



Stakeholder Engagement
Strategy Review 2019



The current. The future.



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1. Introduction

This document is a review of EirGrid's stakeholder engagement activity in 2019. We believe that working together with all stakeholders – customers and industry, the public and local communities – leads to better outcomes that reflect all views.

In 2019 we published an annual Stakeholder Engagement Plan for the first time. In that plan, we explained our approach to engagement – including how we identify stakeholders and how we work to involve them in key decisions. The plan for 2019 set out our scheduled engagements for that year. It detailed the purpose of each engagement and the stakeholder groups we wanted to hear from. It then explained how to get involved and encouraged more stakeholders to take part.

The aim of the document you are now reading is to assess the effectiveness of our completed 2019 engagement. Following an overview of how we are working to improve our engagement, we provide a summary of our engagement in 2019 with customers, industry and on grid development projects. We then highlight five case studies of engagement carried out in 2019 that affect all electricity users – industry or consumers. In an appendix we also present a table of EirGrid consultations and EirGrid organised fora and workshops in 2019.

We are publishing this draft report for consultation, as part of a broader review process. We want to hear from you, our stakeholders, with your views of how we engaged in 2019. We welcome your constructive feedback, so we can develop and refine our engagement in future. We will publish an updated and final version of this review after we receive your feedback to this draft.

Engage for better outcomes for all and work with partners for positive change

Our strategy for 2020-25 strategy includes a commitment to seek innovative new ways to engage. Our aim is to achieve world-class standards, and to deliver better results as a consequence. To achieve the scale of transformation required by climate change will require significant increases in the scope and frequency of our stakeholder engagement. This review of our engagement in 2019 will help us improve this work in future years – which is essential, as we have much work to do in this area.

We will need to engage with industry, so we can integrate renewables, interconnectors and new technologies. Similarly, we will need to engage with industry for system services to help the grid successfully meet our renewables targets. We will need to engage with landowners and their communities. This is to ensure we earn their informed consent to host the next generation of grid infrastructure. Finally, we will need to engage with the Government and regulator. This will ensure we meet the required targets as cost-effectively and efficiently as possible.

A summary of our engagement principles

- We will communicate clearly with stakeholders, including plain English summaries of proposals and other relevant documents.
- We will allow enough time for stakeholders to consider the information we have given – and to give us their views.
- Anybody who wishes to respond will be able to do so.
- We will offer clear opportunities to engage with us.
- We will explain the decisions we need to make – and the timelines.
- We will communicate with all stakeholders who have taken the time to engage with us. We will explain how their feedback shaped our eventual decision or approach.

These principles are applied to our engagement with all our stakeholders and form the basis of all engagement with industry, customers and members of the public.

2. Who we are and what we do

We develop, manage and operate the transmission grid and electricity market in Ireland. The grid transports power from where it is generated to where it is needed. It brings 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. We balance supply and demand every minute of the day, while also planning for Ireland's long-term electricity needs.

EirGrid also develops and operates interconnections with neighbouring grids, as well as enabling interconnections developed and operated by third parties.

We implement government and EU policy in Ireland. We act independently and in the public interest. We are regulated as a monopoly service provider. We perform our services for the benefit of every electricity user, and to support the economy.

The context in which we work

Delivering energy to consumers in Ireland requires us to operate within a complex environment. We actively engage with policy makers, industry and society at all levels, from local to European, in line with our strategy. However, we are also a regulated business, and our engagement takes place within a regulatory environment which we must have regard to. Our engagement strategy provides the principles and tools to ensure that, whether we are talking to our customers or local communities, we are clear about our regulatory obligations and our objectives.



3. Improving our Engagement

In 2019 the Commission for Regulation of Utilities set up the Networks Stakeholders Engagement Evaluation Panel. This body reviewed and published a report on our engagement in 2018. We have used these recommendations in addition to stakeholder feedback to improve:

Stakeholder Engagement Plans

- In 2019, we committed to consulting on and publishing our Stakeholder Engagement Plans. We first published our 2019 plan and are currently consulting on our proposed 2020 plan.

Improving Processes and Engaging Consistently

- We now set objectives and measures of success for all our engagement activities. This includes highlighting an objective for each engagement in our published plans.
- We are also piloting improvements to our engagement with customers and industry. This aims to learn from the improvements made in engaging with the public on grid development projects.

Culture of Engagement

- It is our aim to encourage a culture of engagement at all levels and in all parts or areas or functions in EirGrid. Our commitment to this can be seen in our strategy for 2020-25, where “engagement for better outcomes for all” is a key objective. In late 2019, EirGrid started to evolve its organisational structure to optimise delivery of our strategic goals, including this commitment to better engagement.

Learning from others and implementing best practice

- As part of the development of the EirGrid Group Strategy in 2019, we engaged with other TSOs to understand their approaches to customer and stakeholder engagement. This has informed the improvements we plan to make to our stakeholder engagement processes. It will also be reflected in new engagement initiatives that we plan to roll-out in the next five years.
- EirGrid is a member of the Renewable Grid Initiative (RGI), a collaboration of NGOs and TSOs from across Europe. In 2019, this allowed us to identify and study best practise ideas for engagement.
- EirGrid recognises the need to obtain feedback on our work from a cross-section of Irish society and economy. The EirGrid National Advisory Committee (NAC) is comprised of external stakeholders from national groups and met twice in 2019. The NAC advises EirGrid in relation to several areas that are critical to the development of the transmission grid. In particular, the NAC guides us on the need to mitigate the potential impact of our work on individuals and local communities.

