeholder and Landowner Participation

The period from project conception to 2016 was prior to the launch of EirGrid's Six-Step process for grid development projects, which was launched in 2016. Notwithstanding this, high level liaison and cooperation at government levels continued in order to build a solid platform for subsequent project cooperation and development. Once launched the Celtic Interconnector was aligned to Step 2 of the process.

Media exposure derived from the strategic importance of the project was useful in raising the public profile of the project in the early stages of development¹⁴.

¹² <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/energy-and-resources/4m-given-to-investigate-french-irish-electricity-link-1.2284878>

¹³ IRISH TIMES 03.06.2012 EirGrid considers Ireland-France electricity interconnector

¹⁴ <https://www.siliconrepublic.com/comms/celtic-interconnector-ireland-france-electricity-cable>

Interest in the project was accentuated by its inclusion on the PCI list with reports made available to the public on the company website.

3.3 Step 2

The objective in Step 2 is for a number of technical solutions to be considered with the objective of shortlisting feasible options.

3.3.1 Project Actions

In July 2016, the Initial Design and Pre-Consultation phase of the Celtic Interconnector was launched. As part of this phase EirGrid in partnership with Réseau de Transport d'Electricité (RTE), the French transmission system operator and project partner, undertook to complete:

- Additional marine surveys in order to provide a clearer picture of routing options for the project;
- Consultation activities in order to get feedback on plans to date, and in preparation for the statutory consultation and consenting processes;
- Further cost benefit analysis to ensure the benefits for France and Ireland are clear and robust; and,
- Initial preparation for the procurement process.

A joint assessment of the feasibility of the Celtic Interconnector project had already been completed. This included a detailed suite of marine surveys, marine engineering studies, and a technical assessment. These assessments concluded that there were feasible options for the various onshore elements of the project and a feasible marine route between Ireland and France was identified.

At this point the studies also revealed the best option for the Celtic Interconnector was to connect to the existing Irish transmission system at East Cork.

It was communicated via the project pages on the company website that the Initial Design and Pre-Consultation phase did not represent a commitment to construct the interconnector and that initial design work as well as further studies of the marine environment close to the shore, landing points for a subsea cable and connection points to the electricity transmission grid, amongst other studies would be required.

To inform and engage stakeholders a project update brochure was developed and made available in digital and printed format containing a summary of the assessments to date and instructions regarding how to provide feedback. The summary confirmed that:

- The project was feasible;
- The best performing option was to connect to France from East Cork;

- That a shortlist of options for landfall locations had been identified; and,
- That the best performing connection point was the 220 kV substation at Knockraha.

In January 2018, it was established that additional studies would be needed along the coast of East Cork. An application for a Foreshore License was submitted to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in order to carry out these surveys.

A copy of the application, the relevant maps, plans, reports and drawings, were made available in Garda stations in Youghal, Ballycotton and Midleton, Co Cork. Advertisements were also placed in the Evening Echo and Irish Examiner on 18th January 2018 announcing the public consultation phase of the Foreshore Licence application.

The application was made available on the Department's website. It opened on 18th January 2018 and closed on 16th February 2018. Subsequently additional geotechnical and environmental marine surveys were carried out in May 2018.

On 5th February 2018, EirGrid announced East Cork as being the most suitable location for the Celtic Interconnector. The announcement was made at a meeting hosted by the Cork Chamber of Commerce and attended by local and national elected representatives and other stakeholders.

3.3.2 Stakeholder and Landowner Participation

In addition to ongoing liaison with government departments and other such stakeholders including Cork County Council, specific engagements were held with local community and fishery groups during Step 2 including meetings with:

- The Knockraha Community Association on 15th May 2017
- The Ballycotton Fisherman's Association on 17th July 2017

Members of the EirGrid team presented the project to the Southern Regional Assembly in Waterford in October 2017 and the East Cork Municipal District Meeting in Midleton in November 2017. These meetings placed additional information on the project in the public arena; ensuring elected representatives were kept informed of progress on the project and were able to communicate directly with the project team.

Industry and state bodies were also engaged with including:

- Engineers Ireland;
- the Industrial Development Agency (IDA); and,
- Energy Cork.

This served to continue to raise the project profile amongst a diverse audience.

Participation in Step 2 therefore extended to engagement with statutory bodies and professional organisations.

Public engagement was addressed via direct contact with community organisations and elected representatives and added promotion and visibility amongst the general public was achieved via media coverage.

3.4 Step 3

In Step 3, technology options were considered in more detail. Broad study areas were identified, within which options for routes and the locations for infrastructure would be considered. Information was provided to stakeholders including on the methods used to analyse the technology options and study areas.

3.4.1 Project Activities

Step 3 was launched on 5th February 2018 at a meeting hosted by the Cork Chamber of Commerce. The meeting was attended by elected representatives and project stakeholders.

At the meeting, East Cork was confirmed as the best performing connection point for the project.

Following this decision, an information and engagement campaign to raise the project's profile in the identified project area commenced.

3.4.2 Mobile Information Unit

On 9th and 10th May 2018, EirGrid held drop-in sessions in its Mobile Information Unit (MIU) in Midleton and Youghal in Co. Cork. These sessions were advertised in local print media and online.¹⁵ The MIU was located at busy commuter locations on the Main Street in both Midleton and Youghal and were accessible to the public.

Over the course of two days, members of the project team met with stakeholders to discuss the project and respond to people's issues and questions. The mobile information unit was staffed by:

- Public engagement team members; and,
- Members of the Celtic Interconnector project team including onshore and offshore project managers.

¹⁵ See Appendix C for sample advertisements

Figure 3.2: Members of the Project Team at Main Street Midleton, May 2018

The MIU presence was advertised via radio interview on Community Radio Youghal (CRY104FM) in the days before the event.

Emails were sent alerting Community groups in East Cork to the event via the Public Participation Networks (PPN) email outreach.

Stakeholders met included members of the public and representatives of local community organisations.

3.4.3 Open Evenings

Subsequent to the Mobile Information Unit community events, a programme of information evenings was held in communities within the project study area. In 2018 public meetings to discuss the Celtic Interconnector project were held at:

- Glounthaune Church Centre Wednesday 26th September 2018
- Knockraha Community Centre Wednesday 26th September 2018
- Carrigwohill Community Hall Thursday 4th October 2018
- Lisgoold Community Hall Thursday 4th October 2018
- Youghal, Cumann na Daoine Hall Monday 3rd December 2018
- Cloyne Community Hall Friday 7th December 2018

The meetings were advertised in local media and promoted widely on social media sites including:

- EirGrid project pages;
- EirGrid social media platforms;
- Local community organisations' Facebook pages; and
- Facebook pages of local elected representatives.

The events were also promoted by email to all elected representatives and the local Public Participation Network (PPN) of community organisations.

The purpose of these events was to inform the general public and project stakeholders on the project. The options presented were in respect of:

- The converter station, the key over ground construction element of the project; and,
- The landfall locations.

14 feasible converter station location zones were presented to stakeholders for comment, each zone denoting an area of approximately 2km radius, as well as 5 landfall options.

Feedback forms were made available at the open evenings to gather commentary.

On 3rd September 2018, EirGrid gave an update to local elected representatives at the meetings of the East Cork and the Cobh-Glanmire Municipal Districts.

Meetings were also held with representatives of the Ballycotton Fisherman's Association (4th October 2018) and Youghal Fisherman's Association (13th November 2018).

An update was given to the Cork Regional Division of Engineers Ireland in the Rochestown Park Hotel on 13th November 2018.

3.4.4 Additional Activities

Additional activities and events where the general public interacted with EirGrid staff and could learn more about the Celtic Interconnector project included:

- Door to Door visits from EirGrid personnel to project area stakeholders.
- June 15th - 16th 2019 Cork Summer Show, with EirGrid staff available in the Mobile Information Unit for the duration of the event. The event was promoted nationally.
- July 12th – 14th 2019 Sponsorship of the Youghal Queen of the Sea Festival, with EirGrid staff available in the Mobile Information Unit for the duration of the event. The event was promoted locally in the East Cork area.
- Sep 17th- 19th 2019 National Ploughing Festival, with EirGrid available at a dedicated stand. The event was promoted nationally.

3.4.5 Step 3 Consultation

A formal Step 3 consultation was launched on the 11th April for eight weeks, closing on the 10th June 2019. This consultation considered a shortlist of three landfall locations

- Ballinwilling Strand, East Cork
- Claycastle Beach, Youghal
- Redbarn Beach Youghal

And six converter station location zones in East Cork, including:

- Ballyadam
- Leamlara
- Knockraha
- Pigeon Hill
- Kilquane
- Balyvatta

Landowners in the Converter Station location Zones (c. 300) and in proximity to the shortlisted landfall locations (c. 270) were advised by letter that these areas were being considered zones as suitable for key infrastructural elements of the project and informed of the consultation dates. Letters were also sent to existing stakeholders whose details were registered on the project's database, statutory bodies and elected representatives (local councillors, TDs, MEPs).

Advertisements were placed in local and national newspapers and on social media including social media pages of community organisations and elected representatives and notifications sent via email to the PPN network in East Cork.

EirGrid published its assessments and supporting information on the proposed shortlist of converter station location zones and landfall location options for consultation on 11th April 2019 via the following documents:

- Offshore Constraints Report
- Onshore Constraints Report and Mapping
- Strategic Social Impact Assessment Scoping Report
- Step 3 - Performance Matrix Assessments
- Project Update Brochure - Step 3 Consultation (Spring 2019)

Feedback was invited via an online feedback form, in person at the advertised public meetings, by phone, email or in writing.

3.4.6 Stakeholder and Landowner Participation

The objectives of the initial engagement activities embarked on in 2018 included:

- Raising the project profile;
- Informing stakeholders;
- Gathering feedback and additional local information; and,
- Promoting access to further project information and documentation.

During this period, the EirGrid team engaged with the public through phone, feedback forms, emails, open days, public events and meetings. Media coverage also contributed

to raising the level of public awareness. Feedback was gathered by means of a physical feedback form completed at the information evenings, verbally by phone and in conversation with stakeholders and by email. Attendance at these information events was satisfactory with some venues getting higher attendance than others. Feedback received was informative for the project team and their ongoing assessments.

The Step 3 consultation followed the information and engagement campaign and was widely advertised and promoted.

Step 3 consultation participation was facilitated through:

- Phone
- Face to face meetings
- Open evenings

And online, through:

- Email
- Online consultation forms

On the forms used to capture feedback, respondents were asked how important it was to consider 13 distinct aspects of the proposals, including air quality, the local economy and the historic environment, when choosing a landfall location. They were also invited to comment on three shortlisted locations for landfall:

- Claycastle Beach;
- Ballinwilling Strand; and
- Redbarn Beach.

Respondents were asked to give their views on twelve aspects of the proposals that could influence the site selection for a converter station location zone and were invited to comment on six shortlisted zones:

- Zone 1 – Ballyadam;
- Zone 6 – Leamlara;
- Zone 9 – Knockraha;
- Zone 10 – Pigeon Hill;
- Zone 12 - Kilquane; and
- Zone 14 – Ballyvatta.

Respondents were able to respond by completing an online response form, submitting a letter, sending an email, or holding conversations with EirGrid representatives at consultation events¹⁶.

¹⁶ Please see Appendix D for a copy of the Online Consultation Form

In total 1,037 responses were received as a result of the consultation process. These included 113 records of engagement with the EirGrid team at consultation events and 770 campaign responses that contained pre-written identical text, with some respondents adding their own comments to the campaign template. Five different campaigns were identified, focusing on concerns relating to three of the proposed converter station location zones: Zone 6 – Leamlara, Zone 10 – Pigeon Hill and Zone 14 – Ballyvatta.

Respondents offered various views on the project: Whereas some respondents expressed support for the project, saying that it is a necessary measure to secure Ireland's energy supply, other respondents discussed the potential negative impact the project could have on specific landfall locations and converter station location zones.

All views were captured and reported on in the 'Celtic Interconnector Project Step 3 Consultation Report'¹⁷ published in August 2019.

In addition to the consultations, detailed meetings were also held with numerous statutory bodies including:

- PCI Unit of An Bord Pleanála;
- SID Unit of An Bord Pleanála;
- Cork County Council (numerous Departments);
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (Foreshore Unit);
- Department of Environment, Climate and Communications;
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII);
- National Parks and Wildlife Service – Development Application Unit;
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- The Commission for the Regulation of Utilities (CRU);
- Irish Rail;
- Irish Water;
- IDA; and,
- Inland Fisheries Ireland.

Following the close of the consultation, a Consultation Report and Consultation Response Document was published online. The Consultation report summarised respondents' views on the overall project, the proposed shortlist of Landfall Locations and Converter Station Location Zones, other proposed infrastructure (for example cables) and the consultation process itself. These responses were separated into benefits, concerns and suggestions and organised by theme.

¹⁷ https://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector_Step-3_Consultation-Report_030919-FINAL-FINAL.pdf

A number of common themes were raised in the majority of submissions. These were:

- Noise;
- Health;
- Visual impact;
- Farming and land use; and,
- Traffic and road network.

The Consultation Response Document commented on these themes providing additional information to address stakeholder concerns as identified during the consultation. Questions answered in the response document¹⁸ included:

- How will the project be funded?
- How will this impact on the local economy?
- Will the fibre optic cable be of local benefit?
- Will there be more energy infrastructure developed close to the interconnector in the years to come?
- How will the interconnector connect to the Knockraha substation?
- How many cables are there?
- Why was the Knockraha substation chosen as the most suitable connection point?
- Will the local electricity system be affected?
- Will the outcomes of the studies which have been carried out to date be published?
- Will it bring in nuclear energy from France?
- Will this project impact on planning applications in the area in the future?
- Are the forestry sites being considered suitable for a project of this nature?
- Will there be any impacts on local ecology?
- Will the cable be buried or laid on the seabed?
- How many other cables will have to be crossed over in the sea?
- Will the project impact on surrounding marine life?
- Will the project affect the potential for archaeological work at Claycastle Beach?
- Will the project interfere with local radio signals?

Further information was also made available to address concerns specific to:

- Electro Magnetic Fields (EMFs);

¹⁸ <https://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-Step-3-Consultation-Response-Document.pdf>

- Water Quality; and,
- Air Quality.

At the close of the consultation, EirGrid published a ‘*Step 3 Preferred Options Report*’ dated August 2019 on the EirGrid website¹⁹ along with a separate ‘*Project Update Brochure - Step 3 Consultation (Spring 2019)*’²⁰ that summarised the Preferred Options Report and confirmed the shortlisted locations which concerned 6 converter station zones and 3 landfall locations (please see Volume 3C Part 2 Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) Appendices for Chapter 1 regarding Alternatives Considered that are included as part of the application).

3.5 Step 4

In Step 4, detailed routes and sites are developed that specify the exact position of any new equipment and infrastructure. Information is provided to stakeholders on how the sites were chosen and on what assessments have been carried out.

3.5.1 Project Activities

In November 2019, EirGrid communicated an Emerging Best Performing Option (EBPO) for the landfall option, three options for the converter station location with one emerging best performing option, and proposed underground cable routes. This information was made public on the project pages of the EirGrid website. The information published included:

- Step 4A Consultant’s Development Options Report²¹;
- Claycastle - Landfall location and cable route map;
- Kilquane - Converter station option and cable route map;
- Knockraha - Converter station option and cable route map;
- Ballyadam - Converter station option and cable route map; and,
- Project Update Brochure - Step 4 Consultation (Winter 2019 - 2020)²².

3.5.2 Open Evenings

Seven Open Evenings were scheduled to facilitate stakeholders throughout the East Cork project area including:

¹⁹ <https://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Step-3-Preferred-Options-Report.pdf>

²⁰ <https://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/EirGrid-Celtic-Interconnector-Update-Spring-2019.pdf>

²¹ <https://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-Step-4A-Consultants-Development-Options-Report.pdf>

²² <https://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/EirGrid-Celtic-Interconnector-Project-Update-4-Proof-07-DOWNLOAD.pdf>

- Landfall communities;
- Communities on the DC and AC cable routes including agricultural areas, commuter towns and stakeholders using arterial route in the South East (N25); and,
- Mixed rural / commuter localities near the Study Area of the proposed converter station sites and system connection location.

The event locations were:

- Knockraha Community Centre: Monday 18th November 2019
- Carrigtwohill Community Hall: Tuesday 19th November 2019
- Midleton Park Hotel: Friday 22nd November 2019
- Midleton Park Hotel: Saturday 23rd November 2019
- Walter Raleigh Hotel, Youghal: Wednesday 27th November 2019
- Castlemartyr Resort Hotel: Thursday 28th November 2019
- Killeagh Community Centre: Friday 29th November 2019

The events were planned to inform and consult with the general public, stakeholders and landowners as to the project options. They were advertised in print media and online, with strong attendance at all locations.

In addition to the Open Evenings, meetings took place in Midleton and Cobh on 7th October 2019 with local elected representatives in the East Cork and the Cobh-Glanmire Municipal Districts, in order to present how the various assessments were being finalised.

Notification of the event locations and dates was sent by letter to registered landowners within the shortlisted converter station sites and in proximity to the shortlisted landfall location along with stakeholders who had registered to receive project updates. In addition, letters advising of the consultation were sent to statutory bodies and elected representatives (local councillors, TDs, MEPs).

Advertisements were placed in local and national newspapers and across social media. Email notification was issued to all email addressees registered with EirGid for updates and the PPN network.

At these Open Evenings, adapted and improved methods of communication and engagement were put into practice in response to learnings taken from the Step 3 Consultation. These included the use of visual communication methodologies.

3.5.3 Visual Communication

Previously in Step 3, an architectural model of the converter station as built for the East West Interconnector project had been displayed. This was a representative model, but it illustrated clearly what a converter station could look like. However, it was not intended to confirm what visual impact the Celtic Interconnector converter station would have on its receiving environment.

Rather, a virtual 3D model was built and used at the open evenings to show the view towards the converter station from any local point. This allowed a stakeholder to view the project from his / her own residence or place of business. This system allowed such views to be seen with and without tree cover and from various heights. It gave a more accurate representation, and addressed the visual concern from the perspective of any individual stakeholder. The technology required the use of 2 high speed computers which were set up for viewing at the open evenings. Stills could also be printed off for individual stakeholders. The landfall location was also represented.

3.5.4 Health Information

Health concerns in regard to electrical infrastructure are concerns for stakeholders. While material had been produced to educate stakeholders as to EMF in regard to electrical infrastructure including overhead line and substations, material relating specifically to underground cabling had not previously been available.

In response to concerns, a dedicated brochure was produced which clearly illustrated and treated EMF concerns in regard to underground cabling. It answered questions including:

- How do underground or undersea cables work?
- What magnetic field levels do alternating current underground power cables produce?
- What magnetic field levels do direct current underground power cables produce?

At the Step 4 consultation open evenings, a display dedicated to addressing EMF was manned by a specialist company²³. The display was a physical demonstration of how EMF works and illustrated the issue using, for example, household appliances and measuring the resulting EMF.