Lessons learnt in 2019

We learnt a great deal from our engagement in 2019 to better understand the needs and concerns of our stakeholders, and we aim to continue this process. Here are some of the key learnings this year:

- We heard from many stakeholders this year that proactive, preliminary stage engagement was welcomed. The earlier we can communicate, the more welcomed our engagement is.
- We need to develop a greater potential for flexibility based on responses we receive during engagement. Our engagement needs to be – and be perceived as – a truly two-way process. There should be the opportunity and possibility for both sides to learn from, and respond to, the engagement process.
- There is a need to broaden our communication practices outside of project-specific engagement. We know from feedback gained in 2019 that an informed audience has more trust in our work, and so engages in the detail, rather than opposing in principle. As such, we have a responsibility to educate the general public on the imminent potential for significant changes to the grid as Ireland moves towards renewable generation.
- Our experiences of engagement with the public in 2019 affirms the value of our liaison officers. Direct and personal access to a known individual builds trust, accountability and understanding. Where a public-facing project is small enough, this should be the sole method of engagement.
- Even on industry engagement, we need to consider the added benefits of direct personal contact, rather than solely relying on formal response gathering. The insights gained through informal responses can often be more open and revealing than those submitted through more formal channels.
- We need to encourage and facilitate the opportunities for stakeholders to engage through representative bodies with a view to reducing duplicated responses. We should consider devising a method that allows representative bodies to tally levels of support for their positions to allow for the sense of inclusion that this creates.



4. Our Engagement in 2019 with Customers and Industry

Engagement with our customers and with other industry stakeholders is crucial. It allows us to shape our plans to meet the evolving needs of our customers, and the future enhancement of the power system. Throughout 2019, we worked closely with customers and industry stakeholders across the spectrum of EirGrid's work, carrying out 20 consultations with this audience.

In the first three quarters of 2019, we engaged closely with the wider electricity sector to develop the EirGrid Group Strategy for 2020-25. We sought significant input from a number of customer and industry stakeholders to gain insights on their priorities as well as their views on trends, challenges and opportunities. The strategy was launched in September 2019 and it received significant positive feedback. *Working with partners for positive change* is one of the key pillars in the new strategy. Our goal is to use these collaborations across the electricity sector to help achieve the primary purpose – *transform the power system for future generations*.

Other industry engagement highlights this year included a process of consultation and engagement on Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios 2019 and the launch of, and consultation on, the FlexTech initiative. We welcome the high-volume of engagement in both of these consultations and will incorporate the feedback and learnings. DS3 – our programme to increase the proportion of renewables on the system - continues to be a key area of engagement with industry. We carried out consultations and hosted forums in 2019 to provide information, answer questions, gather insights and inform decision-making for DS3. We also had three network code consultations on specific articles within the guidelines on electricity transmission system operation.

We held a number of annual consultations on key topics - including the balancing market principles statement, and on charges, tariffs and transmission loss adjustments factors. Together with ESB Networks, we consulted on the short-term outage mechanism and the joint TSO and TAO electricity transmission performance report. The outturn availability forum in March and the constraints and curtailment forum in September both provided greater levels of information and transparency around operational drivers such as transmission outages. They also provided opportunity for collaboration, with industry presenting at the September forum. This allowed us to better understand industry priorities and concerns, and to take steps to address these. One example of this is the publication of wind dispatch tool constraint groups. We also held several webinars to answer questions and provide information on ECP-1 constraint studies.

In April, an exercise to test black start emergency communications planning was carried out with key stakeholders. These included the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, CRU, ESB Networks and Bord Gais. This ensured appropriate awareness and training and also identified improvements to enhance our emergency preparedness.

Finally, EirGrid has a number of recurring engagements with customers and industry - such as the grid code modifications panel and the DS3 Advisory Council. We also hold regular bilateral meetings and ad hoc workshops with customer and industry representative bodies. In addition, we had 19 customer clinics across the year hosted by our subject matter experts. This allowed us to provide information to customers on potential connections, and to answer questions ahead of submission of connection applications.

5. Our Engagement in 2019 on Grid Development Projects

Asking landowners and local communities to accept new infrastructure has never been an easy task. We never take these decisions lightly, or without first investigating all alternative solutions. But where new infrastructure is essential, we need to inform and persuade landowners and communities.

As outlined in our 2019 Stakeholder Engagement Plan and in the 2018 report, in recent years we transformed our public and stakeholder engagement, applying our engagement principles. We use a consistent, six-step public engagement process to explore options and make decisions. This means we follow the same steps for every project. It ensures we are identifying stakeholders and giving them an opportunity to shape the proposals as early as possible. 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.

And we are committed to further improvements where required. We will articulate our goal of transforming the power system for future generations in a compelling way. We will also continue to look for innovative new ways to engage. Our aim is to achieve world-class standards, and to deliver better results as a consequence. Our goal is to deepen and broaden our consultation, and to respond in meaningful and persuasive ways to fears and concerns.



In 2019 we engaged on a number of projects as they progressed through the six-step process:

- CP1029
- Celtic Interconnector Project
- Cross Shannon 400 kV Cable project
- Lanesboro 110 kV Station Redevelopment
- North Connacht 110 kV Project

The level of stakeholder engagement is very dependent on the type of project, as technical projects such as Lanesboro and Cross-Shannon cable have a more limited number of impacted stakeholders. Large infrastructure projects such as North Connacht, CP1029 and Celtic Interconnector involve a much wider range of stakeholders, with larger numbers of landowners and communities affected by the development.

As such, the approach to the engagement is tailored to suit the particular project. A bespoke media campaign is used for each project, covering information and notifications provided via multiple channels. This can include advertising in local and national press, letters to landowners and statutory bodies, emails to stakeholders, social media announcements and discussions on public radio. It also includes promotion in public locations and open days in the local area. Stakeholders are invited to provide feedback in multiple formats including feedback forms online and at open days, email or letter. They can also engage directly with a dedicated Community Liaison Officer.

The key engagements on grid development projects and the effectiveness of this engagement are highlighted below. For CP1029 and the Celtic Interconnector separate case studies are included. In addition to project specific engagements, our mobile unit continued to travel around the country, providing updates at local agricultural events on key projects such as the North South Interconnector. This included the Castleblayney Agricultural Show in Monaghan and the Virginia Agricultural Show in Cavan.

Lanesboro 110 kV Substation Redevelopment

Lanesboro 110 kV Substation Redevelopment involves the construction of a new electricity substation on the lands adjacent to the existing Lough Ree Power Station. The project was in Step 4 of EirGrid's Six Step Engagement process at the start of 2019. As part of Step 4, a full media campaign in the local area was carried out. This was followed by a consultation day held in Lanesboro, running from 12 – 8 PM to facilitate the local community during the day or in the evening as convenient. Approximately 30 people attended the consultation day and the project manager was interviewed on local radio to highlight the development. The engagement was positive and there was no opposition to the project following clarification of some questions. The engagement was effective, and the project successfully moved into Step 5 in Q3 2019 and is now waiting on a planning ruling.

Cross Shannon 400 kV Cable project

The Cross Shannon 400 kV Cable project consists of a submarine cable that will link the electricity substation at Kilpaddoge in North Kerry to Moneypoint transmission substation in Clare. The project was in Step 4 for most of 2019, and a full media campaign was carried out in the local areas. This was followed by two consultation days (12 – 8 PM), one in Tarbert, Co Kerry and the other in Kilimer, Co Clare to engage with the local communities and landowners on the route selection. Approximately 25 people attended the open days. Feedback was received from three separate stakeholders on the possible route selection. This feedback was incorporated into the final route selection before moving to Step 5 in December 2019.

North Connacht 110 kV Project

The North Connacht 110 kV Project is a 110 kV transmission circuit linking the substations at Moy in Co. Mayo and Tonroe in Co. Roscommon, with many landowners and communities possibly impacted. The project was in Step 4, the technology and route selection phase, for all of 2019. In Q1 of 2019, EirGrid met local authorities and associated municipal district councils in Mayo, Roscommon and Sligo to introduce the project. This was followed in February by a period of introducing the project to six towns and communities within the North Connacht area using the mobile information unit, where we provided background information and outlined next steps. In October, following an extensive media campaign in the local areas, open days were held in Swinford, Ballina and Ballaghaderreen. Approximately 75 people attended one of the open days. These events were used to outline and discuss several topics with local communities. These included the possible project technologies - underground cable or overhead line. We also introduced the study area and outlined the high-level timelines for the project. Learnings from this engagement will be used in 2020 when we consult on the technology and associated corridors for the project.

6. Case Studies

We highlight below five case studies of engagement carried out in 2019 that affect all electricity users – industry or consumers. We also present a table of EirGrid consultations and EirGrid organised fora and workshops in 2019.



Case Study 1:

EirGrid Capital Project 1029:

Intel 220 kV substation

Situation

Capital Project 1029 is an electricity project that will ensure there is a secure and reliable supply of power to the Intel manufacturing facility in Leixlip, Kildare. The development involves a new 220 kV substation, adjacent to the Intel site. It also includes two new electricity circuits connecting into the Maynooth-Woodland 220 kV power line that runs to the north of the facility. In addition, three new circuits will be required to connect the new 220 kV substation to new transformers located in the Intel facility. These transformers will reduce the high-voltage electricity from the Maynooth-Woodland line to a lower-voltage that can be used by Intel.

During 2019 this project went through steps 4 and 5 of EirGrid's 6 Step Process to identify where exactly we should build and to complete the planning process. This project, that will support future load growth at the Intel facility, is of great national significance. The requirement for the new infrastructure to be completed before the end of 2021 required an innovative approach to engagement. This ensured that stakeholders had an opportunity to have their say while project development was moving at a very fast pace.

Engagement Approach

EirGrid developed a structured plan for engaging the public and stakeholders – including the local community, landowners and elected representatives. This took place using door-to-door visits with all stakeholders within the project study area. We also held open days, local media briefings and meetings by appointment. The following were the key steps in this plan:

- In early January 2019 our Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) and Agricultural Liaison Officers (ALOs) engaged directly with all the landowners and homeowners - approximately 50 - in the study area. This engagement was done face to face and used an information brochure and map showing environmental constraints within the study area. The purpose of this engagement was to raise awareness of the project, present the local environmental aspects (constraints), seek any feedback on these and to start building relationships.
- We then held a public information event in Leixlip on January 23rd, 2019. This event was advertised in all local newspapers and about 50 people attended. The majority of the individuals who came had met with the ALOs and CLOs in the previous fortnight.
- We gathered feedback at the face to face meetings, the public information night and subsequently via email. This was then addressed by the liaison officers and, where required, we organised follow-up meetings.
- The feedback taken from this first stage of engagement was taken into consideration by the project team and a second public event was held in May 2019. This outlined the best performing option to the public. In advance of the second public event, we individually contacted all landowners directly impacted by the best performing option.
- Once again feedback received was incorporated into our plans and in July the planning permission application was submitted to An Bord Pleanála.