The objective was that the demonstration, alongside the improved written information, would help to address stakeholder concerns.

²³ <https://cei.ie/about-cei/company/>

3.5.5 Cable Samples

A sample of an Underground 400 kV HVAC, an underground 200 kV HVDC and a 200 kV HVDC subsea cable and a fibre optic cable were also available for inspection by stakeholders at the Step 3 and Step 4 open evenings.

3.5.6 Stakeholder and Landowner Participation

Over the course of the consultation, respondents were asked to give their views on the three emerging best performing options for a converter station site, namely:

- Site 1 – Ballyadam;
- Site 9b – Knockraha; and
- Site 12 – Kilquane.

Respondents were also asked to give their views on the emerging best performing option for a landfall location at Claycastle Beach, and the required underground cable routes. Respondents could also offer their views on any of the previously discussed options if they felt there was any new information to be considered, offer suggestions for groups to participate in any local advisory group convened to assist with engagement, comment on how a proposed community fund could be used, and provide feedback about the consultation process itself.

Events were well attended at all locations. Locations had been selected to optimise people's ability to attend one or more East Cork location at a convenient time.

3.5.7 Capturing Feedback

With regard to capturing feedback, respondents were able to complete an online response form, submit a letter, send an email, or hand in a hardcopy response form to an EirGrid representative at consultation events. Feedback was also taken by phone.

In total, 1,047 responses to the consultation were received, including 928 campaign responses that contained pre-written identical text, with some respondents adding their own comments to the campaign template.

Respondents offered various views on the overall project, with some supporting the ambition for greater interconnection with Europe. Others felt that the project was unnecessary and expressed concern about some European countries' use of nuclear power, as well as the perceived environmental impact of the project.

Respondents commented on the perceived environmental impact of the landfall location at Claycastle Beach, saying that the beach is currently undeveloped land, and that it should not be disturbed. They also commented on the proposed cable route and the distance of Claycastle Beach from the potential converter station sites and expressed concern that the need to lay underground cables to connect the converter station site could damage utilities and social amenities in the area surrounding the cable route.

Of the three converter station sites, Site 1 at Ballyadam was noted to be a site that was already zoned for industry and therefore not likely to disturb the surrounding communities; however, there was some concern that a large amount of AC cabling would be required to connect the site with the existing Knockraha substation, as this site is the furthest from the substation.

Converter station Site 9b at Knockraha was noted to be the closest to the existing substation and would therefore require the least amount of AC cabling. Respondents suggested that the surrounding landscape could be adjusted to help mitigate the potential noise impact once the converter station was operational. Conversely other respondents said that the site was elevated and exposed, and that development at this site would have a significant visual impact and potentially lead to further industrialisation of a rural area. Respondents also commented on other possible negative environmental impacts as well as potential damage to sites of historic interest.

Converter station Site 12 at Kilquane was noted to have a suitable landscape to provide visual screening of the converter station and to support noise mitigation measures. However there were concerns that using this site could lead to further industrialisation of a rural area, and that there could be negative environmental impacts and potential damage to sites of historic interest.

A common theme across all comments about potential converter station sites was that there would be very little benefit to the communities surrounding whichever site was chosen. Respondents who commented on the community fund generally supported the idea of investing in local community facilities to support a positive legacy from the project.

A summary of the responses to the Consultation was published in the Step 4 Celtic Interconnector Consultation Report²⁴.

3.5.8 Response to Step 4 Consultation

The consultation provided a lot of information which required to be taken into account as part of the ongoing project assessment process in 2020. Particular focus emerged from the consultation on the assessment process for the converter station site.

A number of respondents supported Site 1, the IDA site at Ballyadam near Carrigtwohill, as the most appropriate location for the new converter station, given the existing industrial and commercial activity in the area. Feedback was also received from both local and national elected representatives recommending that full consideration should be given to Ballyadam.

It was agreed that work to determine a suitable location within Site 1 would need to continue prior to a final decision.

²⁴ <https://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-Step-4-Consultation-Report.pdf>

With additional work required, and due to challenges to ways of working due to COVID-19 restrictions it was decided to publish the 'Step 4 Consultation Report'²⁵ in May 2020 and respond to as many of the issues raised as we were able to at that time. Further updates, along with additional findings made during the ongoing assessment would be communicated once a final decision would be made on the best performing option for the project later that year.

A *Step 4 Consultation Report* was published alongside a '*Step 4 Project Update Document (Spring 2020)*'²⁶ communicating what stage the project assessment was at.

In addition, a preliminary Acoustic Study Report was published in response to stakeholder concerns with particular reference to the Converter Station²⁷.

Common themes to emerge from the Step 4 consultation included:

- Noise;
- Health and Safety;
- Visual Impact and Light Pollution;
- Impact on the Community and the Community Fund;
- Impacts on Local Water Quality;
- Recreational Land use, Ecology and Wildlife;
- Local Ecology and Wildlife;
- History and Heritage; and,
- Traffic and Road Network Concerns.

3.5.9 Consultation and Engagement 2020 – COVID-19 Mitigation measures

The publication of the Step 4 Consultation Report in May 2020 was an important step in responding to stakeholder concerns raised in the preceding consultation.

Subsequently it became increasingly challenging to meet with stakeholders face to face, due to Government restrictions in respect of the COVID-19 pandemic. To address this, the team remained available to all stakeholders via direct contact numbers and email addresses.

In May 2020, adverts such as that advertised in Figure 3.3, were published in broadsheets and on EirGrid social media to advise the public that work was progressing despite COVID-19 restrictions and provide project team contact details.

²⁵ <https://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-Step-4-Consultation-Report.pdf>

²⁶ <https://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-Step-4-Project-Update-Document-Spring-2020.pdf>

²⁷ <https://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-Preliminary-Acoustic-Study-Report.pdf>

Figure 3.3 Copy of Public Awareness Advert during COVID-19 Restrictions

In addition:

- Online meetings were held with community organisations and councils on request to answer queries and concerns and continue to engage and take feedback.
- The Step 4 Project Update Document (Spring 2020) was published online and issued to registered stakeholders by email.
- The European Movement, Ireland together with the European Parliament Liaison Office in Ireland hosted an online webinar on the Celtic Interconnector Project in June 2020.
- To support ongoing communication and engagement, the project team hosted two online information webinars on the 5th and 6th of August 2020, engaging with members of community councils, business groups and interested stakeholders in the community. The project team took attendees through a short presentation where they gave an overview of the project and an update as to its current status before taking

questions from attendees. Following the meetings, the presentation was published on EirGrid's project specific website²⁸.

- An Underground Cable Brochure was published online in October 2020 to assist stakeholders understanding of the underground cabling process.

3.5.10 Closure of Step 4

In November 2020 EirGrid closed Step 4 with publication of the Best Performing project Option (BPO). Due to COVID-19 related delays in landowner engagement and cable route studies however, the identified BPO cable route remained subject to change as studies and assessments on the cable route were ongoing, specifically in the area of Castlemartyr and Killeagh on the N25.

The assessments, studies and considerations which resulted in the BPO selection for the proposed onshore development in Ireland were outlined in the Consultant's Development Options Report November 2020 and confirmed that :

- The landfall location would be at Claycastle Beach, Youghal;
- The converter station would be located at the IDA Ballyadam Site, Carrigtwohill; and
- The main underground cable corridor between Claycastle and Ballyadam would run along the N25 and local road network, with the routes to be confirmed in relation to Killeagh and Castlemartyr. The underground cable corridor between Ballyadam and Knockraha substation would also largely run along the local road network.
- It was also confirmed that an enhanced community benefit scheme would be established for the Celtic Interconnector project.

The BPO was communicated via two webinars, press advertising²⁹, a press release, an email to registered email addresses (c. 600), a letter to registered stakeholders (c. 1,500), social media, and direct contact to elected representatives as well as to community organisations who had engaged on the project. The announcement was also reported by local and national print and radio media.

Online accessibility to information was enhanced with the publication of an 'easy to access' project overview presentation, a project introduction video and an online booking form where stakeholders were invited to book a call back from a member of the project team at a time to suit them.

With the closure of Step 4 the project entered into Step 5, the Planning Process.

²⁸ <https://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-Step-4-Overview.pdf>

²⁹ See Appendix C Advertisements

3.5.11 Step 5 Engagement

The project entered Step 5 with a requirement for the cable routes to be confirmed in relation to Killeagh and Castlemartyr. As per the Celtic Interconnector Project Step 4b Report, in November 2020, it remained that a number of considerations particular to the cable route in this area required further assessment. In February 2021, it was confirmed that due to challenges to routing the cable circuit through Killeagh and Castlemartyr villages, which had been raised in the assessment process, both villages would be bypassed and the cable laid in agricultural land north of Castlemartyr and south-east of Killeagh.

3.5.12 Communication of Project Update

This update was communicated to stakeholders on 8th February 2021 with the publication of a complete proposed project cable route option which included by-passing Killeagh and Castlemartyr.

This project update was communicated via press release; email blast to registered emails (c. 600); social media; direct contact with community organisations who had engaged on this issue, Councillors and TDs. The update was also reported by local and national print and radio media.

Limited in external engagement activities (e.g. door to door calls) due to ongoing COVID-19 measures, and to ensure the message had been received by cable route communities, EirGrid elected to issue a letter to the landowners on the cable route advising the complete proposed project cable route and providing direct contact details.

This was issued to the Property Registration Authority Ireland (PRAI) sourced database of landowners on the overall route (c. 650).

3.5.13 Churchtown Route Review

Following the project update in February 2021 a number of stakeholders in the Churchtown/Roxborough area of East Cork, on the HVDC cable route raised concerns with the project team.

The project team engaged meaningfully with the group via:

- Email
- Letter
- Telephone
- Dedicated online meetings

In response to the engagement additional information was issued to stakeholders on the cable route including:

- Celtic Interconnector – Key Facts information piece

- **The Electricity Grid and Your Health – Answering your questions**

An agreed outcome of the engagement was the preparation of a comprehensive route review for the HVDC cable route in the project area west of Castlemartyr to Roxborough. This review considered alternative routes and was informed by the latest information available (March 2021) regarding the development of the Midleton-Youghal Greenway and the proposed upgrade of the N25 from Midleton to Carrigtwohill.

The review determined that the best performing option was the proposed route coming off the N25 at Churchtown and using local roads to Ballyadam.

Subsequent to the publication of the Route Review two public webinars were held to update stakeholders. The outcome of the review was also shared with local, national and European elected representatives and was broadcast by local media.

3.5.14 The Community Forum

A call for expressions of interest from interested parties to participate in the Celtic Interconnector Community Forum was opened in May 2021. The forum brings together people and organisations from across the project area so that stakeholder and community views can be discussed, understood and properly considered prior to and during project delivery. Irish Rural Link has been appointed as the community forum's independent facilitator.

Irish Rural Link (IRL), formed in 1991, is a national network of organisations and individuals campaigning for sustainable rural development in Ireland and Europe. IRL, a non-profit organisation, now directly represents over 600 community groups with a combined membership of 25,000. The organisation has a long, successful track record in designing and implementing community relations plans for development companies, community organisations, semi-state agencies and Government.

In addition to providing a forum for dialogue between stakeholders with interests in the project and the project team the Community Forum will also be invited to input on the design and implementation of the Celtic Interconnector Community Benefit Fund.

3.5.15 Ongoing Engagement

In addition to the Community Forum Community Liaison Officers remain available for ongoing stakeholder engagement with additional communication activities to be activated over the coming weeks and months.

4 Landowner Consultation and Engagement

4.1 Approach to landowner Consultation and Engagement

Consultation and engagement with landowners who may be directly impacted by the Celtic Interconnector project has been a critical aspect to the project development process. At EirGrid, this role is carried out by Agricultural Liaison Officers (ALOs).

ALOs are responsible for:

- Providing landowners with a comprehensive knowledge of a project in a timely manner;
- Giving landowners an opportunity to influence decisions being made by EirGrid in regard to the project development; and,
- Discussing the siting of new lines and cables, land access, and also providing information on community funds and proximity payments.

At the Step 3 Consultation stage, letters were issued to landowners in the project study area as per information available through the Property Registration Authority of Ireland (PRAI). These letters were intended to inform landowners about the project plans, raise the project profile and provide contact details for the project team to the landowners.

ALO's were available to engage with stakeholders and landowners at information evenings in the communities where cable routes, methods of work and specific concerns could be addressed.

4.2 Engagement process

In late July / early August 2020 as part of the engagement and consultation required for Step 4, direct landowner engagement on the cable route linking Claycastle to Ballyadam and onto Knockraha began.

Phase 1 of landowner engagement involved engaging with landowners for off-road routes at Castlemartyr and Killeagh along with all of the locations where initial engineering surveys identified a potential off-road requirement for reason of river / stream crossings, culvert crossings, major utility crossings, livestock underpasses and for locations where for various reasons an on-road route was undesirable such as tight corners, extensive mature tree lines, etc.

The Phase 1 engagement which ran from late July 2020 to early October 2020 (including surveys of all lands) occurred during a period of limited Government COVID-19 restrictions (Level 2 restrictions as per the *Living with COVID-19 Plan* were introduced on 15th September 2020).

This Phase 1 engagement involved direct interactions with impacted landowners and was essential in involving landowners in the assessment processes required to subsequently confirm cable routes.

Phase 2 of the landowner engagement involved meeting all the landowners whose lands had been identified as suitable for a passing bay and identifying suitable sites for construction laydown compounds. A further 35 landowners were identified for phase 2 engagement all of whom were contacted directly by the ALO team.

It is the experience of the ALO team at EirGrid that direct and personal contact with landowners implicated on projects is essential to identifying and addressing concerns. It is EirGrid's experience that this establishes good communication and ongoing engagement.

The identification of landowners implicated in the studied cable route options for the Celtic Interconnector project coincided with repeated Level 5 COVID-19 restrictions in 2020.

In accordance with best practice health and safety protocols, face to face meetings were prohibited for the duration of Government COVID-19 Level 5 restrictions. This impacted on the ability of the team to engage with landowners. This restriction lasted for 6 weeks.

Alternatives to face to face meetings were considered but deemed unsatisfactory. In addition the data from the PRAI does not contain any telephone contact information making contact challenging.

Landowner engagement recommenced in early December 2020, when Government COVID-19 restrictions were eased to Level 3. Landowner engagement continued up to Christmas 2020 and recommenced in so far as was possible in January 2021, prior to further Level 5 restrictions imposed by the Government in response to increasing COVID-19 case levels.

4.3 Participation

The face to face engagement between the experienced ALOs and landowners ensured a general understanding by landowners of the project, the infrastructure to be developed, and potential or likely impact on landholdings and agricultural activities. This included both direct impact on landholdings and also in terms of moving livestock, etc.

This engagement facilitated general access to lands as required for environmental and technical survey, although some landowners exercised their right to refuse access for survey. In addition, specific engagement occurred where temporary and permanent infrastructure was planned on landholdings, such as off-road cable laying, and the provision of temporary passing bays.

5 Public Participation Methods and Activities

5.1 Public Participation Methods and Outcomes

The EirGrid Public Engagement team employ a wide array of methods and activities as required by their different audiences and project stages. As the project progresses activity is scaled up accordingly and, particularly due to the high level of engagement with Celtic, methods are developed in line with stakeholder feedback and evolving information needs. Methods used for the Celtic Interconnector Project are listed in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 Public Participation Methods and Cumulative Outcomes

Steps	Development of Method and Activity	Cumulative Outcomes
Step 1	High level stakeholders awareness activities	Increased stakeholder awareness
Step 2	Dedicated project website pages Dedicated project email address Project Brochure Publication of technical project reports Stakeholder meetings Social media promotion	Establishment of community relationships Increase in publicly available information. Submission of stakeholder feedback forms detailing concerns Concerns addressed by EirGrid
Step 3	Use of visual aids to explain proposals (posters; architectural models) Online consultation questionnaires Focused stakeholder meetings Site walkovers with community groups. Consultation report	Focused community consultations addressing specific concerns. 1,000+ responses to formal consultation
Step 4	Use of visual aids to explain proposals (posters; architectural models) 3D visualisation software to demonstrate visual impact of project Consultation questionnaire online and hardcopy iPad availability at events to facilitate online access to questionnaires and project information Focused stakeholder meetings (virtual) Consultation report Responses to consultation report Webinars	Additional 1,000+ responses to formal consultation

6 Nature of Feedback Received and Impact of Public Participation on Project Development

6.1 Nature of Feedback Received and Impact on Project Development

Table 6.1 sets out the nature of the feedback received according to various categories. It also sets out impact that the public participation process had on project development in terms of setting out how EirGrid responded to this feedback.

Table 6.1 Nature of Feedback Received and Impact on Project Development

Feedback Category	Description of Feedback	Responses to Feedback
Cultural Heritage	During Step 3, the cultural heritage value of the identified converter station location zones (CSLZ 12) at Kilquane was raised by a number of respondents.	A cultural heritage constraints study by Rubicon Heritage Services Ltd of the shortlisted CSLZ was commissioned and a copy of the report is provided in Appendix D Cultural Heritage Report in the Step 3 Consultation Report. Subsequently the siting of the proposed Converter Station site was selected having regard to numerous factors that occurred during the Step 4 process including the findings of the above report.
Visual impact	The nature of circuit construction overhead vs underground was expressed as a concern.	EirGrid confirmed its intention to install both the AC and DC land circuit by way of underground cable in the early stages of project development.
	Concern was expressed over the visual impact of the converter station.	At Step 3, an architectural model was commissioned and used at information evenings to demonstrate the visual impact of the converter station. At Step 4, a 3D visualisation model was commissioned and made available at open evenings to help address stakeholder concerns demonstrating visual impact at varied locations and seasons. Stakeholder visits to the converter station at Portan, Co. Meath (East West Interconnector converter station) were facilitated for stakeholders on request. A video was made available online showing the EWIC converter station.
Health	Feedback was received outlining local concern about the potential negative health impacts of electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) as produced by electricity	A dedicated brochure 'The Electricity Grid & your Health' which details EMFs in regard to underground cables was produced and made available to stakeholders in hard copy and online.. A demonstration of EMFs in everyday life was made by a specialist contractor at the open evenings held

Feedback Category	Description of Feedback	Responses to Feedback
	infrastructure.	during Step 4.
Noise	Operational noise of the converter station was raised as a concern.	A Preliminary Acoustic Report was produced in May 2020 to help address concerns. Noise impact assessments will be carried out as part of ongoing studies and the final design will be within set acoustic guidelines.
Farming and Land Use	Impact on farming and land use was raised as a concern.	Committed to ongoing engagements with landowners to establish how to mitigate impacts with lessons learned from previous underground cable projects being applied.
Traffic and Road network	Impact on traffic and road use was raised as a concern.	The proposed project route has been established in cooperation with landowners with measures, such as passing bays, anticipated in order to ease traffic disruption.

7 The Impact of Feedback received

7.1 The impact of Consultation

Consultation on the Celtic Interconnector project was structured, methodical, consistent, resourced and improved and developed in line with the project and stakeholder requirements as outlined in Section 3 of this report.

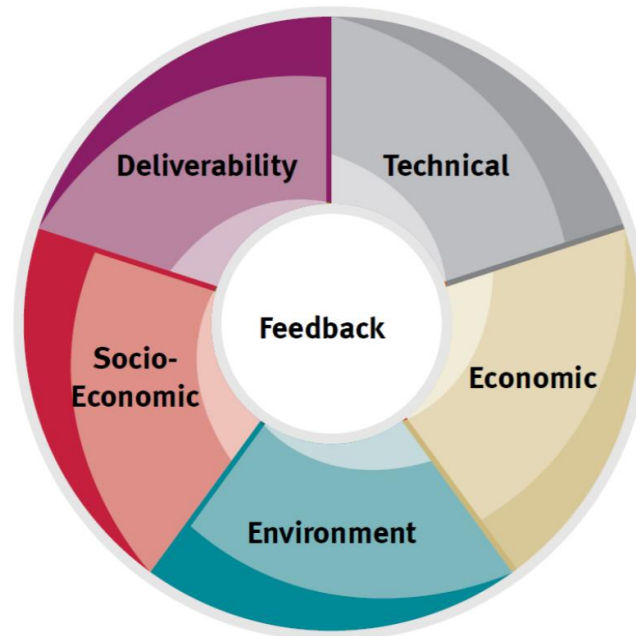
7.2 Outcome of Approach to Consultation

The purpose and aim of consulting, including on an Emerging Best Performing Option was to ensure a robust project development process which could be influenced by stakeholder feedback. In EirGrid's experience, many people do not take an active interest in a project until a precise route or project is defined. However, it is important that EirGrid gathers views before this point and that these views help to shape the emerging project.

An iterative approach to consultation allowed EirGrid to explore options and make well informed decisions. This feedback was considered as part of the EirGrid assessment criteria which includes deliverability; technical; economic; environment and socioeconomic performance. The approach taken to consultation and engagement allowed for:

- Early inclusion of stakeholders in the project development process;
- Early identification of additional information for inclusion in the project development process; and,
- Incremental development of the project in line with the assessment process.

Figure 7.1 Multi-Criteria decision making in EirGrid’s Six-Step Process source: EirGrid



7.3 Identification of Best Performing Option

The identification of the Best Performing Option followed a bespoke process defined by the complexities of the project and the high number of considerations required. The sequence of public engagement events, consultations and outcomes is illustrated in Figure 7.2 below.

Figure 7.2 Sequence of Public Engagement Events, Consultations and Outcomes



8 Additional Activities

8.1 Joint activities with project Partners

As part of the PCI process, the project partners were obliged to work together to inform European citizens, and by default citizens of both France and Ireland, as to the project and its development. This was achieved through the means outlined below.

8.2 Project of Common Interest activities

8.2.1 .eu Website³⁰

This website was established in cooperation with RTE, EirGrid's project partner. This website fulfils the requirements of Article 9(7) of the TEN-E Regulation as it includes a link to the Commission website. It is designed to inform European citizens as to the project context, status and stage of development. It also links back to each of the project partner's websites facilitating additional information to be procured by stakeholders. The website is available in both the English and French language. Key updates and news are posted on the site.

8.2.2 Brochure

A project brochure introducing the project details, its anticipated benefits, current status, and timeline for consultation, is available on the website in both French and English.

8.2.3 Video

An informative video created by both partners illustrating the project details, the anticipated benefits and key milestones, is available on the website in both French and English.

8.2.4 PCI status

Further to the prescribed activities required as a PCI the project has also raised its public profile through consistent political support. This included activities around the securing of a Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) grant for €530 million in December 2019. Activities leading to this milestone event included:

- May 2019: An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar and President of France Emmanuel Macron submitted a joint request to the European Commission seeking financial support for the Celtic Interconnector electricity link. The Taoiseach and Mr Macron co-signed the

³⁰ <https://www.celticinterconnector.eu/>

letter requesting Jean-Claude Juncker's support for the grant application before a European Council meeting in Brussels.

- October 2019: EirGrid, in cooperation with Réseau de Transport d'Electricité (RTE), held an event in October 2019 in Midleton, East Cork on the occasion of the signing of an application request for European Commission funding for the Celtic Interconnector under the Commission's 2019 Connecting Europe Facility Energy Programme. The event brought together a wide range of stakeholders including senior members of both project partner organisations, senior national elected representatives in both Ireland and France, local elected representatives and stakeholders.
- December 2019: A signature ceremony in Brussels occurred on 3 and 4 December 2019 in Brussels, in the presence of Kadri Simson, Commissioner for Energy and Phil Hogan, Commissioner for Trade for the European Commission. It was chaired by the Director-General for Energy, Ditte Juul Jørgensen. Sean Canney, Minister of State for Natural Resources, Community Affairs and Digital Development of Ireland and Fabrice Dubreuil, Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the European Union represented France and Ireland.

9 Conclusions

9.1 Compliance with best practice and regulations as per PCI requirements

The approach to public and landowner consultation adopted for the Celtic Interconnector benefitted from the dual requirement to meet the standards demanded for PCI projects as set out in the Concept for Public Participation, those required by both national and European laws, as well as those embodied in the EirGrid Six-Step grid development process. The early focus on consultation and engagement and the additional engagement activity due to the project need to explore a wide variety of options enhanced the process, creating a better outcome for the project.

9.2 Effective Dissemination of Information to the Public and Landowners

Public and landowner consultation and engagement has been central to the project development process for the Celtic Interconnector from the project's inception. EirGrid's six step process has created a distinct opportunity as part of the project development process to inform, engage and consult with a diverse range of stakeholders from an early stage of project development.

Since 2016, EirGrid has employed direct and indirect communication methods ranging from traditional approaches such as face to face meetings, letters and open evenings to using online webinars and meetings in order to reach communities and stakeholders across East Cork who may be impacted or affected by the Celtic Interconnector. In total, over 2,000 responses were received to consultation processes and this feedback was considered carefully alongside the other assessment criteria to assist in identifying the best performing project option.

9.3 Nature of Participation

Participation occurred by a wide range of stakeholders. This included guidance and input from specialised consultants, statutory bodies, business organisations, community organisations, community councils, local government and the general public and landowners.

9.4 Impact of Public Consultation on the Final Proposal

The final proposal has benefitted from robust public consultation and comment. The Best Performing Option has been identified following careful assessment of concerns raised through consultation, and a comprehensive consideration of alternatives, presented for feedback to the public and other stakeholders. These concerns have been responded to both individually and collectively through the development of information material and activities carried out throughout the process, and are reflected in the final project proposal.

9.5 Ongoing Engagement

Engagement is ongoing with stakeholders and landowners. Team members dedicated to public outreach continue to communicate updates and developments.

A Community Forum to ensure that stakeholder and community views are understood and properly considered prior to and during project delivery is in place and will play an important role in maintaining engagement and consultation around the project.

Appendix A: Concept of Public Participation prepared in accordance with Article 9(3) of the TEN-E Regulation

Celtic Interconnector



Connecting the electricity grids of Ireland and France

TEN-E Regulation **Concept for Public Participation** Ireland

April 2020



Executive Summary

The Ireland-France electricity interconnector project, called the Celtic Interconnector, consists of a proposed High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) 700 megawatt (MW) connection, between the 400kV substation in La Martyre (Finistère, France) and the 220kV substation in Knockraha (Co. Cork, Ireland). The interconnector would pass through the territorial waters of Ireland and France along with the Exclusive Economic Zones of Ireland, the United Kingdom and France.

With a total length of approximately 575km this project is being jointly developed by EirGrid and Réseau de Transport d'Électricité (RTÉ), the respective electricity transmission system operators (TSOs) in Ireland and France, who are the “project promoters” within the meaning of Regulation for the trans-European energy infrastructure (347/2013 EU), hereafter referred to as ‘the TEN-E Regulation’.

The European Commission sees increased interconnection as a key step towards achieving a more integrated electricity system and considers the Celtic Interconnector to be an important move towards achieving such integration.

The Celtic Interconnector was designated in 2013 as a Project of Common Interest (PCI) number 1.6 for the North Seas Countries Offshore Grid Initiative (‘NSCOGI’) priority corridor under the TEN-E Regulation. The TEN-E Regulation seeks to modernise and expand Europe’s energy infrastructure and to interconnect networks across borders to meet the European Union’s core energy policy objectives of competitiveness, sustainability and security of supply. The project has retained its PCI designation during subsequent reviews in 2015, 2017 and 2019.

The purpose of this document is to propose a concept for public participation relating to the Celtic Interconnector project, in fulfilment of the requirements of the TEN-E Regulation (Article 9(3) and Annex VI). It sets out the necessary information and measures that EirGrid has undertaken thus far and intends to further undertake in Ireland regarding the public consultation on the project, and the ongoing measures in the United Kingdom and France in order to ensure a high level of public participation in the project.

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1. Introduction

The Celtic Interconnector is a proposed electrical link which will enable the import and export of electricity between Ireland and France and will be the first direct energy link between the two countries, running from the south coast of Ireland to the north-west coast of France. The project promoters are EirGrid plc and Réseau de Transport d'Électricité (RTÉ), the respective Transmission System Operators (TSOs) in Ireland and France.

EirGrid has an obligation under its TSO licence to explore and develop opportunities for interconnection of the Irish power system with other systems and has previously fulfilled this obligation by developing the East West Interconnector between Ireland and Wales which was delivered in 2012.

The European Commission sees increased interconnection as a key step towards achieving a more integrated electricity system and considers the Celtic Interconnector to be an important move towards achieving such integration.

Projects of Common Interest (PCIs) are essential infrastructure projects aimed at helping to physically integrate energy markets and enable Member States to diversify their energy sources and contribute to ending energy isolation. The Celtic Interconnector was designated in 2013 as PCI number 1.6 for the North Seas Countries Offshore Grid Initiative ('NSCOG') priority corridor under the Regulation for the trans-European energy infrastructure (EU 347/2013)¹ (hereafter referred to as the 'TEN-E Regulation'). The project has retained its PCI designation during reviews in 2015 and 2017. This status has been confirmed in the fourth list of PCI projects published by the European Commission on 31st October 2019. The Regulation seeks to modernise and expand Europe's energy infrastructure and to interconnect networks across borders to meet the Union's core energy policy objectives of competitiveness, sustainability and security of supply.

PCI projects can also benefit from accelerated planning and permit granting and also have access to financial support from the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). The Celtic Interconnector has already been supported with over €3.5m provided for the Feasibility Phase of the project and a further €4m allocated for the Initial Design & Pre-Consultation Phase of the project. EirGrid and RTÉ made a further grant application in June 2019 for financial support under the CEF to cover the Detailed Design & Consents and Construction Phases of the Celtic Interconnector project (refer to Figure 13) and the European Commission announced in October 2019 that it was awarding a further €530.7m in grant funding to the project.

EirGrid and RTÉ have provided formal notification under Article 10(1)(a) of the TEN-E Regulation to commence the permit granting process for PCI 1.6, the Celtic Interconnector project, to An Bord Pleanála (ABP) in its role as the Competent Authority (CA) in Ireland and to the Ministère de la Transition Écologique et Solidaire in its role as the CA in France. Formal notification has also been provided to the Marine Management

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R0347&from=en>

Organisation (MMO) in its role as the CA in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK).

Where two or more Member States are concerned, the date of the acceptance of the last notification by the CA concerned serves as the date of the start of the permit granting process. In this case the MMO was the last CA to give its acceptance and therefore 31st January 2020 is the start date of the permit granting process for the purposes of PCI.

This Concept for Public Participation (CPP) document sets out the envisaged public participation measures for the Celtic Interconnector project's permit granting and public participation phase in Ireland. The envisaged public participation measures relating to the project in the UK and France are detailed by way of separate CPPs for each jurisdiction.

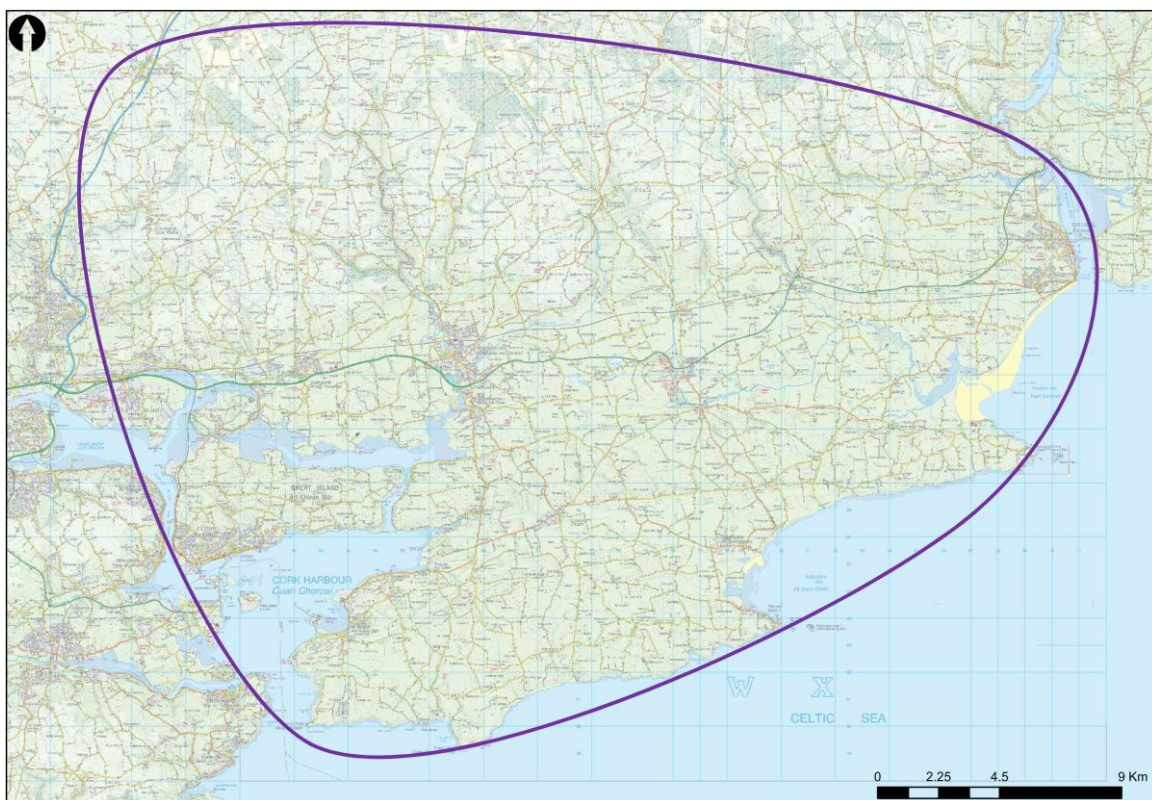


Figure 1 - Celtic Interconnector Project Study Area – East Cork

The onshore project study area in East Cork can be seen in Figure 1 above. Further information about the project can be found on the project websites at:

<http://www.celticinterconnector.eu/>

<http://www.eirgridgroup.com/the-grid/projects/celtic-interconnector/the-project/>

<http://www.rte-france.com/en/project/celtic-interconnector-interconnection-project-between-france-and-ireland/>

2. Project Overview

2.1 Project Benefits

The proposed Celtic Interconnector, which will enable the import and export of electricity between France and Ireland, will support Europe’s transition to the Energy Union by applying downward pressure on the cost of electricity to consumers in Ireland and France, by strengthening energy security between the two countries and by facilitating the growth of renewables and the transition to a low carbon energy future.

The Celtic Interconnector is well aligned to support the achievement of Europe’s energy ambitions:

- It will enable the movement of electricity across Ireland, France and continental Europe, increasing competition in the electricity market and applying downward pressure on cost to the benefit of consumers;
- It will enhance the security of supply for both Irish and French electricity consumers;
- It will support Europe’s transition to a low carbon energy future by increasing the market available for renewable electricity and supporting the development of the renewable energy sector;
- It will provide Ireland’s only energy connection to a European Union (EU) Member State following the UK’s departure from the EU; and
- It will help to improve telecommunications between Ireland and continental Europe by providing a direct fibre optic link between both countries.

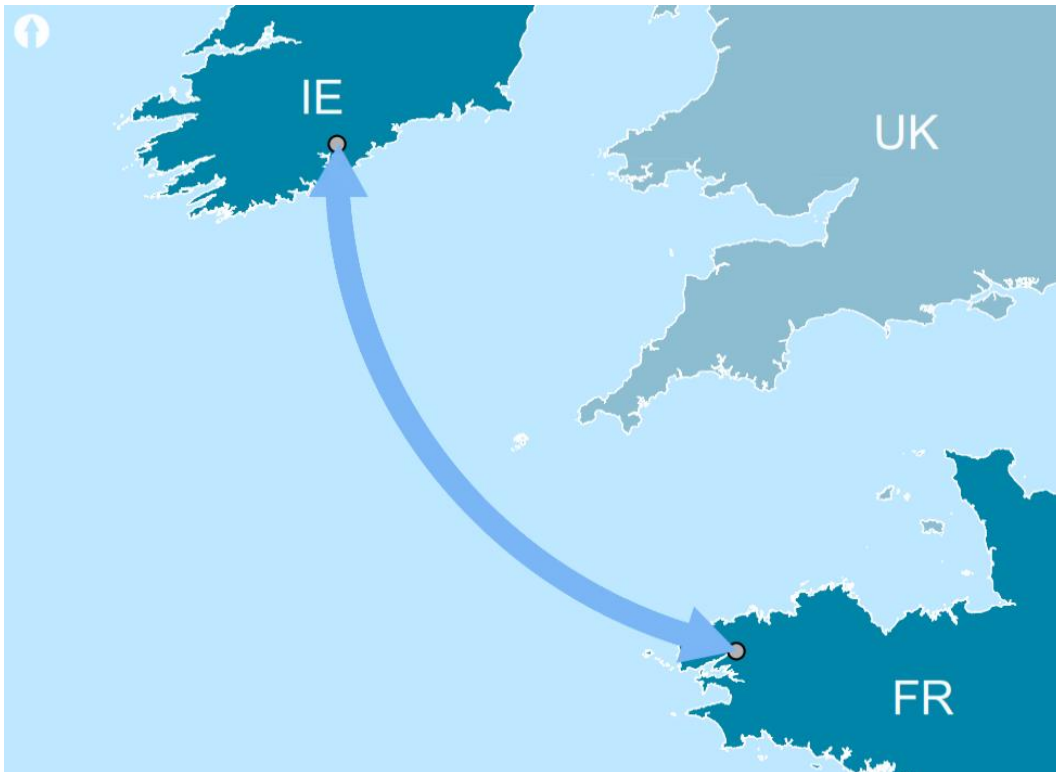


Figure 2 - Celtic Interconnector - proposed electricity interconnector between Ireland and France

2.2 Project Elements

The Celtic Interconnector project involves the construction of an electrical circuit between Ireland and France using High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) technology, the global standard for the transfer of electricity over long distances using underground technology. The interconnector would have a capacity of 700MW (equivalent to the power used by 450,000 homes) and measure approximately 575km in length. The longest spatial element of the Celtic Interconnector would be the submarine circuit which would measure approximately 500km out of the total 575km. The interconnector would form a link between the south coast of Ireland and the coast of Brittany in North West France (Nord-Finistère).