Impact of Engagement

- The initiative to meet individually with landowners prior to the first public information event built trust between landowners and our liaison officers.
- This trust, and the feedback received from our engagement activities, allowed us to develop a cable route across private land. This was technically superior to using a local road and was also a more cost-effective outcome for the project.
- Six submissions were made to An Bord Pleanála in relation to this project and were mostly positive.
- Planning permission was successfully achieved in November 2019 and this decision has not been appealed.
- The project remains on target for completion in Q4 2021.

Learnings

- The engagement ensured there was a better understanding locally of the project. The Best performing Option reflected much of the feedback received from the public during the course of the project development. This in turn led to greater support in the community for the project.
- The small number of homes in the study area - approximately 50 - made it possible to contact all local stakeholders personally. This approach was very successful and is something we plan to replicate in future. We acknowledge this will be more challenging when we face a larger study area with greater numbers of landowners.
- Our liaison officers are the public face of this project and have established strong relationships with local landowners and stakeholders. We will ensure the same individuals continue their involvement until the completion of the works and beyond.

Case Study 2:

Tomorrows Energy Scenarios 2019

Situation

EirGrid is responsible for planning the development of the electricity transmission grid to meet the future needs of society. Key to this process is considering different scenarios - a range of possible ways that electricity supply and consumption may change in the future. The aim of EirGrid's Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios (TES) is to outline a range of credible scenarios for Ireland's clean energy transition with a specific focus on the electricity transmission grid. These scenarios are reviewed and consulted on every two years. TES 2019 was published for consultation in June 2019. We invited our stakeholders to contribute their insights, and supporting evidence where possible, to help improve the scenarios. Engagement at this point in TES is critical - as industry, academia and the public provide their input. This step is necessary to ensure the scenario storylines and portfolios cover a reasonable and appropriate range of outcomes for the energy industry. These scenarios are then used to identify future needs of the electricity transmission system, which are published in TES System Needs Assessment. This is fundamental to Step 1 of EirGrid's 6-step grid development process, where we identify the future needs of the electricity grid. The publication of [TES 2019](#) and the [System Needs Assessment](#) were specific actions to help deliver the Climate Action Plan 2019.

Engagement Approach

Stakeholder engagement is vital to the development of TES, particularly with customers and the broader energy sector. At the start of the process, a full engagement plan was developed that set out the engagement approach and identified all stakeholders for the full cycle of TES 2019. The stakeholders included regulators, policy makers, industry bodies, academia, technology manufacturers and the public. The key steps in this engagement were:

- Targeted stakeholder engagement: At early stages of TES 2019, we engaged bilaterally with key stakeholders on messages within TES. This saw us collaborating with our industry peers to source the best available information and promote consistency. We also considered our prior engagement with stakeholders – and their feedback - during the development of our EirGrid Group Strategy.
- Public Consultation: To maximise opportunity for stakeholder engagement and facilitate feedback, we held a public consultation on TES 2019 for six weeks in 2019, which was supported by a planned media campaign and forum.
 - We issued a news release at the start of the consultation period. This drew attention to the publication of the consultation on our website, which was picked up in the national media. This raised awareness of the consultation and its purpose.
 - In partnership with Engineers Ireland, we hosted a TES 2019 information briefing session on 1st August 2019. The scenarios were presented, there was significant discussion and feedback and it also provided an opportunity for stakeholders to ask questions.
- On an ongoing basis, we provided dedicated updates for TES 2019 on our website, including recent and prior documentation for reference.

Impact of Engagement

The targeted stakeholder engagement at the start of the TES 2019 process ensured we considered and responded to the messages from our industry peers. It also ensured the messaging aligned with the regulators and government departments.

In response to our public consultation we received 27 formal responses from a range of different stakeholders. This formal feedback, as well as the feedback received through bilateral meetings and forums was considered and addressed in the development of the final report.

The final scenarios report was published in October 2019. It contained revised scenarios along with other changes and clarifications in response to the feedback received from our stakeholders. The revised scenarios reflected data captured during the consultation phases and reflected the best available information at the time.

These revised scenarios formed the basis for the development of the System Needs Assessment, which was published in December 2019 in line with the Climate Action Plan timelines.

Learnings

Stakeholders really welcomed the consultative approach taken to scenario development at EirGrid.

The information briefing session held with stakeholders was a very effective way of discussing topics and issues associated with the Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios. Providing stakeholders with an opportunity to respond in a less formal way resulted in us receiving more robust and frank feedback that could be considered and integrated. The output from this session changed the content and assumptions of the final scenarios report.

In future, it would be beneficial to provide greater opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback through representative bodies. This may reduce repetition in the feedback received.

EirGrid will engage with key stakeholders on our draft engagement plan for future iterations of Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios.

Case Study 3:

Celtic Interconnector

Situation

The Celtic Interconnector is a proposed electrical link which will enable the movement of electricity between Ireland and France. The European Commission has designated the Celtic Interconnector as a Project of Common Interest (PCI). It will deliver a number of benefits including enhanced security of supply and downward pressure on electricity costs. It will also facilitate Ireland's transition to a low carbon energy future.

Incorporating public feedback is critical to the delivery of energy infrastructure. It allows EirGrid to make better and more informed decisions. The Celtic Interconnector is a project that will affect multiple communities and stakeholder groups over a number of years. It is critical that we make consistent efforts to facilitate effective stakeholder participation in decision-making as the project develops. This will allow us to answer queries, address concerns and build understanding and support for the project. We will also learn how the project may affect host communities, which will inform what we do to address this.

Engagement Approach

From April to June 2019 a consultation took place as part of Step 3 of our grid development process. During this stage, we sought feedback on a shortlist of three proposed landfall locations on the coast of East Cork and six proposed location zones for a converter station in East Cork. This shortlist had resulted from earlier engagements and subsequent studies. The engagement approach incorporated lessons learnt from earlier consultations in the planning with highlights being:

- An increased effort was made to promote the consultation. In addition to social media promotion and media advertising, we issued letters to all landowners affected by the project. We engaged with community groups via social media and sent direct mails to all registered stakeholders. We placed posters in local shopping centres and shops, and made direct contact with local groups, organisations, sporting and amenity groups to ensure the events were well advertised in the local areas. We also carried out frequent briefings with the relevant municipal district councils in the region to promote the consultations.
- Along with bespoke project update brochures, we also issued information on specific topics. This included a leaflet on the safety of electromagnetic fields (EMF) from underground cables, which was in response to concerns raised at earlier consultations. We also issued information posters to take stakeholders through the project development, to demonstrate how decisions were made at each step. We used a bespoke architectural model of the converter station at Portan, Co. Meath to give stakeholders a clear picture of what visual impact a converter station could have. We also brought cable samples to physically demonstrate cable sizes and their fabrication. These physical additions to the consultation events were in response to concerns raised at earlier consultations with regard to cable size and the visual impact of converter stations.
- Our liaison officers addressed the feedback received at the face to face meetings, public information night and subsequently via email. We then held follow up meetings as part of an ongoing engagement plan.
- Over the course of the consultation a total of 1,037 responses were received. The majority of these came from distinct community groups who had come together to engage collectively with EirGrid to amplify their concerns.

At the close of the consultation, we published our report and response document on the EirGrid website along with a separate Step 3 summary report that confirmed the shortlist.

Impact of Engagement

- Where we had previously engaged with communities - due to existing infrastructure – the established communication practices ensured better engagement. This also reinforces our learning that early engagement delivers better results.
- Engagement helped to identify common concerns and themes held by the public. This could be then considered by the project team. As an example, our consultations established a public concern about noise and a resulting need for noise assessments.
- New information was used to develop additional constraints for consideration by the project team. These included local undocumented heritage sites, patterns of land usage and other local insights.
- Engagement strengthened existing relationships and created new relationships with the community. These will need to be maintained over the lifetime of the project.
- Feedback from engagement was a valuable asset to other aspects of the project. These include communication and engagement methods and the development of our approach to community gain on this project.

Learnings

- Proactive and consistent early engagement and communication is of great value. The availability of additional resources to further promote the project before each consultation event would have been beneficial.
- Consultation will add to existing constraints through new local knowledge and it is necessary to factor this into the project timeline. For example, local knowledge on historical events and sites.
- People's awareness of wider energy issues has an increasing impact on how they perceive a project and their level of trust. A broad approach to engagement and communications outside of specific consultation periods would be very valuable.
- Direct and consistent contact with EirGrid is valuable and the CLO and ALO role is critical in achieving this.

Case Study 4: EirGrid Group Strategy 2020–25

Situation

Our new strategy is a direct response to the significant but necessary challenges we have been set in the Government’s Climate Action Plan 2019. Our 2020 - 25 strategy, available [here](#), is shaped by climate change and the transition of the electricity sector to low-carbon, renewable energy. We have a unique role to play in leading the radical transformation that is required. Our strategy sums up our, and our key stakeholders’ response, to these challenges. It consists of a set of key goals which have been informed and refined by a lengthy stakeholder engagement process, underpinned by our purpose: to transform the power system for future generations.

We faced a major challenge at the start of our strategy development process. We needed to deliver a strategy that our key customers and stakeholders would support and believe in, while at the same time achieving the objectives set out for us in the Climate Action Plan. Incorporating customer and stakeholder feedback into our strategy was key in ensuring that our customers and stakeholders supported our strategy.



Engagement Approach

- Our strategy was informed, led and delivered by extensive engagement with board members, management and staff from across EirGrid Group.
- Through the development of our 2020-2025 strategy we reached out to key stakeholders at an early stage in order to gain external insight and to involve them in our process. These included industry representative bodies, market participants, customers, regulatory authorities, public bodies and government departments. We held approximately 35 bilateral meetings with stakeholders in Ireland and Northern Ireland as part of the development process.
- The main objectives of this engagement were:
 - To better understand stakeholder strategic aims and ambitions and how these align with EirGrid group
 - To gain insights on stakeholder views of industry and policy trends for both short and long term, and what challenges and opportunities these present
 - To communicate our draft ambitions and explore stakeholder views on these.
- Findings from across the discussions were analysed and played a key part in the shaping of our new strategy.
- The new strategy was launched at the EirGrid Group Annual Conference in September 2019, to an audience of over 400 attendees including key customers, stakeholders and other interested parties.

Impact of engagement

- Stakeholder feedback was incorporated early in the process. This ensured stakeholder feedback was intrinsic to the development of the strategy and reflected in the final strategic objectives.
- We listened and reflected the various concerns and priorities of our key stakeholders. We believe that this process further demonstrates how a culture of engagement has been, and continues to be, deeply embedded within our organisation.
- Engaging for better outcomes for all is a key component of our strategy. We are now working to embed this approach across the organisation and throughout our culture.
- EirGrid need to work together seamlessly with a wide range of stakeholders to achieve our ambitions and strategic objectives.
- During the engagement on this strategy, many industry stakeholders asked for EirGrid to take a leadership role in the transition to sustainable energy sources and related demand growth.
- Stakeholders indicated that EirGrid is in a key position to drive the decarbonisation agenda. Focus areas highlighted by stakeholders included EirGrid being a trusted and recognised organisation, influencing policy and crucial in leading the sustainability agenda. These views are clearly reflected in our strategy.
- We recognise the key role that government and regulatory policy will play in enabling the energy transition. Government policies such as the National Development Plan, and 2019 Climate Action Plan were analysed, and our strategy was developed in a way to align with and support delivery of these policies.