Figure 3 - Celtic Interconnector Project Elements

The main elements of the interconnector are illustrated in Figure 3 above and consist of:

- A submarine circuit, approximately 500km in length placed on or beneath the seabed between France and Ireland. The submarine circuit will pass through the territorial waters of Ireland and France and through the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of Ireland, the UK and France, as shown in Figure 4. The cable route within the UK EEZ passes approximately 30km to the west of the Isles of Scilly and approximately 75km to the west of Land's End on the UK mainland.

In addition to the submarine circuit the infrastructure in both Ireland and France will include:

- A landfall point where the submarine circuit comes onshore;
- A HVDC land circuit between the landfall point and a converter station. This circuit is proposed using underground technology and consists of a pair of cables. There are currently two types of HVDC cable available, either Cross Linked Poly-Ethylene insulation (XLPE) or Mass Impregnated Non-Draining (MIND) insulation technology. Typically these cables are between 100mm and 200mm in diameter and will operate at an expected voltage of 320kV;
- A converter station, to convert the electricity from HVDC to High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC), which is used on the respective transmission grids in each country. The converter stations will use Voltage Source Conversion (VSC) technology and will operate at an expected voltage of 320kV and typically include a range of technical equipment some of which must be located indoors in a series of buildings, potentially up to 25m in height. A typical converter station also includes:

- Control Room;
 - Converter Power Electronics and associated DC equipment;
 - Alternating Switchgear;
 - Transformers and other associated AC equipment;
 - Ancillary equipment and spares building.
- A relatively short HVAC land circuit between the converter station and the connection point to the grid. This circuit is proposed using underground technology; and
 - A connection point to an existing substation on the transmission grid.

A fibre optic cable would also be laid along the entire route for operational control, communication and telemetry purposes. There would be additional capacity available on the fibre optic cable which could be made available to the market. This model was previously established with the East West Interconnector.

At present there is no direct telecommunications connectivity between Ireland and France, all existing traffic between Ireland, France and the rest of mainland Europe must first pass through the UK land bridge.

A direct telecommunications connection between Ireland and France would provide improved latency performance between the island of Ireland and continental Europe. As well as improved latency, a direct fibre connection between Ireland and France would yield additional strategic benefits for Ireland, including:

- Increased resilience and security of supply;
- Single point of failure reduction;
- Increased competitiveness of the region;
- Providing a marketing tool;
- Potential to attract new businesses.

The overall marine route map is presented in Figure 4 overleaf. The breakdown of the marine cable route by zone is shown in Table 1 below:

Zone	Approximate Cable Route Length
Irish Territorial Waters	35km
Irish Exclusive Economic Zone	115km
UK Exclusive Economic Zone	211km
French Exclusive Economic Zone	88km
French Territorial Waters	48km

Table 1 - Breakdown of marine cable route

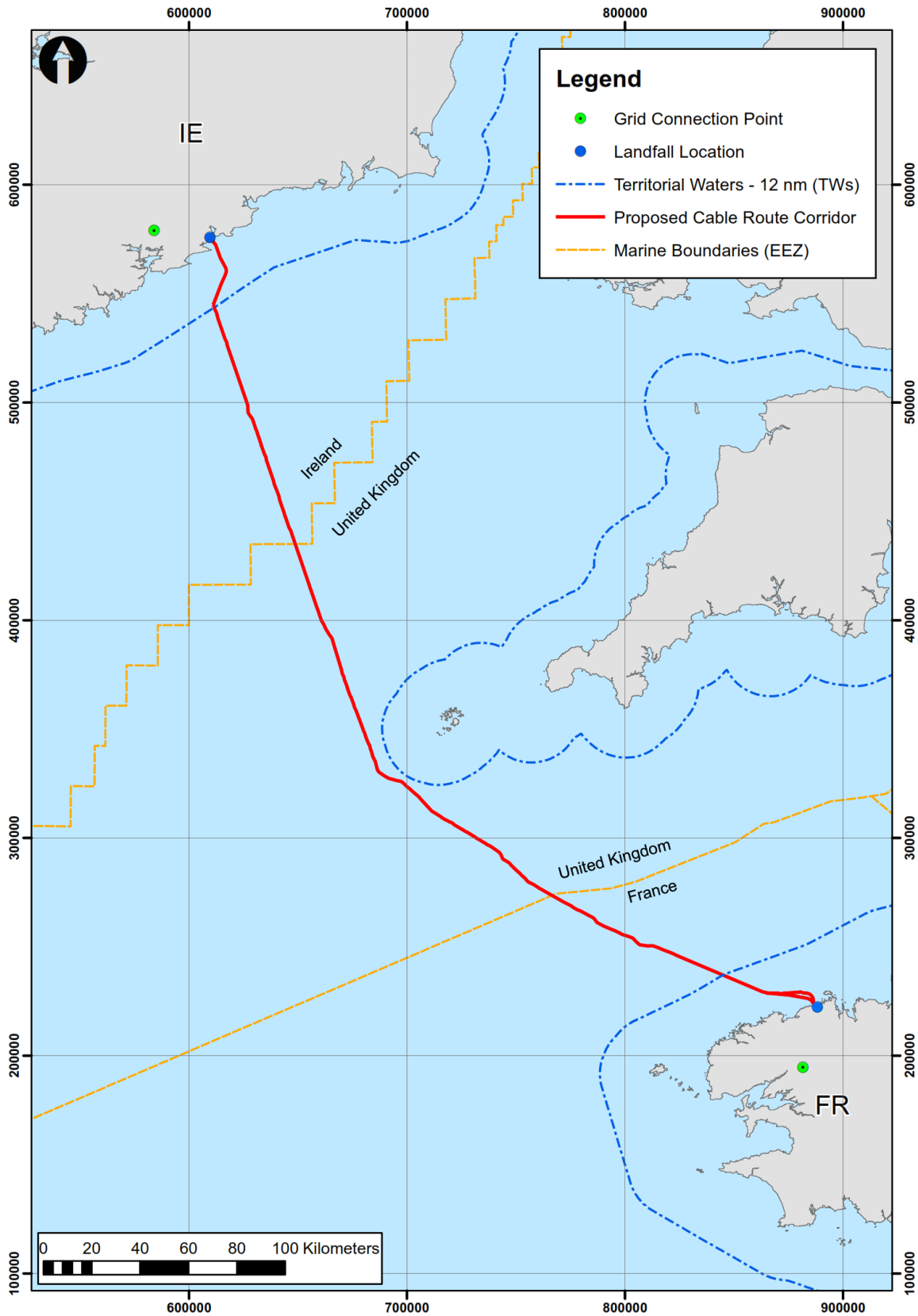
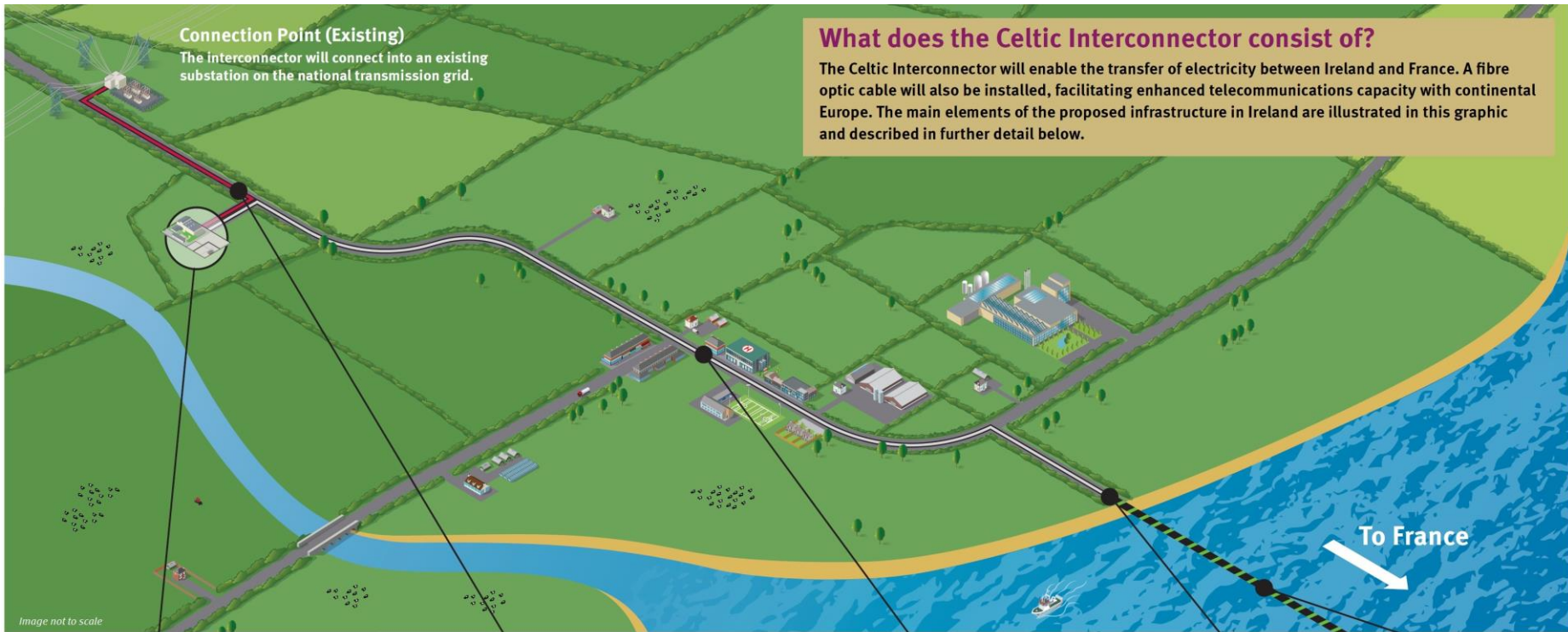


Figure 4 - Celtic Interconnector marine cable route map

EirGrid has also produced a detailed infographic, as shown in Figure 5 overlaid to illustrate in further detail the various elements of the interconnector in Ireland and how they would be installed.




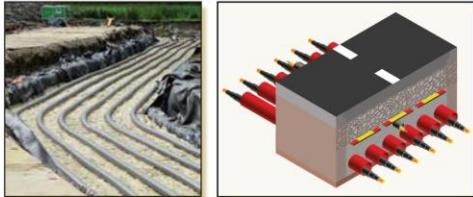


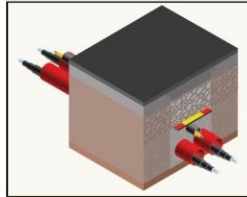
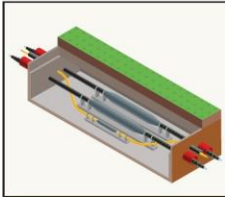
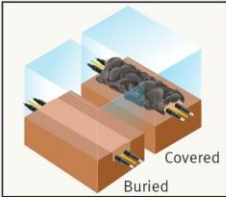
Converter Station	AC Land Circuit	DC Land Circuit	Landfall Point	Submarine Circuit
 <p>The interconnector will use High Voltage Direct Current (DC) technology, the global standard for the transfer of electricity over long distances using subsea cables. The electricity systems in Ireland and France both use Alternating Current (AC) technology, so converter stations are required at either end. The converter station is an industrial type building and outdoor compound with typical dimensions of 300 m x 150 m and a height of up to 25 m.</p>	  <p>The circuit between the connection point and the converter station is intended to be installed as an underground cable. This appears to be feasible based on assessments to date, however it has been determined that a single cable per phase would not meet the power transfer capacity required. Therefore two cables per AC phase would be required totalling 6 power cables. The cables would be installed in ducts under the road network where possible, which would be fully re-instated. Additional equipment would also be required at both the connection point and the converter station once the cable route goes beyond approximately 4.5km in distance.</p>	  <p>The circuit between the converter station and the landfall point will be by underground cable installed in ducts under the road network, which will be fully re-instated. The total length of this circuit is expected to be between 30 – 40 km.</p>	 <p>This is where the land circuit will connect to the submarine circuit by way of an underground transition joint. This will be installed behind the beach where the submarine circuit comes ashore. The landfall point will be fully re-instated following completion of the works.</p>	 <p>The submarine circuit between Ireland and France will be approximately 500 km. It will be either buried beneath the seabed or laid on the seabed and covered for protection.</p>

Figure 5 - What does the Celtic Interconnector consist of?

3. Background to the CPP

3.1 Regulation 347/2013 EU

The Project of Common Interest (PCI) permit granting process established by the TEN-E Regulation establishes the role of a Competent Authority (CA) for PCIs in each Member State to coordinate and schedule the permit granting process and put in place a 'one-stop-shop' to streamline the permit granting process. An Bord Pleanála is the designated CA in Ireland and is responsible for facilitating and co-ordinating the permit granting process for PCIs acting in a collaborative role with the various permitting authorities to ensure a high degree of comprehensiveness in the manner in which the necessary permissions and consents are granted. An Bord Pleanála is also responsible for monitoring the individual time limits within which the various permit granting processes must be concluded.

The PCI permit granting process must take place within a period of three and a half years and is broken down into two separate phases. The first phase is the Pre-Application Phase where the project is refined and any potential impacts associated with the proposed development are assessed in order to help to identify the most suitable location for each element of the project. The preparation of environmental reports and public participation and consultation at an early stage in the decision making process are key components of the Pre-Application Phase, which must take place within an indicative period of up to two years.

The second phase of the process is that of the Statutory Permit Granting Phase, which must take place within an indicative period of up to one and a half years. This phase commences once the Pre-Application Phase has been completed, with the submission of formal consent applications for each of the relevant permits in Ireland, France and the UK. It is currently anticipated that the project will be ready to enter this phase in early 2021 and that the PCI Comprehensive Decision would be issued in early 2022.

In December 2018, EirGrid commenced the PCI permit granting process in Ireland by submitting a PCI Notification to An Bord Pleanála, in its role as the Irish CA. Once the PCI Notification was received by An Bord Pleanála, it contacted all relevant permit granting authorities for their assessment on whether or not the project was sufficiently mature to enter the Pre-Application Phase (first phase of the PCI permit granting process) and in a position to complete it within an indicative period of up to two years. An Bord Pleanála acknowledged the PCI Notification on 21st March 2019.

When submitting the respective notifications to the CAs in both Ireland and France, EirGrid and RTÉ had proceeded on the understanding that no relevant consents were required in the UK on the basis that the marine cable route ran outside of UK territorial waters and that there is no requirement in UK law for any permit or licence for the laying of submarine cables in the EEZ of the UK.

Further detailed technical analysis of the chosen route for the laying of the cable on the seabed of the UK EEZ has indicated geological and sedimentary issues which will likely require the placement of rock at certain locations in order to protect the submarine cable from hazards. Under the UK's Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, the placement of

any object (other than the submarine cable itself) on the seabed of the UK EEZ requires a Marine Licence to be obtained from the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), in its role as the relevant permit granting authority for such licences in the UK.

Consequently, EirGrid and RTÉ commenced engagement with the MMO in 2019 and subsequently submitted a PCI Notification to the MMO which was accepted on 31st January 2020, which serves as the start date for the project’s PCI permit granting process.

The PCI permit granting process is following the timeline as outlined in Figure 6 below.

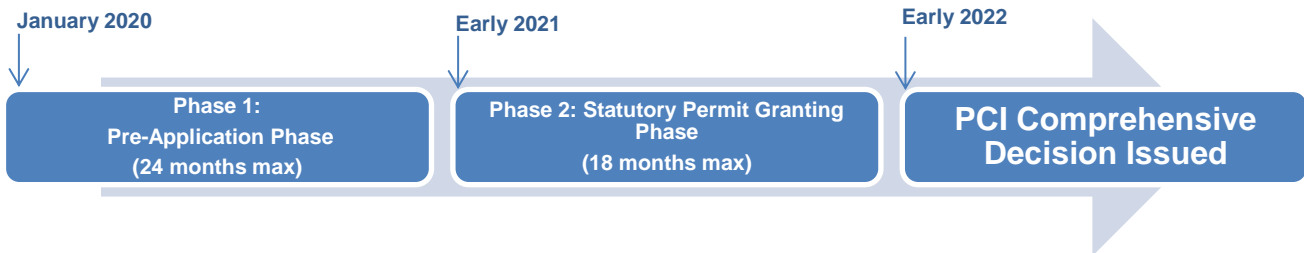


Figure 6 - PCI Permit Granting Process Timeline

Article 1(2)(b) of the TEN-E Regulation relates to the enhancement of public participation facilitated by the introduction of the TEN-E Regulation while Article 9 of the TEN-E Regulation specifically deals with transparency and public participation in Projects of Common Interest cases. Annex VI of the TEN-E Regulation sets out the principles for public participation which the permit granting process established under the TEN-E Regulation must follow. Annex VI of the TEN-E Regulation is appended to this document in Appendix A1.

Article 9(3) of the TEN-E Regulation states the following with reference to the Concept for Public Participation (CPP):

“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, following the process outlined in the manual referred to in paragraph 1 and in line with the guidelines set out in Annex VI.”

Annex VI of the TEN-E Regulation in relation to the CPP specifies the following requirements as a minimum for transparency and public participation:

- The identification of the relevant stakeholders;
- Measures proposed for dedicated project meetings including specified locations;
- The timeline for public participation;
- The human resources allocated to engagement with the public;
- The publication of an information leaflet of no more than 15 pages;
- The establishment of a website to inform the public (to include a non-technical summary of the project, public consultation schedule and contact details regarding submissions); and,
- Written invitations to relevant affected stakeholders to dedicated meetings.

Article 9(3) of the TEN-E Regulation also details the CA's process of review following receipt of the CPP and that they may consider any form of public participation and consultation that took place prior to the submission of the CPP:

“The competent authority shall request modifications or approve the concept for public participation within three months; in so doing, the competent authority 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 participation and consultation has fulfilled the requirements of this Article.”

This present document has been submitted to An Bord Pleanála as CA for PCI projects in Ireland in fulfilment of the requirements of the TEN-E Regulation and those outlined in Section 3 of An Bord Pleanála's Project of Common Interest Manual of Permit Granting Process Procedures (July 2019)².

3.2 PCI Manual of Permit Granting Process Procedures

An Bord Pleanála, as PCI CA pursuant to Article 9(1) of the TEN-E Regulation, has published a Manual of Permit Granting Process Procedures (revised 15/07/2019) to assist project promoters, the public and relevant authorities and to provide transparency and assist with public participation in the PCI process.

In Section 3.1 of the Manual, the need for project promoters to interact with the public at the earliest possible opportunity is emphasised. This engagement process is underlined by the Aarhus Convention whose principles are embedded in the TEN-E Regulation. The Manual reiterates the requirements of Annex VI of the TEN-E Regulation with respect to the requirement for and the content of the CPP. The project promoter has an indicative period of three months from the start of the permit granting process (acceptance of PCI Notification) to submit a Concept for Public Participation to the CA which must thereafter either modify or approve the concept within three months of receipt. The CA may seek the opinion of other relevant permitting authorities concerned on the Concept for Public Participation before responding to the project promoter.

² <http://www.pleanala.ie/PCI/PCIManual.pdf>

4. Public Participation

4.1 Introduction

The public participation details described hereinafter comprise several parts:

- A summary of the company's approach to public participation;
- A summary of the project's overall public participation process;
- Public participation in the network development plans or outlines of the network integrating the electricity interconnection project between France and Ireland already conducted; and,
- The principal statutory consents required under the national consenting process in Ireland and the public participation processes therein.

4.2 EirGrid and Public Participation

We are committed to stakeholder engagement and consultation and operate a six step approach to public participation and stakeholder engagement on all grid development projects. This approach is detailed in *'Have your Say; How we develop the electricity grid, and how you can influence our plans'*³. A high level overview of these steps is laid out in Figure 7 overleaf.

Our commitments as part of this approach are:

- We will offer clear opportunities to engage with us;
- We will explain the decisions we need to make – and when. We will explain the factors that influence these decisions, and how you can contribute to the decision-making process;
- We will communicate with everyone who has taken the time to engage with us;
- We will explain how we considered their feedback and the outcome of EirGrid's decisions; and,
- EirGrid's staff will treat everyone, on every project, with honesty and respect.

This approach facilitates open and transparent engagement and consultation with EirGrid's stakeholders and communities. Feedback received through consultation helps us to explore options fully and make more informed decisions.

EirGrid is committed to publishing accessible information, in Plain English, and is keen to meet interested stakeholders on all projects. This commitment to the use of Plain English by EirGrid, specifically on the Celtic Interconnector project, has previously been recognised by the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)⁴.

³ http://www.eirgridgroup.com/_/uuid/7d658280-91a2-4dbb-b438-ef005a857761/EirGrid-Have-Your-Say_May-2017.pdf

⁴ https://www.nala.ie/sites/default/files/publications/plain_english_awards_winners_and_highlycommended.pdf



Figure 7 - EirGrid six step approach to grid development projects

4.3 Celtic Interconnector and Public Participation

As the Celtic Interconnector project is being jointly developed by EirGrid and RTÉ, the elements of the project in Ireland are being developed in accordance with EirGrid's six step approach above.

In addition, the project has achieved Project of Common Interest (PCI) status. Projects with this status are recognised as developing key cross border infrastructure that links the energy systems of EU countries. PCI projects are intended to help the EU achieve its energy policy and climate objectives. The status places significant emphasis and obligation on the part of the developer to deliver meaningful opportunities for the public, and stakeholders to engage with and understand the project.

A significant level of stakeholder engagement and consultation has already been delivered on the Celtic Interconnector Project, and is outlined below. EirGrid is committed to meeting all interested parties on the project and will endeavour to facilitate all opportunities for persons and organisations to engage with the project.

In 2018 a dedicated, locally based, Community Liaison Officer was appointed to the Celtic Interconnector project. Based in Cork, the officer is responsible for direct communication and consultation with project stakeholders and with ensuring the highest levels of community engagement are met in line with EirGrid and PCI requirements.

Step 1

Step 1 of the process was completed as part of the initial feasibility studies carried out which resulted in establishing the benefits of the project and promoting further studies and included consultation and engagement with strategic stakeholders at a national level. EirGrid's six step approach for grid development projects was launched in 2016 and at that stage the Celtic Interconnector was aligned to Step 2 of the approach.

Step 2

In this step two general areas with feasible connection points were identified for the project. These were East Cork and West Wexford with connection points at Knockraha and Great Island respectively, as shown in Figure 8 below. Five feasible landfall locations were also identified for each area. The objective of Step 2 was to confirm the general area for the project including the connection point and a shortlist of landfall locations.



Figure 8 - Connection points identified in Ireland

Consultation and engagement was completed in 2017 and included:

- Publication of a Project Information page on the EirGrid website;
- Publication of a detailed Project Update Brochure for Step 2⁵ (2017) which summarised the following assessments that had been carried out for both project areas in Co. Cork and Co. Wexford (published on website):
 - Feasibility Study – Converter Station Site & Route Identification in Ireland⁶;
 - Land Report⁷ (identification & analysis of landfall locations);
 - Route Investigation Report⁸ (identification & analysis of marine route options);
 - Feasibility Study – Network Analysis⁹; and
 - Social Impact Assessment Baseline Report¹⁰.
- The Project Update Brochure outlined that the assessments had concluded that the project was feasible and that the best performing option was to connect to France via East Cork;
- Engagement in stakeholder outreach through meetings with:
 - Local community and fisheries groups e.g. meeting with the Knockraha Community Association on 15th May 2017 and meeting with the Ballycotton Fisherman’s Association on 17th July 2017;
 - Elected representatives e.g. presentations to the Southern Regional Assembly meeting in Waterford on 6th October 2017 and the East Cork Municipal District Meeting in Midleton on 6th November 2017; and
 - Industry bodies including Engineers Ireland, IDA, Energy Cork, etc.;

⁵ <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-Project-Update-Brochure.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/PE424-F0000-R000-038-001.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-Land-Study-Report-2.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-Marine-Route-Investigation.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-Feasibility-Phase-Network-Analysis.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-IC-S2-Social-Impact-Baseline-Report-Apr2017.pdf>

- Public consultation from 13th June 2017 to 11th July 2017 specific to the foreshore licence application process for marine survey investigations.

Step 3

Step 3 was launched on 5th February 2018 at a meeting held in the Cork Chamber of Commerce office with both local and national elected representatives and business leaders. During this meeting, EirGrid confirmed that the best performing connection point for the project was in East Cork and also outlined the objectives of Step 3 which focussed on identifying a shortlist of options for the converter station and landfall location in East Cork.



Figure 9 – Initial list of project options identified at the outset of Step 3

EirGrid published a detailed Project Update Brochure for Step 3¹¹ (2018) which outlined the initial list of project options identified, as shown in Figure 9 above, and the onshore and offshore assessments to be carried out as part of Step 3.

On 9th and 10th May 2018, EirGrid held drop in sessions in its mobile information unit in Midleton and Youghal in Co. Cork. On 3rd September 2018, EirGrid gave an update as to the ongoing project assessments to local elected representatives at the meetings of the East Cork and Cobh-Glanmire Municipal Districts. EirGrid then held a number of public information and consultation meetings with project stakeholders in East Cork, which were advertised in local media and through local elected representatives, to inform them about the shortlisting process that was underway and to seek their input as follows:

¹¹ <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-Project-Update-Brochure-2018.pdf>

- 26th September 2018 in Glounthaune,
- 26th September 2018 in Knockraha,
- 4th October 2018 in Carrigtwohill,
- 4th October 2018 in Lisgoold,
- 3rd December 2018 in Youghal, and
- 7th December 2018 in Cloyne.

Meetings were also held with representatives of the Ballycotton Fisherman's Association on 4th October 2018 and Youghal Fisherman's Association on 13th November 2018. An update presentation on the project's development was also given to the Cork Regional Division of Engineers Ireland in the Rochestown Park Hotel on 13th November 2018.

EirGrid published its assessments and supporting information on the proposed shortlists of converter station location zones and landfall location options on 11th April 2019 via the following documents:

- Offshore Constraints Report¹²;
- Onshore Constraints Report and Mapping¹³;
- Strategic Social Impact Assessment Scoping Report¹⁴;
- Step 3 - Performance Matrix Assessments¹⁵;
- Project Update Brochure - Step 3 Consultation (Spring 2019)¹⁶.

EirGrid held a round of consultation on Step 3 from 11th April to 10th June 2019 where six separate public information and consultation meetings were held in East Cork as follows:

- 23rd April 2019 in Lisgoold,
- 24th April 2019 in Knockraha,
- 30th April 2019 in Carrigtwohill,
- 1st May 2019 in Midleton,
- 2nd May 2019 in Cloyne, and
- 3rd May 2019 in Youghal.

Prior to the launch of the consultation, EirGrid wrote to registered landowners within the shortlisted converter station location zones and in proximity to the shortlisted landfall locations along with existing stakeholders on the project's database, statutory bodies and elected representatives (local councillors, TDs, MEPs), to advise them that EirGrid had published its assessments and supporting information on the proposed shortlists. EirGrid also advertised the consultation through social media and through local and national newspapers. In these communications stakeholders were advised of the dates of the public information meetings along with the various means in which feedback on the project could be submitted:

¹² <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-Project-Step-3-Offshore-Constraints-Report.pdf>

¹³ <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-Project-Step-3-Onshore-Constraints-Report.pdf>

¹⁴ <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-Project-Step-3-SIA-Scoping-Report.pdf>

¹⁵ <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-Project-Step-3-Performance-Matrix-Assessments.pdf>

¹⁶ <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/EirGrid-Celtic-Interconnector-Update-Spring-2019.pdf>

- Completing an online feedback form on the EirGrid project website;
- Attending the public information meetings and giving feedback in person; and
- Contacting the project team by email, phone or in writing to the contact details provided.

The public information meetings were supplemented by meetings in Midleton and Cobh on 7th May 2019 with local elected representatives in the East Cork and Cobh-Glanmire Municipal Districts, in order to explain how the various assessments were carried out and to seek stakeholder feedback on the proposed shortlist of options, as shown in Figure 10 below.



Figure 10 - Refined shortlist of project options identified during Step 3

Stakeholder feedback gathered at Step 3 was analysed before confirming the shortlist of options. EirGrid wrote to all stakeholders concerned in September 2019 to advise them of the outcome of Step 3.

Step 4

Further assessments were carried out in Step 4 in order to refine the shortlisted options which also took account of landowner and community engagements and feedback received during the Step 3 consultations. In November 2019, EirGrid announced that it had identified an Emerging Best Performing Option (EBPO) for the location of the landfall and underground cable routes in Ireland along with three options for the converter station location for consultation with stakeholders.

EirGrid published its assessments and supporting information on the proposed shortlist on 11th November 2019 via the following documents:

- Step 4A Consultant's Development Options Report¹⁷;
- Claycastle - Landfall location and cable route map¹⁸;
- Kilquane - Converter station option and cable route map¹⁹;
- Knockraha - Converter station option and cable route map²⁰;
- Ballyadam - Converter station option and cable route map²¹;
- Project Update Brochure - Step 4 Consultation (Winter 2019-20)²².

EirGrid held a round of consultation on Step 4 from 11th November 2019 to 2nd February 2020 where seven separate public information and consultation meetings were held in East Cork as follows:

- 18th November 2019 in Knockraha,
- 19th November 2019 in Carrigtwohill,
- 22nd November 2019 in Midleton,
- 23rd November 2019 in Midleton,
- 27th November 2019 in Youghal,
- 28th November 2019 in Castlemartyr, and
- 29th November 2019 in Killeagh.

Prior to the launch of the consultation, EirGrid wrote to registered landowners within the shortlisted converter station sites and in proximity to the shortlisted landfall location along with existing stakeholders on the project's database, statutory bodies and elected representatives (local councillors, TDs, MEPs), to advise them that EirGrid had published its assessments and supporting information on the proposed shortlists. EirGrid also advertised the consultation through social media and through local and national newspapers. In these communications stakeholders were advised of the dates of the public information meetings along with the various means in which feedback on the project could be submitted:

- Completing an online feedback form on the EirGrid project website;
- Attending the public information meetings and giving feedback in person; and
- Contacting the project team by email, phone or in writing to the contact details provided.

The public information meetings were preceded by meetings in Midleton and Cobh on 7th October 2019 with local elected representatives in the East Cork and Cobh-Glanmire Municipal Districts, in order to explain how the various assessments were being finalised.

¹⁷ <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-Step-4A-Consultants-Development-Options-Report.pdf>

¹⁸ <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-CLAYCASTLE-Discovery.jpg>

¹⁹ <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-KILQUANE-Discovery.jpg>

²⁰ <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-KNOCKRAHA-Discovery.jpg>

²¹ <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-BALLYADAM-Discovery.jpg>

²² <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/EirGrid-Celtic-Interconnector-Project-Update-4-Proof-07-DOWNLOAD.pdf>

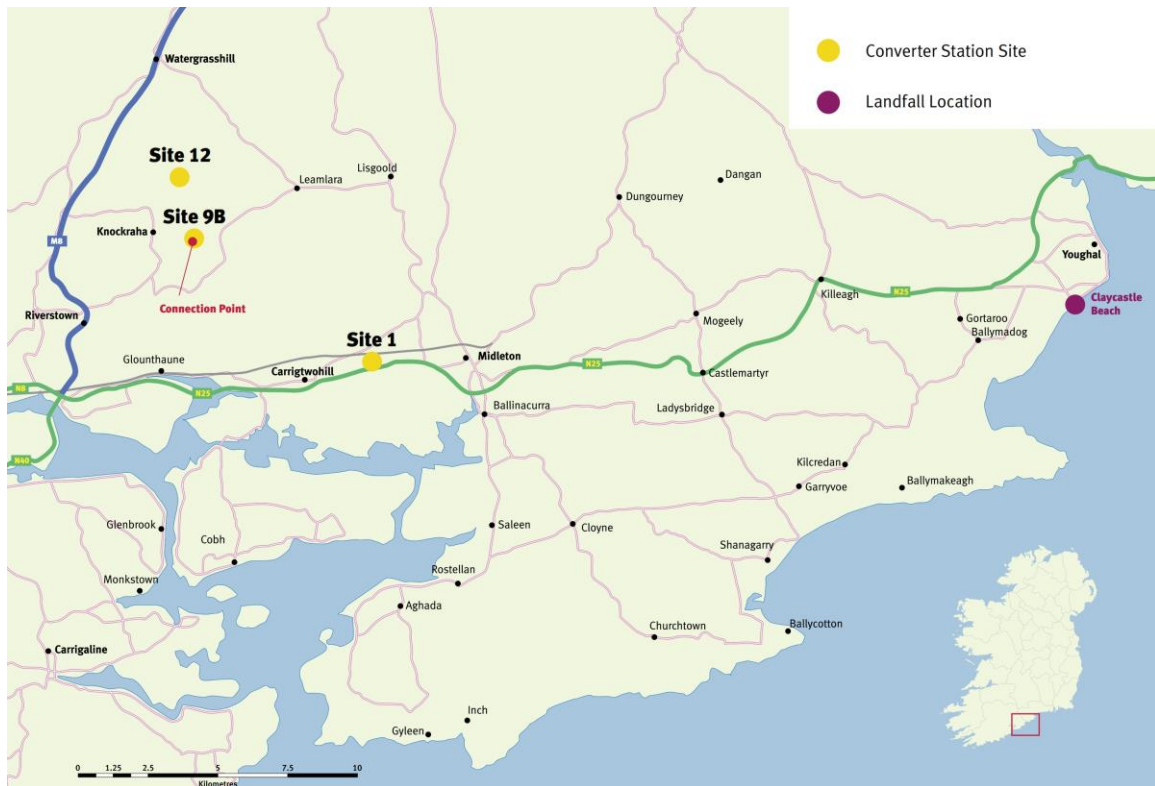


Figure 11 - Refined shortlist of project options identified during Step 4

EirGrid is currently considering and analysing all consultation feedback received as part of the ongoing Step 4 assessments. On completion of this step EirGrid will confirm the Best Performing Option (BPO) for the project, which will form the project proposal within Step 5. Consultation and engagement with relevant affected stakeholders will continue throughout this process. Given the current public health guidelines in place with regard to COVID-19 (as of April 2020) there may be an impact on the ways in which EirGrid engages with stakeholders, however EirGrid will seek to minimise any impact where possible.

Step 5

Step 5 is planned to commence in 2020 with environmental assessment of the confirmed BPO being undertaken and the preparation of the consents application file for submission to the consenting authorities in early 2021. The completion of the statutory permit granting phase and receipt of the PCI Comprehensive Decision is therefore anticipated in early 2022. EirGrid will continue to consult and engage with project stakeholders and keep the public informed throughout the development of Step 5.

Step 6

Step 6 will commence in 2022 with the commencement of the manufacturing process and subsequent construction of the project, which is likely to take place from 2023-2026. EirGrid will continue to consult and engage with relevant affected stakeholders throughout this step to ensure that any impacts to local communities during construction are minimised as far as possible and that they are carried out in accordance with all relevant planning consent conditions.



Figure 12 - Timeline of EirGrid's six step approach for the Celtic Interconnector Project

Community Gain

In response to the 2012 Government Policy Statement on the Strategic Importance of Transmission and other Energy Infrastructure, which states that *'delivering long lasting benefits to communities is an important way of achieving public acceptability for infrastructure'* and EirGrid's internal Community Gain policy, EirGrid intends to establish a Community Fund for the Celtic Interconnector.

In order for EirGrid to facilitate the development of this Community Fund, specific research will be undertaken into the needs of the local communities that may potentially be impacted by the Celtic Interconnector Project. This will result in the development of a project specific, needs based Community Fund. The Community Fund is scheduled to be released in Step 6 to coincide with the commencement of construction, as per the timelines outlined in Figure 12 above.

Social Impact Assessment

The social impact of grid development projects is a key consideration for EirGrid in project decision making in EirGrid's six step approach to grid development. EirGrid has therefore developed a methodology for Social Impact Assessment (SIA) to provide a consistent format in assessing the potential social impacts of grid developments, irrespective of the scale and complexity of a project. The methodology has been developed in reference to international guidance for social impact assessment published by the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA), which has been tailored to the specific context of grid development, and the various steps of EirGrid's six-step approach. It also provides for a proportionate assessment, dependent upon the anticipated significance of social impact.

PCI Process

Further to EirGrid's commitment to stakeholder consultation and engagement, the PCI designation under the TEN-E Regulation brings a number of distinct requirements which are also being met. These include:

- Production of a PCI brochure informing citizens of both partner countries as to the project specifics and benefits; and,
- Publication and curation of a joint project website at www.celticinterconnector.eu.

PCI Information Brochure

EirGrid, in co-ordination with RTE, have produced a 6-page information brochure, available in French and English, informing citizens of both partner countries as to the project specifics and benefits which clearly and concisely presents:

- The purpose of the project;
- The schedule of studies, procedures and works;

The brochure also states, in the form of reference to the appropriate websites:

- The development plan of each national network;
- The environmental assessment process;
- The measures making it possible to avoid, reduce and offset environmental impacts;
- The list of web addresses of the European Commission's transparency platform; and
- The public consultation arrangements.

The PCI information brochure is available on the EirGrid website²³. A bespoke UK version of the brochure will also be made available to ensure that relevant information is provided for UK based stakeholders, including those in the Isles of Scilly. Consultation in the UK is focussing on marine stakeholders given that the entirety of the route is in the UK's EEZ and does not directly interact with the UK's territory.