Learnings

- Engaging with key stakeholders early in the process enabled us to develop our strategy to respond to their various concerns and priorities.
- We have taken on board the feedback about the need to engage more with stakeholders to shape our plans, as set out in our 2020 stakeholder engagement plan, which has been published for consultation.

Case Study 5: South West Wind Constraints during Moneypoint Forced Outage

Situation

The 400 kV transmission lines that run from Moneypoint, Co. Clare to the east of the country are a key pathway. They facilitate the transmission of renewably generated electricity from the south west region, where 1200 MW of wind generation was connected by early 2019. On 31st January 2019, the single transformer in Moneypoint 400 kV substation experienced a fault and had to be switched off – what we call a forced outage. Without the Moneypoint transformer, less wind energy could be exported from the area, resulting in increased constraints to the affected windfarms in the south and west of the country.

Engagement Approach

- EirGrid's approach to engagement was initially reactive due to the unplanned nature of this event, but we then developed and implemented a structured approach for our engagement with affected customers.
- It was recognised from individual customer interactions that a coordinated approach was required. Because of this, we held regular conference calls with affected customers in the south west starting in late March. These continued on average every two weeks until November 2019 when an alternative transformer was refurbished, moved and energised.
 - We ensured that there were subject-matter experts from EirGrid on each call to provide information and address customer questions.
 - ESBN also participated on several conference calls in Q3 and Q4 to give more detail on the construction activities on site.
- Between conference calls we sent regular email updates providing high-level project programmes and other relevant information. These emails have continued at least monthly since the alternative transformer was added.
- We ensured that there was a single customer point of contact for this issue in EirGrid. This ensured effective and consistent engagement, as well as advocating the customers' needs and concerns within our organisation.

Impact of Engagement

- Industry and individual customers welcomed the regular engagement and the active approach that EirGrid adopted during the forced outage. They have indicated that they would like to see this approach used again in the future.
- The participation of ESBN on the regular conference calls provided programme information from those working on the project directly to affected customers. This was well received by customers.
- While the situation and the impact on constraints caused significant challenges for customers, EirGrid's engagement strategy allowed affected customers to understand the latest information in relation to project timelines, analysis and alternatives being considered and provided feedback on priorities. Feedback from the conference calls resulted in a change to the sequence of transmission outages in the region in 2020.
- Engagement and increased transparency around constraints and curtailment built a greater level of knowledge across the industry.
- Concerns raised about the timelines of the repair of the faulted transformer and the absence of a strategic spare 400/220 kV transformer were used to strengthen the business case for the progression of a strategic spare 400/220 kV transformer, which is now underway.

Learnings

- Working closely with industry is valuable to provide transparency and build industry knowledge of constraints and curtailment, as well as building EirGrid's understanding of customer priorities. A curtailment and constraints forum took place in September 2019 at which both industry and EirGrid presentations from subject matter experts took place and generated beneficial discussions. Regular engagements with industry representative bodies and individual customers have continued and this focus on increasing knowledge and transparency, and working together to resolve priority challenges, has continued into 2020.
- The timeliness and channels of the initial communication of the forced outage and impact on generators were highlighted as a concern. A process for the communication of forced outage's to customers in a timely manner is being developed to ensure that this information is highlighted going forward.
- EirGrid set up a cross functional team to learn from this forced outage, which has resulted in the advancement of a number of recommendations to minimise the impact of any future such events.

A large, lattice-structured electricity pylon stands in a field of tall grass. The pylon is the central focus, with several power lines extending from it across the frame. The sky is filled with heavy, grey clouds, and a faint light source is visible through a break in the clouds near the horizon. In the foreground, there is a large, semi-transparent graphic element consisting of several overlapping, curved shapes that resemble a stylized 'E' or a series of arcs. The overall mood is industrial and atmospheric.

Appendices

What?	Who?	When?	How?	Why?	Outcome	Effectiveness
Offshore Functional Specifications	All	Q1 2019	EirGrid Consultation	Ask for feedback on proposed specifications to input to final version.	EirGrid reviewed the feedback and are currently revising our Offshore Functional Specifications to take the feedback on board. Decision and responses to feedback not yet published.	150 comments from 5 stakeholders were received and are being considered in the development of the Final Functional Specifications.
Balancing Market Principles Statement	All	Q2 2019	EirGrid Consultation	Ask for feedback on proposed changes to BMPS to input to final document.	BMPS V3.0 and consultation report were published in June 2019.	Responses from 5 stakeholders were received. The consultation report outlines how the responses shaped the final BMPS.
Proposed 2019/2020 Other System Charges	All	Q2 2019	EirGrid Consultation	Ask for feedback on proposed OSC to input to recommendation.	Recommendation paper provided to Regulatory Authorities (RAs). Decision published in August. Recommendation paper available on EirGrid website.	Responses from 5 stakeholders - feedback received was considered for the recommendation paper to the RAs.
Proposed Transmission Loss Adjustment Factors	All	Q2 2019	EirGrid Publication for Comment	Ask for feedback on proposed TLAFs to input to recommendation.	Approved Transmission Loss Adjustment Factors were published in September 2019.	Comments received from 1 respondent on the proposed TLAFs.
Stakeholder Engagement Report 2018	All	Q2 2019	EirGrid consultation	To gather Stakeholder Feedback on EirGrid's Stakeholder Engagement.	Consultation report was submitted to Network Stakeholder Engagement Evaluation (NSEE) Panel and subsequently published on CRU website with the NSEE Panel Report.	3 responses were received from stakeholders on our Stakeholder Engagement report for 2018. This feedback was incorporated into the Consultation Report submitted to the NSEE panel.