PCI Website

During the information and public participation phase in accordance with the TEN-E Regulation, EirGrid and RTE have made available common information in English and French relating to the Celtic Interconnector project on-line via a website www.celticinterconnector.eu.

The following information and features are available:

- The presentation of the project, its objectives, its schedule, its status as a Project of Common Interest within the meaning of European Union law;
- A link to the Ten-Year Network Development Plans (EirGrid and RTE);
- A link to the European Commission's transparency platform;
- A link to the list of Projects of Common Interest;
- A link to TYNDP 2018 European network ten-year development plan (ENTSO-E);
- A link to the EirGrid website concerning the consultation in Ireland;
- A link to the RTE website concerning the consultation in France;
- Dedicated e-mail addresses to contact the project managers: celticinterconnector@eirgrid.com and rte-celtic-interconnector@rte-france.com;
- The PCI information brochure on the project previously referred to;
- The timeline of the project and updates on the public consultations;

²³ <http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Celtic-Interconnector-Project-PCI-Information-Brochure.pdf>

- The contact details for obtaining all of the documents relating to the application; and
- The contact details to be used to send observations and objections during the public consultations.

Ongoing close cooperation with EirGrid's project partners is a critical part of the project development process, thereby ensuring that clear and correct information on the project is available to all European citizens and that all obligations with regard to public consultation and engagement are being met.

4.4 Network Development Plans

At a European level, the Celtic Interconnector has appeared in the Ten Year Network Development Plan (TYNDP) produced by ENTSO-E (European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity), without interruption since 2012.

The TYNDP is the reference tool enabling the European electricity transport system operators to assess, in a consistent and coherent manner, the interest of strengthening the European grid. In terms of public participation, the TYNDP 2018 was the subject of a public consultation from 3rd August to 21st September 2018.

The project also appears in the EirGrid Transmission Development Plan (TDP), the plan for the development of the Irish transmission network and interconnection over ten years, most recently from 2017 to 2027. A public consultation on the most recent TDP was held by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU). Following feedback received from the public consultation EirGrid incorporated feedback where possible, and updated the TDP. A final report was provided to the CRU on feedback received. A final version of the TDP was then prepared and submitted to the CRU for approval.

In France, the Celtic Interconnector project is also included in the Schéma Décennal de Développement du Réseau (SDDR), the Ten-Year Electricity Grid Development Plan drawn up on a regular basis by RTE since 2013. The most recent SDDR is mainly based on the up-to-date information from the multi-annual energy planning or Programmation Pluriannuelle de l'Énergie (PPE) which constitutes the basis of the energy future of France for the coming years and which was the subject of a public presentation on 25th January 2019.

The SDDR was the subject of a consultation within the Commission of Users of the Public Electricity Grid (CURTE) prior to publication in Spring 2019. Interconnection was also presented as part of the consultation with the Celtic Interconnector project being clearly identified.

4.5 National Consenting Process

There are various consents required in order to realise the Celtic Interconnector project and a summary of the public participation processes under the two principal statutory consents has been provided.

Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID)

The Statutory permitting authority for the onshore element of the Celtic Interconnector is An Bord Pleanála (ABP or “The Board”) through the SID consenting process. The SID process has its own public participation requirements as set down in the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended). In particular, there is a Statutory requirement for a “prospective applicant” to enter into pre-application discussions with the Board in order to determine whether or not the proposed project constitutes an SID project; the Board also provides other advice to the prospective applicant. There is no provision for public participation in the formal pre-application stage of an SID project (this is separate to the public participation activities that have been and will be undertaken by EirGrid in the project development process as described above) but the pre-application file is available for public inspection once the pre-application stage is complete. In addition, the Board advises that public participation on the project should be undertaken in parallel with the formal pre-application consultation process.

Before applying to the Board, the prospective applicant must publish notice of the proposed application in at least one newspaper circulating in the area, and generally also in a National newspaper. In addition, site notices will also be required in most cases. These notices will indicate the nature and location of the proposed development, that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and / or Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared (where required), the times and places where the application (and EIAR / NIS) can be inspected, that an application is to be made to the Board for planning permission / approval, the types of decisions which the Board may make 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.

The applicant must make the full application (including the EIAR / NIS (if required)) available for inspection and for purchase (for the reasonable cost of making the copy) for a period of at least six weeks within which time members of the public, the relevant local authorities, and other prescribed bodies may make submissions to the Board. The documentation will also be available for viewing and downloading on the internet on a dedicated SID project website provided by the applicant. The documents will also be available at the Board's offices and those of the planning authority in whose jurisdiction the proposed development would be located.

The Board has an absolute discretion whether to hold an oral hearing of any strategic infrastructure development case. The Board may not direct the holding of an oral hearing in all cases, particularly where the Board considers that the nature of the issues arising can be adequately and appropriately assessed by way of written submissions.

Foreshore Licence

The relevant permitting authority for that portion of the development within the foreshore is the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) through the consenting process under the Foreshore Act 1933 (as amended). DHPLG places a high priority on public participation during the assessment of foreshore applications. At pre-application stage, when the developer initially discusses the project with DHPLG (Marine Planning and Foreshore Section), the developer is encouraged to engage in pre-application consultations with stakeholders.

In accordance with the Aarhus Convention Implementation Guide, Irish legislation pertaining to Environmental Impact Assessment, Access to Information on the Environment and public participation procedures requires notices of applications to be published in a newspaper that is circulated in the relevant area and / or published on-line. The Foreshore Act 1933 (as amended) provides that an applicant, who has submitted an EIAR, must publish a notice in a newspaper circulating in the district in which is situated the foreshore to which the application relates stating:

- That the person has made an application and indicating the location and nature of the proposal to which the application relates;
- Stating that an EIAR has been prepared in respect of the proposal;
- Stating whether Section 19(c) of the Foreshore Act, which concerns applications that may have transboundary effects, applies to the proposal;
- Stating that the Minister is responsible for making a decision on the application and that the Minister may either grant, approve or consent to the application with or without covenants, conditions or agreements, where applicable, or refuse the application;
- Stating that submission, comments or questions in relation to the effects on the environment of the proposal may be made in writing to the appropriate Minister within 8 weeks from the publication of the notice;
- Specifying the times at which and the place where, within 8 weeks from the publication of the notice, a copy of the application, the EIAR and any other relevant report or information (including copies of any submissions, comments or questions received by the appropriate Minister may be inspected free of charge or purchased at a price to be determined by that Minister (which shall not be more than the reasonable cost of the making the copy or copies concerned).
- Where further information is subsequently received by DHPLG following a request by DHPLG, submissions or observations in relation to the further information may be made in writing within a specified period. A second newspaper notice may be required.
- Following the receipt of a foreshore licence application, DHPLG makes the following information available on its website free of charge:
 - Name of applicant
 - Date of application
 - Nature of development
 - All application documents including application form, EIARs (if any), Appropriate Assessment Screening, maps, drawings, reports etc.

5. Consultation Timeline

The Celtic Interconnector project has been in development between EirGrid and RTÉ since 2011, as shown in the project roadmap in Figure 13 below.

Phase Description	Preliminary Feasibility	Feasibility	Initial Design & Pre-Consultation	Detailed Design & Consents	Construction
Timetable	2011 – 2014	2014 – 2016	2016 – 2019	2020 – 2022	2022 – 2026
EirGrid / RTE Project Work Streams	Benefits Technology Costs	Marine survey Project Parameters Economic & Financial Analysis	Initial Design Pre-Consultation Investment Request Grant Application	Detailed Design EPC Procurement Consenting	Contract Award Manufacturing Energisation
EirGrid Framework for Grid Development		Step 1	Steps 2 - 4	Step 5	Step 6

Figure 13 - Celtic Interconnector Project Roadmap

EirGrid has been carrying out high level consultation and engagement with strategic stakeholders at a national level since inception and consultation and engagement with project stakeholders (including members of the public) from Step 2 since 2017, as per the timeline shown in Figure 14 below. Consultation and engagement will continue throughout Steps 4 and 5 at locations in East Cork relevant to the options identified for the project.

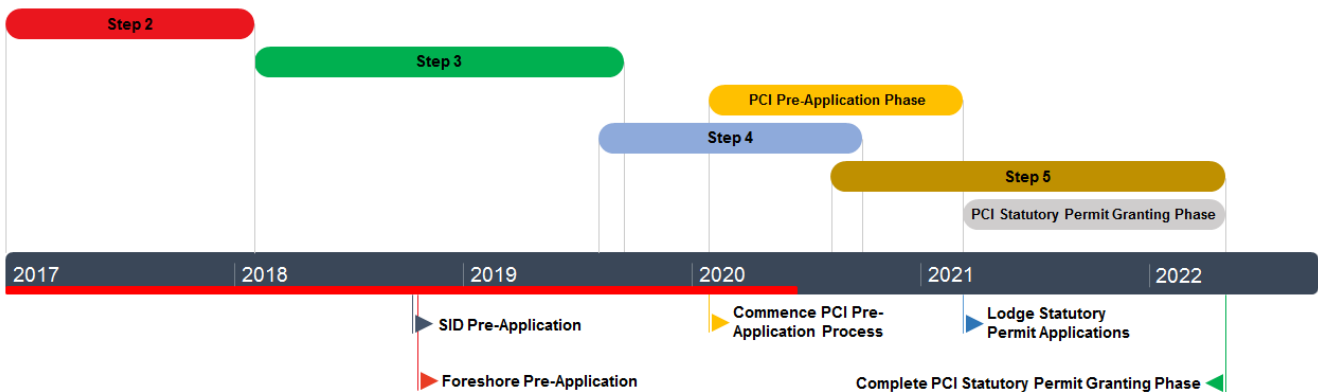


Figure 14 - Celtic Interconnector Project Consultation Timeline

6. Project Stakeholders

6.1 Stakeholder Identification

Engagement with stakeholders concerned by the project is a key part of each step of the EirGrid approach to grid development. Since the project's inception EirGrid has been continually identifying additional stakeholders who have an interest in the project. EirGrid maintains a stakeholder management database specific to the project which is updated on a regular basis.

The process of identifying stakeholders has been both:

- Proactive; and
- Passive.

Examples of proactive forms of stakeholder identification include:

- Stakeholder mapping workshops;
- Early stage communication and consultation activity;
- Advertised engagement events e.g. project meetings, conferences etc.;
- Community Liaison Officer activity in local areas;
- Review of desktop information e.g. data from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and the Property Registration Authority of Ireland (PRAI); and
- Engagement with statutory bodies.

Examples of passive forms of stakeholder identification include previously unidentified stakeholders interacting with the project in response to:

- Project website;
- Social media;
- Media reporting; and
- Word of mouth.

EirGrid is open and accessible to project stakeholders through dedicated phone, email and postal contact details which are available on all project material and on the project website.

6.2 Stakeholders Concerned

A non-exhaustive list of project stakeholders in Ireland is detailed in Table 2 below.

Stakeholder Type	Stakeholder Name
Community Organisations within Project Study Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Taisce Green Coast • Irish Farmers' Association • Clean Coasts Ballynamona • Youghal Residents Network, Cumann na Daoine • The Irish Environmental Network • Enterprise Youghal • South Coast Charter Angling • Youghal For All • Ironman • Ballycotton Development Company • Cork Tourist Information Centre • National Inshore Fisheries Forum • Inch Hideaway Eco-Sustainable Camp • Carrigtohill Community Council • Rocklands Residents Association • Cul Ard Residents Association • Carrigtohill United FC • Midleton MY PLACE Limited • Midleton GAA Club • Midleton Football Club • Midleton Rugby Club • Midleton Post Office • Midleton Pitch and Putt Club • Midleton Farmers Market • Midleton Country Market • Ballyspillane West & Surrounding Area Action Group • Knockraha Area Community Association • Lisgoold GAA Club • Lisgoold Community Childcare Centre • Brookfield Care Centre • Lisgoold / Leamlara Community Council • Leamlara Montessori School • Dungourney Church • Dungourney GAA Club • Dungourney Camogie Club • Midleton & Area Chamber of Commerce • SECAD Partnership • Youghal RNLI lifeboat station • Ballycotton Medical Centre • Ballycotton RNLI lifeboat station • Ballycotton Fisherman's Association • Youghal Fisherman's Association

Local Enterprise within Project Study Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perks Entertainment Centre • Claycastle Pitch & Putt Club • Summerfield Holiday Park • Seafield Caravan Park • Youghal Dive Charters / Deep Sea Angling • Ballymaloe House Restaurant • Inn by the Harbour • Garryvoe Hotel • Ballycotton Pitch and Putt Club • Stephen Pearce Pottery • Swell Surf School • East Cork Tourism Ltd. • Irish Distillers • Dairygold Co-Operative Society Ltd • Jasmine Villa Caravan and Camping Park • Barryscourt Castle • Nordic Enterprise Park Management Company • Europa Enterprise Park Management Company • Water Rock Golf Club • East Cork Golf Club • The Paddocks Holiday Village • The Thatched Inn • Castlemartyr Resort and Castlemartyr Golf Resort • Trabolgan Holiday Village
Regulatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission for Regulation of Utilities • Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
Political – Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Commission • European Parliament • French Government • MEPs
Political – National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of An Taoiseach • Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment • Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation • Oireachtas committees • TD's representing the constituencies of Cork
Political – Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern Regional Assembly • County Councillors representing East Cork and Cobh-Glanmire Municipal Districts
Policy – Europe, National, Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity (ENTSO-E) • Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI) • European Investment Bank (EIB)

Statutory Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Bord Pleanála • Cork County Council • Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine • Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht • Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government • Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment • Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport • Transport Infrastructure Ireland • Ervia (Irish Water and Gas Networks Ireland) • Electricity Supply Board • An Chomhairle Ealaíon (Arts Council) • Fáilte Ireland • An Taisce (the National Trust for Ireland) • The Heritage Council • Regional Fisheries Board • Sea Fisheries Protection Agency • Bord Iascaigh Mhara • Irish Aviation Authority • Córas Iompair Éireann • Health Service Executive • Environmental Protection Agency • Railway Safety Commission • Health and Safety Authority • The Defence Forces • Inland Fisheries Ireland • The Marine Institute
Industry Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDA • IBEC • Chambers Ireland • French Irish Chamber of Commerce • Cork Chamber of Commerce
Landowners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public and private landowners with a land holding of interest within project study area
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadcast • Press • Online media outlets at a local, national and European level

Table 2 - Project Stakeholders

6.3 Methods of Addressing Stakeholders

For each specific consultation held, project materials are prepared in order to enhance and support the consultation process with a view to securing effective engagement and enabling it to influence the location and form of the development. Engagement is carried out through various project specific means including public advertisements, written correspondence to project stakeholders and registered landowners, project information brochures, project specific web-site, consultation events and community outreach meetings.

Examples of engagement methods employed include (but are not limited to):

- Project Information Brochures (see examples in Figure 15 below);
- Correspondence via email and in writing;
- High level stakeholder events;
- Face to face meetings;
- Public Information Meetings;
- Presentation of cable samples and typical converter station model (see examples in Figure 24);
- Community Liaison Officer engaging at a local level on a regular basis with mobile phone / email contact details available in brochures and on website;
- Project team attendance at local events e.g. Energy Cork Annual Conference, INFOMAR Annual Conference, the Cork Summer Show etc.;
- Press releases;
- Advertising;
- Social media activity, e.g. proactive via posts on EirGrid and local community Facebook / Twitter accounts to advertise project and engagement events;
- Development of engaging collateral, e.g.: brochures, web pages, videos, etc.;
- Online feedback forms; and,
- Mobile Information Unit visits to locations within the study area.



Figure 15 - Celtic Interconnector Project Information Brochures

Photographs giving examples of some of the public consultations that have been carried out to date have been included in Appendix A2.

7. Human Resources

The Celtic Interconnector is being jointly developed between EirGrid and RTÉ. EirGrid is responsible for the development of the project in Ireland and is resourcing the project with internal staff and with the support of external consultants.

Some of the key resources in Ireland are listed in Table 3 and Table 4 below.

Role	Resource Name
Project Manager	Gary Nolan
Onshore Project Manager (Consultation / Consenting Process)	Eoghan Tuite
Offshore Lead / Fisheries Liaison Officer	Erlend Christiansen
Project Communications Specialist	Jamie Moore
Community Liaison Officer (Cork Based)	Michelle Walsh
Community Liaison Officer (Southern Region)	Eoghan O’Sullivan
Agricultural Liaison Officer	Seán Kenny

Table 3 - EirGrid Resources

Role	Resource Name
Lead Consenting Consultant	Mott MacDonald Ireland Limited

Table 4 - External Resources

Appendix A1 – TEN-E Annex VI

25.4.2013

EN

Official Journal of the European Union

L 115/73

ANNEX VI

GUIDELINES FOR TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- (1) The manual of procedures referred to in Article 9(1) shall at least specify:
 - (a) the relevant law upon which decisions and opinions are based for the different types of relevant projects of common interest, including environmental law;
 - (b) the relevant decisions and opinions to be obtained;
 - (c) the names and contact details of the Competent Authority, other authorities and major stakeholders concerned;
 - (d) the work flow, outlining each stage in the process, including an indicative time frame and a concise overview of the decision-making process;
 - (e) information about the scope, structure and level of detail of documents to be submitted with the application for decisions, including a checklist;
 - (f) the stages and means for the general public to participate in the process.
- (2) The detailed schedule referred to in Article 10(4)(b) shall specify as a minimum the following:
 - (a) the decisions and opinions to be obtained;
 - (b) the authorities, stakeholders, and the public likely to be concerned;
 - (c) the individual stages of the procedure and their duration;
 - (d) major milestones to be accomplished and their deadlines in view of the comprehensive decision to be taken;
 - (e) the resources planned by the authorities and possible additional resource needs.
- (3) 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.
- (4) 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.

- (5) 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.
- (6) The 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.
-

Appendix A2 – Examples of consultation to date



Figure 16 - Project information session held in Knockraha in May 2017

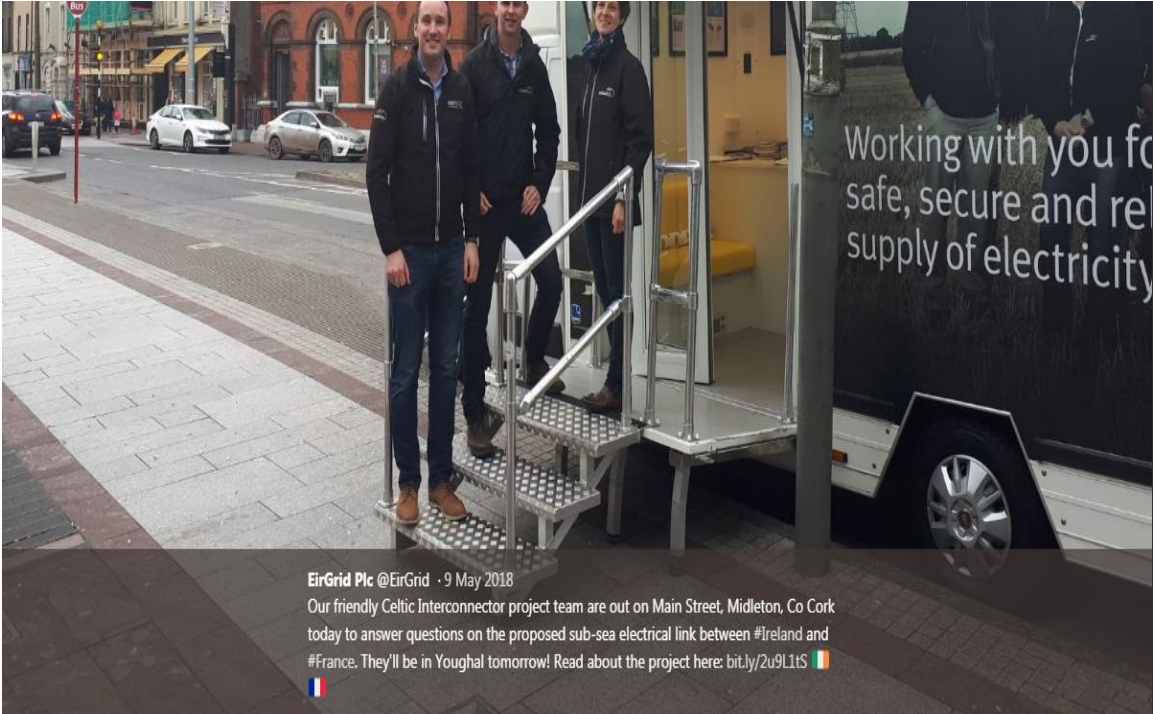


Figure 17 - Project information session held in Midleton in May 2018



Figure 18 - Project information session held in Youghal in May 2018



Figure 19 - Project information session held in Lisgoold in October 2018



Figure 20 - Project information session held in Cloyne in December 2018

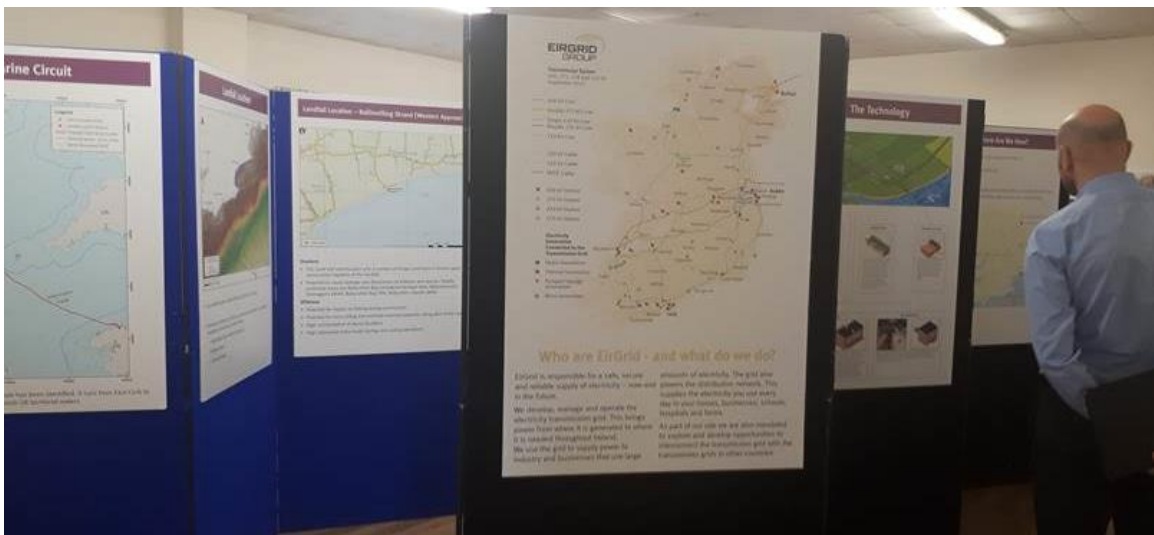


Figure 21 - Project information session held in Carrigtwohill in April 2019



Figure 22 - Project information session held in Midleton in May 2019



Figure 23 – Step 3 project information session held in Cloyne in May 2019



Figure 24 – Step 3 project information session held in Youghal in May 2019

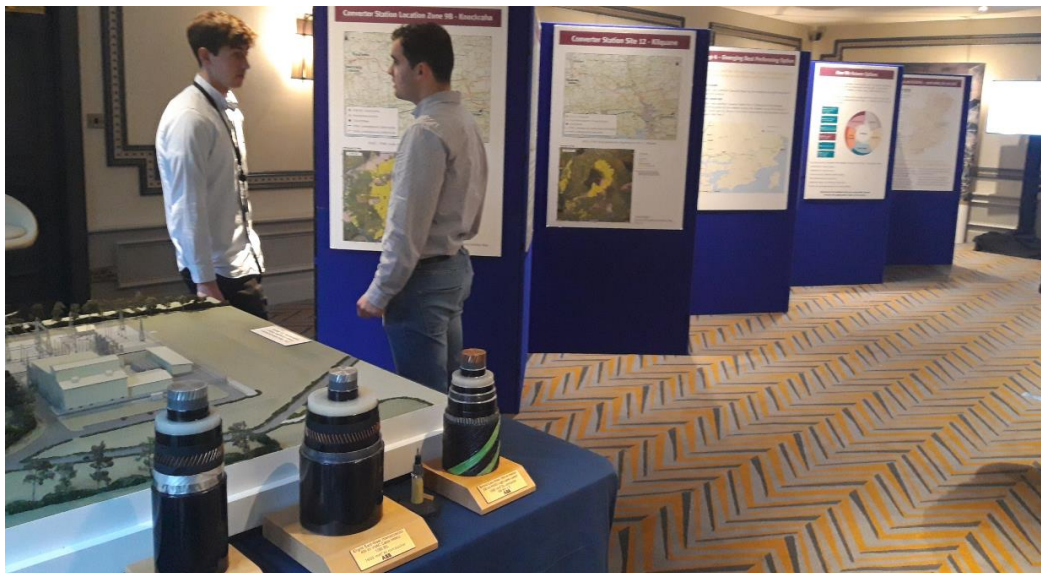


Figure 25 – Step 4 project information session held in Midleton in November 2019



Celtic Interconnector

We're here to talk.

EirGrid operates and develops the electricity grid in Ireland. We are responsible for a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity now and into the future.

Projects like the Celtic Interconnector are part of that future.

This project will carry electricity between France and Ireland, connecting Ireland to the European energy network.

We will be holding public meetings to discuss the Celtic Interconnector project at:

Glounthaune Church Centre, 26th September, 7.00 pm
Knockraha Community Centre, 26th September, 9.00 pm
Carrigtwohill Community Hall, 4th October, 7.15 pm
Lisgoold Community Hall, 4th October, 9.00 pm

Members of the project team will be available to provide an update on the project's development and answer your questions. We also want to hear your views on how we can best deliver this project. We look forward to meeting you there.



The current. The future.

www.eirgridgroup.com

Contact Michelle Walsh on **085 870 4999** or Eoghan O'Sullivan on **087 247 7732**
or email celticinterconnector@eirgrid.com

Figure 26 - Step 3 Public Meeting Advertisement 2018 (placed in local / national newspapers)



Celtic Interconnector

We're here to talk.

EirGrid operates and develops the electricity grid in Ireland. We are responsible for a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity now and into the future.

Projects like the Celtic Interconnector are part of that future.

This project will carry electricity between France and Ireland, connecting Ireland to the European energy network.

We will be holding public meetings to discuss the Celtic Interconnector project at:

Youghal on Monday 3rd December at the Cumann na Daoine Hall from 5pm – 8pm
Cloyne on Friday 7th December at the Cloyne Parochial Hall from 5pm – 8pm

Members of the project team will be available to provide an update on the project's development and answer your questions. We also want to hear your views on how we can best deliver this project. We look forward to meeting you there.



The current. The future.

www.eirgridgroup.com

Contact Michelle Walsh on **085 870 4999** or Eoghan O'Sullivan on **087 247 7732**
or email **celticinterconnector@eirgrid.com**

Figure 27 - Step 3 Public Meeting Advertisement 2018 (placed in local / national newspapers)



Celtic Interconnector

We're here to listen.

EirGrid operates and develops the electricity grid in Ireland. We are responsible for a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity now and into the future.

Projects like the Celtic Interconnector are part of that future.

This project will carry electricity between Ireland and France, directly connecting Ireland to the European energy network.

We are now consulting on this project, and invite you to attend one of our public information meetings in:

Lisgoold Community Centre	Tuesday 23 April	2pm – 8pm
Knockraha Community Centre	Wednesday 24 April	2pm – 8pm
Carrigtwohill Community Centre	Tuesday 30 April	6pm – 9pm
Midleton Park Hotel	Wednesday 1 May	2pm – 8pm
Cloyne Parochial Hall	Thursday 2 May	6pm – 9pm
Walter Raleigh Hotel, Youghal	Friday 3 May	2pm – 8pm

We want to hear your views and answer your questions on how we can best deliver this project. We look forward to meeting you there.



The current. The future.

www.eirgridgroup.com

Contact Michelle Walsh on **085 870 4999** or Eoghan O’Sullivan on **087 247 7732** or email celticinterconnector@eirgrid.com

Figure 28 – Step 3 Public Consultation Advertisement 2019 (placed in local / national newspapers)



Celtic Interconnector

We're here to listen.

EirGrid operates and develops the electricity grid in Ireland. We are responsible for providing a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity now and into the future.

Projects like the Celtic Interconnector are part of that future.

The Celtic Interconnector will carry electricity between Ireland and France, directly linking Ireland to the European energy network.

Between 11th November 2019 and 2nd February 2020, we are holding a public consultation on the project.

If you have questions about the proposals or would like to share your views, please come along to one of our public information evenings in:

Knockraha Community Centre	Monday 18 November	4 pm – 9 pm
Carrigtwohill Community Hall	Tuesday 19 November	4pm – 8 pm
Midleton Park Hotel	Friday 22 November	4 pm – 8 pm
Midleton Park Hotel	Saturday 23 November	12 pm – 5 pm
Walter Raleigh Hotel, Youghal	Wednesday 27 November	12 pm – 8 pm
Castlemartyr Resort Hotel	Thursday 28 November	4 pm – 8 pm
Killeagh Community Centre	Friday 29 November	4 pm - 8 pm

There will also be a feedback form on our website where you can give us your thoughts.

If you want to find out more, see www.eirgridgroup.com

We look forward to hearing your views.



The current. The future.



Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

www.eirgridgroup.com

Contact Michelle Walsh on **085 870 4999** or Eoghan O'Sullivan on **087 247 7732**
or email celticinterconnector@eirgrid.com

Figure 29 – Step 4 Public Consultation Advertisement 2019 (placed in local / national newspapers)

Appendix B: Information Leaflet prepared in accordance with Annex VI (5) of the TEN-E Regulation



Le réseau
de transport
d'électricité



The current. The future.

Celtic Interconnector

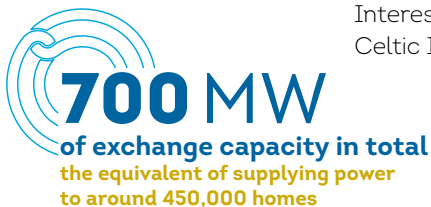
Connecting the electricity
grids of Ireland and France



Co-financed by the Connecting Europe
Facility of the European Union

Celtic Interconnector

Connecting the electricity grids of Ireland and France



The Celtic Interconnector project aims to create an electrical interconnection between Ireland and France to allow the exchange of electricity between the two countries. It is being developed by EirGrid, the electricity transmission system operator in Ireland and its French counterpart, Réseau de Transport d'Électricité.

The connection will link the existing electricity substation located in Knockraha (in East Cork, Ireland) to the substation in La Martyre (Finistère). Recognised as a Project of Common Interest (PCI) by the European Union, the Celtic Interconnector project responds

to European challenges regarding energy transition and addresses climate change by facilitating progress towards a low-carbon electricity mix. It will contribute to a more secure and a more sustainable electricity supply and will place downward pressure on electricity prices.

The benefits of the project



To facilitate the movement of electricity flows on a European scale

By facilitating electricity flows throughout Ireland, France and continental Europe, the Celtic Interconnector will enable European consumers to benefit from a more open electricity market.



To strengthen the security of supply between countries

The Celtic Interconnector will strengthen the security of electricity supply between the two countries enabling them to rely on one another in the case of unexpected events and interruptions to supply (technical incidents, spikes in consumption...).



To support the development of a more sustainable electricity mix in Ireland and France

The Celtic Interconnector will contribute to the European objectives of a low-carbon energy future, facilitating increased levels of renewables being integrated into the European electricity system. On a wider level, the project is part of plans for a European wide electricity network and will enable Ireland to benefit directly from the integrated European electricity market.

A subsea electricity link across the Celtic Sea

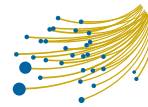
The Celtic Interconnector consists of a proposed 575 km long high voltage direct current (HVDC) connection between the electrical networks of Ireland (East Cork) and France (Brittany).



1 Connection to the Irish electricity network

The interconnector will be connected to the 220kV electrical substation in Knockraha, located in East Cork, Ireland. Onshore infrastructure associated with the interconnector will include a 220kV alternating current (AC) underground connection between the existing Knockraha substation and a new converter station and an underground direct current (DC) connection between the converter station and a landfall point on the Irish coast, where it will meet the subsea connection. The 30 to 40 km long underground connections would be primarily installed beneath the existing road network.

Did you know?

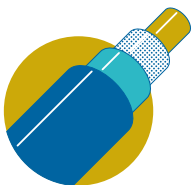


An additional benefit of the Celtic Interconnector will be the provision of a direct telecommunications link between Ireland and France (and continental Europe).

2 The subsea connection

Approximately 500 km long, the subsea connection will link the coast of Cork and the Ceinture Dorée (Gold Belt) coast in Brittany, passing to the west of the Isles of Scilly. Preliminary studies and detailed physical marine surveys have enabled the identification of a preferred route for the cable which avoids the most challenging areas and consequently minimises the environmental impact and any disruption to maritime users. The electrical cable will be either buried beneath the seabed or laid on the seabed and covered for protection.

Did you know?



The subsea cable will not be visible at the landfall point. The underground cable will connect to the subsea cable by way of an underground transition joint and the landfall point will be fully re-instated following the completion of the works.

3 Connection to the French electricity network

The subsea cable from Ireland and the underground cable in France will meet on the east Ceinture Dorée coast. Onshore infrastructure associated with the interconnector will include an underground direct current connection between the French coast and the converter station and a 400kV alternating current underground connection to the La Martyre substation. The length of the underground connections will be approximately 40 km.

Environmental considerations

EirGrid and Réseau de Transport d'Électricité are committed to protecting and respecting communities and the environment affected by the interconnector in each country. They are also committed to preserving the natural environment and have appointed specialist firms to carry out specific environmental analyses, including ecological assessments, for the future connection and the converter stations. EirGrid and Réseau de Transport d'Électricité are working with local stakeholders and associations to carry out these environmental studies which will provide clarification on the project and assist with the development of a specific route while protecting the flora and fauna and any areas of environmental concern. The environmental studies carried out will inform an Environmental Impact Assessment of the project. Measures will be taken to avoid, prevent, reduce, and if possible offset significant adverse effects on the environment. Potential impacts in both terrestrial and marine environments include habitat loss and/or deterioration, water pollution, instream works, and disturbance or displacement of protected species. Mitigation options potentially include timing of works (e.g. to avoid sensitive seasons) sequencing of works (e.g. to implement mitigation first), and use of sensitive construction practices. In both terrestrial and marine environments, monitoring of construction will inform adaptive management of mitigation (e.g. to resolve mitigation conflicts, or to avail of new technologies).

4 The converter stations

To enable the routing of electricity to consumers, the connection to the AC electricity transmission system in Ireland and in France requires the construction of a converter station in each country. Each converter station requires a surface area of approximately 4 hectares, including a building which will measure up to 20-25 metres in height extending over approximately 0.5 ha. Public consultation and environmental studies will be an important consideration in the identification of a best performing option for the converter station and the AC connection, while taking account of environmental concerns.



Example of a converter station

Celtic Interconnector

A European Project of Common Interest

Project Timeline

2014/ 2016	Feasibility Phase
2017/ 2018	Initial Design & Pre-Consultation Phase
2019/ 2021	Detailed Design and Consents Phase
2022/ 2026	Construction Phase

National Grid Development Plans

At a European level, the Celtic Interconnector features in the Ten Year Network Development Plan (TYNDP) produced by ENTSO-E (European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity) since 2012. In Ireland, the project is a part of the EirGrid Transmission Development Plan (TDP), the plan for the development of the Irish transmission network and interconnection over ten years, most recently from 2018 to 2027. In France, the project is also included in the Schéma Décennal de Développement du Réseau (SDDR), the Ten-Year Electricity Grid Development Plan drawn up on a regular basis by Réseau de Transport d'Électricité since 2013.

To learn more

EirGrid Transmission Development Plan:

www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Transmission-Development-Plan-2018-2027.pdf

Ten Year Network Development Plan (Réseau de Transport d'Électricité):

www.rte-france.com/en/article/ten-year-network-development-plan

Public Information (European Commission):

ec.europa.eu/info/about-european-commission/service-standards-and-principles/transparency_en

PCI Manual of Permit Granting Process Procedures (An Bord Pleanála):

www.pleanala.ie/PCI/PCIManual.htm

TYNDP 2018 - European Ten Year Network Development Plan (ENTSO-E):

tyndp.entsoe.eu

Alternatives Considered

A range of assessments have been carried out to date on the project. In Ireland two separate connection points were considered for the project, at Knockraha in East Cork and at Great Island in West Wexford. Six separate marine route corridors were also considered during the feasibility phase of the project. EirGrid confirmed in 2018 that the best performing location for the project to connect in Ireland was in East Cork and that the best performing marine route ran from Cork to Brittany and avoids UK territorial waters.

Working towards a carbon-free Europe (by 2030)

- Each country must have an electrical interconnection capacity of at least **15%** of its installed generation capacity
- **40%** reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990 levels
- A renewable energy target of at least **27%** of final energy consumption by 2030
- Achieve targets for an improvement in energy efficiency at EU level of at least **27%** (rising to **30%**)

A Project of Common Interest

The European Union recognised the Celtic Interconnector as a Project of Common Interest (PCI) for the Northern Seas Offshore Grid (NSCOG) priority corridor in October 2013. This was reconfirmed in November 2017. The Celtic Interconnector project is seen as a key contributor to the European Energy Transition for Ireland, France and Europe.

Working together to build the network of tomorrow

Let us hear your views

EirGrid and Réseau de Transport d'Électricité are both examining the project in accordance with their national procedures. Moreover, as the Celtic Interconnector has been identified as a Project of Common Interest (PCI), both promoters will ensure provision of information to and participation of the public, in accordance with European requirements.