Table 1: Consultations in 2019

What?	Who?	When?	How?	Why?	Outcome	Effectiveness
Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios 2019	All	Q2/3 2019	EirGrid Consultation	Ask for feedback on the proposed scenarios to input to final TES document.	Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios 2019 Report was published in October 2019.	We received a lot of feedback - from 27 different stakeholders - during the consultation and the final report was changed to reflect a lot of this feedback.
Data Centre Connection Policy Paper	Data Centre Customers	Q2/3 2019	EirGrid Publication for Comment	Ask for Data Centre Customer feedback on revised Data Centre Connection Policy.	Initial feedback was provided to the industry in December along with next steps. The Data Centre Connection Offer Process and Policy was published in December 2019. A public consultation is planned for 2020.	7 formal responses in addition to feedback received through bilateral engagements was received. The feedback received was diverse. Some changes were included in the policy published in December. Other policy items are being progressed and will be consulted on more widely in 2020.
Flex-Tech Scope Consultation	All	Q3 2019	EirGrid Consultation	Consultative with Industry to gather input on Year 1 scope associated with the integration of technology.	Response to consultation will be published Q1 2020.	Responses from 20 stakeholders were received and have been considered in the development of the consultation response and scope for the FlexTech Initiative.
Scheduling and Dispatch Audit Terms of Reference	CRU, UR	Q3 2019	EirGrid Consultation	Ask for input to final TOR document.	Terms of Reference were published in June 2019.	Feedback from Regulatory Authorities was included in final Terms of Reference.

Table 1: Consultations in 2019

What?	Who?	When?	How?	Why?	Outcome	Effectiveness
Proposed 2019/20 Generator Transmission Use of System (GTUoS) Tariffs	All	Q3 2019	EirGrid Publication for Comment	Ask for feedback on proposed GTUoS to input to recommendation.	Approved Generator Transmission Use of System Tariffs published in September 2019.	No comments received on proposed tariffs.
Proposed Testing Tariffs	All	Q3 2019	EirGrid Publication for Comment	Ask for feedback on proposed Testing Tariffs to input to recommendation.	Approved Testing Tariffs published in September 2019.	Comments received from 1 respondent on the proposed Testing Tariffs.
Synchronous Area Operational Agreement (SAOA) (SOGL Article 118)	All	Q3 2019	EirGrid Consultation	Ask for feedback on proposed Synchronous Area Operational Agreement articles to put in final proposal to CRU.	Agreement on methodology published on EirGrid, SONI and ENTSOE websites in Q1 2020.	No responses received.
Load Frequency Control Block Operational Agreement (LFCBOA) (SOGL Article 119)	All	Q3 2019	EirGrid Consultation	Ask for feedback on the proposed Load Frequency Control Block Operational Agreement articles to put into final proposal to CRU.	Agreement on methodology published on EirGrid, SONI and ENTSOE websites in Q1 2020.	No responses received.
Co-ordinated Security Analysis Methodology (CSAM) (SOGL Article 76)	All	Q4 2019	EirGrid Consultation	Ask for feedback on proposed methodology to put into initial proposal to CRU.	Submitted to CRU.	No responses received.
Transmission Development Plan 2019	All	Q4 2019	Consultation hosted by CRU	Ask for feedback on proposal to input to the final TDP.	Consultation process not yet complete.	Consultation process not yet complete.
Joint TSO & TAO Investment Planning and Delivery Report 2018	All	Q4 2019	EirGrid Consultation	Ask for Stakeholder feedback on TSO & TAO Investment Planning and Delivery 2018.	Consultation complete. Outcome to be published following CRU approval.	Consultation complete. Outcome to be published following CRU approval.
Joint TSO & TAO Electricity Transmission Performance Report 2018	All	Q4 2019	EirGrid Consultation	Ask for Stakeholder feedback on TSO & TAO Electricity Transmission Performance Report 2018.	Consultation complete. Outcome to be published following CRU approval.	Consultation complete. Outcome to be published following CRU approval.

Table 1: Consultations in 2019

What?	Who?	When?	How?	Why?	Outcome	Effectiveness
Joint TSO & TAO Electricity Transmission Performance Report 2018	All	Q4 2019	EirGrid Consultation	Ask for Stakeholder feedback on TSO & TAO Electricity Transmission Performance Report 2018.	Consultation complete. Outcome to be published following CRU approval.	Consultation complete. Outcome to be published following CRU approval.
Short Term Outage Mechanism	All	Q4 2019	EirGrid Consultation	Ask for Stakeholder feedback on proposed Short-Term Outage Mechanism to input to recommendation.	Consultation complete. Outcome to be published following CRU approval.	Consultation complete. Outcome to be published following CRU approval.
Long-Notice Adjustment Factor and System Imbalance Flattening Factor	All	Q4 2019	Consultation	Ask for feedback on proposal to input to recommendation.	Recommendation paper provided to RAs.	Two responses were received.
Strategic Incentives 2020	All	Q4 2019	EirGrid Consultation	Ask for Stakeholder feedback on proposed Strategic Incentives.	Consultation complete. Outcome to be published following CRU approval.	Consultation complete. Outcome to be published following CRU approval.
DS3 Protocol consultation	All	Q4 2018/ Q1 2019	EirGrid Consultation	Ask for Stakeholder feedback on proposed Strategic Incentives.	Recommendation paper published, with responses to feedback.	Responses were received from 21 stakeholders and this feedback was considered in the recommendation paper.