EirGrid's Six Step Process for developing projects in Ireland

Many people might not take an active interest in a project at the start of the development process. However, it is important that we gather stakeholder views before this point.

We want stakeholders to know how and why we plan our projects, so we can receive feedback as early as possible.

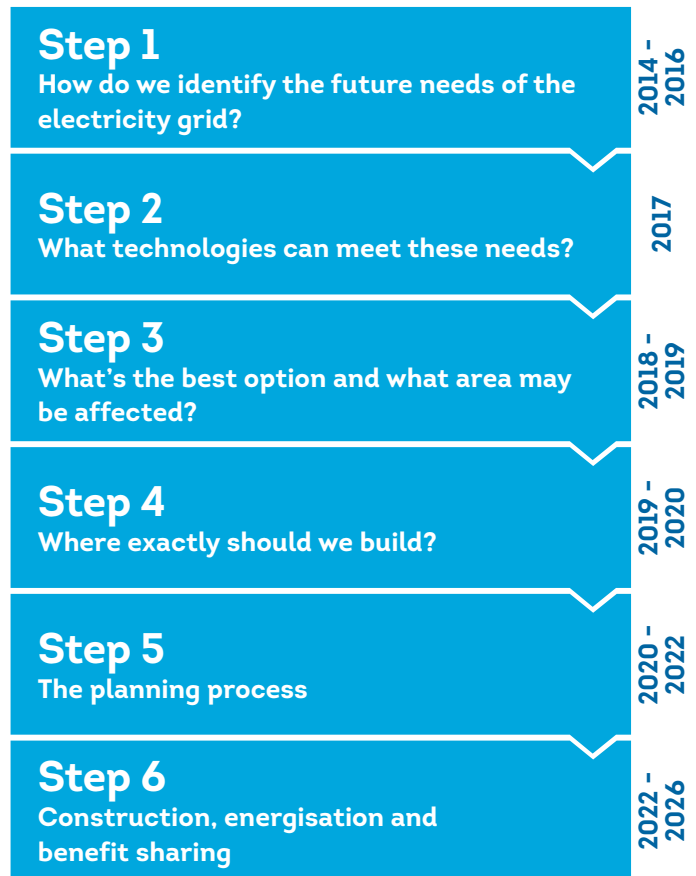
Designing an electricity transmission project can be a complex and lengthy process.

Because of this, we use a consistent project planning process to explore options and make decisions. This means we follow the same steps for every project.

The decision-making tools we use, and the amount of engagement we carry out at each step, depends on the scale and complexity of each project.

What is happening now in Ireland?

At EirGrid we follow a step by step approach to planning the grid. This approach facilitates engagement and consultation with our stakeholders and the public which helps us to explore options fully and make more informed decisions.



For further information

On the project and its development:
www.celticinterconnector.eu

EirGrid project website:

www.eirgridgroup.com/the-grid/projects/celtic-interconnector

Réseau de Transport d'Électricité project website:

www.rte-france.com/celtic-interconnector

PCI Procedures Manual (French):

www.ecologique-solidaire.gouv.fr/interconnexions-electriques-manuel-des-procedures

PCI Procedures Manual (English):

www.pleanala.ie/PCI/PCIManual.htm

The project teams

EirGrid

Gary Nolan, Project Manager Ireland
Eoghan Tuite, Consultation Process Manager Ireland

celticinterconnector@EirGrid.com

Réseau de Transport d'Électricité

Eric Thébault, Project Manager France
Gaëlle Chevreau, Consultation Process Manager France

rte-celtic-interconnector@rte-france.com

Appendix C: Advertisements - Selection of Advertisements Used



Celtic Interconnector

We're here to talk.
Main Street, Midleton, 9th May.
Youghal, Market Square, 10th May.

EirGrid operates and develops the electricity grid in Ireland. We are responsible for a safe, secure and reliable source of electricity now and in the future.

Projects like the Celtic Interconnector are part of that future. This project will improve the security of Ireland's electricity supply for decades to come.

Members of our team will be available to answer your questions on **Wednesday 9th May** at **Main Street, Midleton, Co Cork** or **Thursday 10th May** at **Youghal, Market Square** from **10am – 4pm**.


EIRGRID
The current. The future.

www.eirgrid.com

Contact Eoghan O'Sullivan on 087 247 7732 or email Eoghan.OSullivan@Eirgrid.com

www.eirgridgroup.com THE ORIGINAL MIDLETON AND DISTRICT NEWS Wednesday, September 19th, 2012



Celtic Interconnector

We're here to talk.

EirGrid operates and develops the electricity grid in Ireland. We are responsible for a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity now and into the future.

Projects like the Celtic Interconnector are part of that future.

This project will carry electricity between France and Ireland, connecting Ireland to the European energy network.

We will be holding public meetings to discuss the Celtic Interconnector project at:

- Glounthaune Church Centre, 26th September, 7.00 pm**
- Knockraha Community Centre, 26th September, 9.00 pm**
- Carrigtwohill Community Hall, 4th October, 7.15 pm**
- Lisgoold Community Hall, 4th October, 9.00 pm**

Members of the project team will be available to provide an update on the project's development and answer your questions. We also want to hear your views on how we can best deliver this project. We look forward to meeting you there.




EIRGRID

The current. The future.

www.eirgridgroup.com

Contact Michelle Walsh on 085 870 4999 or Eoghan O'Sullivan on 087 247 7732
or email celticinterconnector@eirgrid.com




**Keeping our electricity,
and our conversations, flowing.**

EirGrid operates and develops the national grid, making sure we all have electricity when and where we need it.

In these difficult times we continue to plan for a brighter future, carrying out critical development work on the Celtic Interconnector – a planned subsea cable linking Ireland's and France's electricity grids. You can find the latest project update and consultation report online at http://bit.ly/Celtic_Interconnector_Update.

While we can't meet you face to face right now, we want to keep you informed about what's happening. If you have questions or any views to share, please contact us via email at celticinterconnector@eirgrid.com. You can also speak directly to our Community Liaison Officers, Michelle Walsh on 085 870 4999 or Eoghan O'Sullivan on 087 247 7732 . We're still here to answer your questions.


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The Celtic Interconnector

Thank you for having your say

EirGrid runs the electricity grid in Ireland, and connects with neighbouring grids. We've been asked by the government to make the grid more resilient, so that 70% of Ireland's electricity can come from renewable sources by 2030. The Celtic Interconnector project is key to this goal. It will connect national grids in France and Ireland, allowing us to export and import power when needed.

For several years we've been listening to the views of people in Cork about how this project will be delivered and can now confirm our proposal.

The Celtic Interconnector will reach Ireland at Claycastle Beach, near Youghal. An underground cable will run inland on the national road passing the villages of Killeagh and Castlemartyr - where we are still deciding the best route. The cable will continue north of Middleton on local roads to the converter station at Ballyadam with the final connection by underground cable from Ballyadam to a substation on the national grid at Knockraha.

We are grateful to you for contributing to our decisions and will continue to engage with you. We will now prepare to apply for planning permission. To learn more about this project please visit eirgrid.ie/CelticInterconnector.



EIRGRID
Delivering a cleaner energy future

Co-financed by the European Union
Connecting Europe Facility The European Commission has designated the Celtic Interconnector as a Project of Common Interest.

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Appendix D: Copy of the Online Step 3 and Step 4 Consultation Form

Step 3 Online Consultation Form



Registration questions

First name

Last name

Email address

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

- Yes
 No

Name of organisation (if applicable)

House number or name

Address line 1

Address line 2

Town

County

Phone number

Eircode

Your personal data will be securely stored by EirGrid Group as the data controller, and by Traverse (a UK-based consultation company) as the data processor authorised by EirGrid Group, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018), to assist in the work related to the subject of this consultation. This consultation questionnaire is being hosted on Snap Surveys: please see their [GDPR statement](#).

Responses to this consultation will be analysed and may be included in a publicly available summary report. For quotes made by individuals the quote will be displayed but the respondent's name will not. For responses made on behalf of an organisation, the organisation name will be displayed together with the quote, but not the name of the individual who made the response.

Please indicate if you would prefer your response to remain confidential, and not used for reporting purposes.

- I would not like my response to be quoted in a report summarising feedback.

Please read the statements below, and tick to agree to both, before clicking "Next" and taking part in this consultation

- I have read the above information and understand the purpose of the consultation, and how my responses will be used.

- I consent to providing data, which will be stored and processed in line with the information given above, and via [EirGrid's Privacy Statement](#)

If you wish to withdraw your consent at any time, please contact dpo@eirgrid.com

Please indicate whether you would like EirGrid to maintain contact with you about the Celtic Interconnector project:

- I give EirGrid permission to contact me during the design, application and development of the Celtic Interconnector project.

This questionnaire contains questions on both the proposed shortlists of landfall locations and converter station location zones. You are welcome to complete only one or both of these sets of questions. At the end of the survey there are also some general questions on the project as a whole and on the consultation process.



Converter station location zone


Q1. In your view, how important is it for us to consider each of the following aspects when choosing the converter station location zone? Please choose from the options below.

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not important at all	Don't know
Agriculture and land quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Air quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Climate change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health and security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Historic environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Landscape and visual	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local economy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sound, noise and vibration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Traffic and transport	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Waste and material resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wildlife, ecology and biodiversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify below at Q2b)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q2a. Do you agree with the shortlist of converter station location zones identified?

- Yes
- No
- Neutral
- Not sure

Q2b. Please provide reasons for your answer.





Landfall location

Q1. In your view, how important is it for us to consider each of the following aspects when choosing the landfall location? Please choose from the options below.

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not important at all	Don't know
Agriculture and land quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Air quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Climate change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health and security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Historic environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Landscape and visual	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local economy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sea, freshwater and flood risk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sound, noise and vibration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Traffic and transport	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Waste and material resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wildlife, ecology and biodiversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify below at Q2b)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q2a. Do you agree with the shortlist of landfall locations identified?

- Yes
- No
- Neutral
- Not sure

Q2b. Please provide reasons for your answer.



General comments

Q1. What is your view on the Celtic Interconnector Project? Please select one option from below.

- A very positive step for Ireland
- A positive step for Ireland
- Neither a positive nor a negative step for Ireland
- A negative step for Ireland
- A very negative step for Ireland

Q2. Finally, here is an opportunity for you to comment generally. You may have something else to say about the landfall locations or converter station location zones overall, or the decision-making process which led to these shortlists. Is there anything else you would like to say?

Consultation process

Q3. Have you attended any of the public information events? If so, please select which event(s) you attended below.

- Carrigtwohill
- Cloyne
- Knockraha
- Lisgoold
- Middleton
- Youghal

Q4. How did you first hear about this consultation? Please select one option from below.

- Correspondence from EirGrid
- Online/social media
- Newspaper
- Poster
- TV/radio
- Word of mouth
- Other (please specify)

Please specify:

Q5. Please rate the following areas of the consultation:

	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	Don't know
Q5a. Consultation events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q5b. Consultation materials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q5c. Promotion of the consultation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q6. Please provide us with any comments you may have on the consultation process.

Q7. Would you like to receive more information about the project?

Yes
 No

Q8. If so, how would you like to receive this information?


Email
 Project website
 Public events
 Other

Please specify:

Q9. As the project progresses, what aspects would you like to find out more about?

Construction timelines
 Cable routing options
 Visual impact of the development
 Other

Please specify:



Step 4 Online Consultation Form

Celtic Interconnector Step 4 Consultation questionnaire



Responding to the consultation

Submit your response by midnight 02 February 2020 (you only need to submit once, using one of the channels below).



Post this form (**free**): EirGrid, The Oval, 160 Shelbourne Road, Freepost FDN5312, Dublin 4, D04 FW28



Online: You can fill in the consultation questionnaire at bit.ly/celticconsultation



Email: If you want to submit your response by email, send it to celticinterconnector@eirgrid.com

What we are consulting on

We are seeking feedback on three converter station sites (12, 9B and 1), the emerging best performing landfill location, underground cable route options, and community gain. Before responding, please familiarise yourself with updated project information, available here www.eirgridgroup.com/the-grid/projects/celtic-interconnector. Please contact us if you would like to receive a hard copy of any reports

Personal details

All information provided to EirGrid will be held by EirGrid personnel and EirGrid's data processors only, for the purpose of engaging with you in the public consultation process.

First name

Surname

Email

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation? Yes No

Name of organisation (if applicable)

Role in organisation (if applicable)

House number / name Eircode

Address line 1

Address line 2

County Phone Number

I have been informed of the GDPR Privacy Statement and received a copy of the Privacy Notice
I would like to be contacted about the Celtic Interconnector Project

Section 1 – Converter station site

Please refer to the Celtic Interconnector Project Update brochure for the Step 4 Consultation and the Step 4A Consultant's Development Options Report for further information on the converter station sites.

1. We identified converter station sites in each zone by considering a number of factors including visual impact, distance from potentially sensitive receptors, including homes and businesses, feedback from the Step 3 consultation, and the number of landholdings that the site covers. These converter station sites were then assessed under EirGrid's five criteria (deliverability, environment, socio-economic, technical, and economic).

Please provide your comments on the assessment process and studies undertaken.

If you need additional space, continue on separate paper with the question number and include it when you post this form

2. EirGrid is moving forward, focussing on three converter station sites (12, 9B and 1) for further review before confirming the best performing option at the end of Step 4. Please provide your comments and any new information about these sites that we should consider.

- a. Site 12

If you need additional space, continue on separate paper with the question number and include it when you post this form

- b. Site 9B

If you need additional space, continue on separate paper with the question number and include it when you post this form

- c. Site 1

If you need additional space, continue on separate paper with the question number and include it when you post this form

3. Four sites (Site 6, Site 9A, Site 10 and Site 14) did not perform as well in our assessments. Please provide any new information about these sites that we should consider.

If you need additional space, continue on separate paper with the question number and include it when you post this form

Section 2 – Landfall location and underground cable route options

Please refer to the Celtic Interconnector Project Update brochure for the Step 4 Consultation and the Step 4A Consultant's Development Options Report for further information on the landfall locations and underground cable route options.

4. We have identified the landfall location at Claycastle Beach as the emerging best performing option. Please provide your comments on the assessment process and studies undertaken.

If you need additional space, continue on separate paper with the question number and include it when you post this form

5. We have identified underground cable routes from the landfall location at Claycastle Beach to Churchtown (east of Midleton) and from Churchtown (east of Midleton) to the converter station sites 12, 9B and 1 and onwards to the connection point (refer to maps available in the brochure). Please provide any comments you may have relating to any of the routes mentioned (if your comments are about a specific section of the route, highlight it clearly).

If you need additional space, continue on separate paper with the question number and include it when you post this form

Section 3 – Working with the community

6. Please provide any ideas you have for how a community fund could best be applied in the affected East Cork communities, where and how the area could benefit, and what support we could give to ensure it is a success.

If you need additional space, continue on separate paper with the question number and include it when you post this form

7. We are considering setting up a local advisory group after Step 4, to represent communities in the area of the best performing option. What organisations and/or groups do you feel should be involved?

If you need additional space, continue on separate paper with the question number and include it when you post this form

Section 4 – General

8. What is your view of the effect of the Celtic Interconnector Project on Ireland? (tick only one)

- Very positive
 Positive
 Neither positive nor negative
 Negative
 Very negative
 No opinion/don't know

9. What do you think of the quality of each of the following aspects of this consultation?

	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	No opinion/ don't know
Promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. How did you first hear about this consultation? (tick only one)

- Correspondence from EirGrid
 Newspaper
 Online / social media
 Word of mouth
 Other (please specify)

11. Provide any comments on these or any other aspects of the consultation below:

Next steps

Your feedback on our proposals, alongside results from further studies, will help us decide which converter station site option, landfall location and underground cable route to take forward for further development at the end of step 4. Please note, we will be unable to respond to individual feedback. We will collate all responses to the consultation and publish a report in response.

Contact details for Celtic Interconnector Project

Michelle Walsh, Celtic Interconnector Community Liaison Officer: +353 85 870 4999

Eoghan O'Sullivan, Community Liaison Officer: +353 87 247 7732

EirGrid Customer Relations: +353 1 237 0472

Email: celticinterconnector@eirgrid.com - info@eirgrid.com

Websites: www.eirgridgroup.com/the-grid/projects/celtic-interconnector - www.celticinterconnector.eu

The Oval, 160 Shelbourne Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin D04 FW28 - Telephone: 01 677 1700 - www.eirgrid.com

Appendix E: List of Relevant Publicly Available Documentation

The following documentation is available on EirGrid's project specific website for the Celtic Interconnector Project at <https://www.eirgridgroup.com/the-grid/projects/celtic-interconnector/related-documents/>. Many of the documents referred to in this Volume 2B Public and Landowner Consultation Report can be accessed via this website.

Step 5 Documents

- Cable Route Options Review Report
- Webinar Slide Deck Presentation - April 2021
- Community Forum Information Evening - 21 April 2021
- Celtic Interconnector Webinar - Wednesday 7 April 2021
- Celtic Interconnector Webinar - Thursday 8 April 2021

Step 4 Documents:

- Step 4B Consultant's Development Options Report
- Step 4B Brochure (Winter 2020)
- Step 4B - Press release
- Step 4 Overview Presentation
- Cable Route Map
- Video: What does a converter station look like?
- Celtic Interconnector Underground Cable Brochure
- Celtic Interconnector Webinar (August 2020)
- Step 4 Project Update Document (Spring 2020)
- Step 4 Consultation Report
- Preliminary Acoustic Study Report
- Step 4 Brochure (Winter 2019 - 2020)
- Step 4A Consultant's Development Options Report

Step 4 Maps:

- Claycastle - Landfall location and cable route
- Kilquane - Converter station option and cable route
- Knockraha - Converter station option and cable route
- Ballyadam - Converter station option and cable route

Step 3 Documents:

- Preferred Options Report
- Consultation Response Document
- Consultation Report
- Project Update Brochure - Step 3 Consultation (Spring 2019)
- Offshore Constraints Report
- Onshore Constraints Report and Mapping
- Strategic Social Impact Assessment Scoping Report
- Performance Matrix Assessments
- Project Update Brochure (2018)

Step 2 Documents:

- Project Update Brochure (2017)
- Marine Route Investigations Report
- Social Impact Assessment - Social Baseline Report
- Feasibility Phase - Network Analysis

Step 2 Land Reports:

- Land Report 1 - Feasibility Study - Converter Station Site and Route Identification in Ireland and Associated Mapping (All maps associated with this study are available for download via hyperlinks throughout the report)
- Land Report 2

Health:

- The Electrical Grid and Your Health

Project of Common Interest Process:

- Project of Common Interest Information Brochure
- Letter from Competent Authority to EirGrid Approving Concept for Public Participation (2020)
- EirGrid Concept for Public Participation (2020)
- Letter from Competent Authority to EirGrid Acknowledge Project of Common Interest Notification (2019)
- Pre-Application Notification from EirGrid to Competent Authority (2018)