Table 1: Consultations in 2019

What?	Who?	When?	How?	Why?	Attendees	Output
Flex-Tech 1st Industry Forum	DSO, DNO, Industry, Regulators	Q2 2019	EirGrid Industry Forum	Consult with Industry to solve a broad range of challenges associated with the integration of new technologies.	Approximately 150	Launch of FlexTech Initiative. Feedback received was used as input to the FlexTech consultation held later in 2019 on the scope.
Infrastructure Planning and Environmental Discussion Forum	Other state agencies (e.g. Bord Gais, Irish Water, DAA, Coillte, ESBI)	Quarterly	EirGrid Industry Forum	Information sharing and learning.	10 - 15 people approximately	Information sharing and benchmarking, industry alignment.
Data Centre Demand Forum	Data Centre Customers	Q2 2019	EirGrid Industry Forum	Industry specific customer engagement.	25 approximately	Information sharing on the Data Centre Connection Offer Process and Policy & other relevant updates. Gather feedback and outline next steps.
Data Centre Demand Webinar	Data Centre Customers	Q4 2019	EirGrid Industry Forum via Webinar	Industry specific customer engagement.	35 attendees	Information sharing on the Data Centre Connection Offer Process and Policy comments received, potential changes & other relevant updates. Gather feedback and outline next steps.
Outturn Availability Forum & Webinar 2019	Generation Customers, CRU	Q1 2019	EirGrid Industry Forum	Provide update on transmission outages and Outturn Availability reports.	23 attendees	Information provided to customers on TOP19 & outages. Completion of 2018 Ex-Post OA forum and 2019 Ex-ante forum as per SEMC decision.

Table 2: EirGrid Hosted Industry Fora and Working Groups

What?	Who?	When?	How?	Why?	Attendees	Output
Blackstart Emergency Communications Plan Exercise	DCCAE, ESB Networks, Gas Networks Ireland, CRU,	Q2 2019	EirGrid Industry Workshop	To enhance emergency preparedness, Training of Stakeholders. Identification of Improvements.	30 attendees	Input from all stakeholders was fed back into the BECP to improve and streamline the process. Familiarity with BECP and training.
Wind Constraints and Curtailment Forum	Wind customers	Q3 2019	EirGrid Industry Forum	Transparency and education around constraints and curtailment. Collaboration with industry to understand industry priorities.	Approximately 30 (in person & online)	Greater information and transparency for wind industry around constraints and curtailment. Greater understanding for EirGrid on industry priorities. Agreed actions to progress.
Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios 2019: Information briefing session and webinar	CRU, DCCAE, GNI, ESBN, SEAI, UCC, ESRI, IWEA, ISEA, FOTE, BnM, UCD, Elgin Energy	Q3 2019	EirGrid Industry Forum	Ask for feedback on the draft scenarios and input to final TES document.	13 Organisations	Feedback on the proposed TES 2019 scenarios was received, which was incorporated into final TES 2019 scenarios report.
EirGrid Annual Customer and Stakeholder Conference	Customers, Stakeholders	Q3 2019	EirGrid Conference	Conference for Customers and Stakeholders facilitating information sharing and industry discussion.	Approximately 400 attendees	Launch of EirGrid Strategy and information sharing. Industry and Stakeholder Panel discussions of challenges and opportunities.
ECP-1 constraints studies webinars	ECP1 customers	Q3 2019, Q4 2019	Webinars	Provide information and answer customer queries on ECP-1 constraint studies for specific areas.	20 - 30 attendees on average	ECP-1 customers provided with information on constraints for specific areas. Feedback received by EirGrid for final reports.

Table 2: EirGrid Hosted Industry Fora and Working Groups

What?	Who?	When?	How?	Why?	Attendees	Output
DS3 Forum on Volume Capped procurement process, QTP, and DS3 Regulated arrangements	Industry	Q1 2019	EirGrid Industry Forum	Inform industry, provide updates & timelines and answer questions.	Approximately 100	Customers informed of processes, detail & next steps.
Flex-Tech 2nd Industry Forum	DSO, DNO, Industry, Regulators	Moved to 2020	EirGrid Industry Forum		Not applicable	Not applicable
Grid Code Review Panel	Industry	12 Apr, 26 Jun, 29 Nov	EirGrid Industry Working Group	Review, discuss and ensure user consultation of recommendations for Grid Code amendments.	14 - 16 per average	All approved modifications and minutes on Grid Code Modifications page on the EirGrid Website
DS3 Advisory Council	Industry experts	Feb-19, May-19, Oct-19	EirGrid & SONI Industry Working Group	To discuss issues which may impact on the success of DS3 with experts from across the power industry.	25 - 30 attendees approximately	Industry feedback on DS3. Information sharing. Updates provided on DS3 progress.
Customer Clinics - Pre-Connection Application Information and Support	Customers looking to connect to the Transmission System	1 - 2 a month	EirGrid Industry Forum	Clinic days with bilateral meetings to support Future Customers and increase efficient engagement.	19 customer clinics held in 2019, with multiple customer meetings at each clinic	Greater understanding of available capacity, transmission system, application process, possible connection options and clarity on policy and technical details provided for potential connections to the transmission system.

Table 2: EirGrid Hosted Industry Fora and Working Groups



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