



Community Fund and Proximity Payments

Direct benefits to local areas
when we develop the grid



The current. The future.

EirGrid is responsible for a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity – now and in the future. We develop, manage and operate the electricity transmission grid. This brings power from where it is generated to where it is needed throughout Ireland. We use our grid to supply power to industry and businesses that use large amounts of electricity.

Our grid also powers the distribution network. This supplies the electricity you use every day in your homes, businesses, schools, hospitals, and farms.

We develop new electricity infrastructure only when it is needed. EirGrid answers to Government and to regulators. We obey all laws, and meet all health and safety standards. We work for the benefit and safety of every person in Ireland.

Why do we need to develop the grid?

We're working towards a more efficient, more effective and more economic electricity network. This may mean we sometimes need to expand our grid, and this can affect communities and homeowners near new transmission lines.



What do we do for those affected by grid development?

In some locations, and to some observers, electricity transmission lines have a visual impact on the landscape. This is because they can seem intrusive when first built.

When we need to find routes for new lines, we consider many factors. These include the need to protect the interests of individuals, households, businesses and communities.

We aim to create as little disturbance as possible, but it's difficult to avoid private, business or community property.

In 2012, the Government issued a policy statement on this issue. It recommended that we should provide a direct benefit to surrounding communities when we build new transmission infrastructure.

In response, we have created two initiatives: the Community Fund and Proximity Payments.

These compensate individuals and communities who are closest to new transmission infrastructure.

This publication explains how these two programs will work in general. Each time we build new transmission infrastructure in an area, we set up a Community Fund and Proximity Payments for the project.



What is a Community Fund?

The Community Fund recognises the importance of the local communities who support our work. Under this initiative, we create a fund in proportion to the scale of the project.

We distribute grants from the fund when a project is complete and goes live.

We calculate the size of the fund based on the length and voltage of the new overhead transmission line.

- 110 kV: €15,000 per km
- 220 kV: €30,000 per km
- 400 kV: €40,000 per km

When we build a new transmission station or substation in a rural setting, we calculate a fund size based on the capacity of that station. We view a new rural station as equal to 1 km of new overhead line. For example, if the station voltage is 110 kV, we create a fund of €15,000.

How will a Community Fund work?

When we create a Community Fund, we aim to support local projects that benefit the community near a new line.

To ensure EirGrid awards grants fairly, we work with independent organisations to decide who benefits.

When a Community Fund is announced, we will promote the new fund, and will ask for applications from local good causes.

We will seek independent advice on social issues that are particular to the area. We will then look for proposals that particularly target these issues.

How will we decide what projects are awarded grants?

The main criteria we use when making any grant is the location of the applicant. This is so we can focus our support on good causes near a new line.

We will look for applications from not-for-profit or voluntary groups with charitable aims. For larger grants, we will seek to fund projects with a proven benefit over the medium to long-term.

We will also prioritise projects where community and voluntary groups work together to serve a wider area or a larger number of people.

Using these criteria, grants will be awarded by a local committee with an independent chairperson.



What kind of organisations can apply?

The Community Fund will award grants to not-for-profit organisations. Each time we establish a fund, the local committee defines specific criteria to award grants. In general, our priority is to help as many people as possible. Because of this, we typically won't fund individuals, trips abroad, or groups with an exclusively religious or political focus.

We also want to the fund to achieve specific and measurable goals. This means we generally won't accept applications for general sponsorship, salaries, running costs, or general research.

Finally, we require applicant organisations to supply audited accounts, and to follow The Governance Code for charities. See www.governancecode.ie for more information.

What are Proximity Payments?

We know that individuals and communities may have concerns about new transmission infrastructure. In particular, we understand your worries about the visual impact of new lines. For this reason, EirGrid aims - as much as is practical - to find routes that avoid residential property.

While every city, town and village needs electricity, we live in a dispersed way across a small island. This makes it impossible for new electricity transmission lines to completely avoid residential areas.

Where we can't avoid homes, we then look for a corridor that maintains the greatest and fairest distance between new lines and these homes. For example, this might mean passing a new line half way between two properties.

When this happens, we will make Proximity Payments to rural homeowners.

How will Proximity Payments work?

We make Proximity Payments where a home is located within 200m or less of certain infrastructure that is newly built on a greenfield site. Specifically, we make payments for new overhead transmission lines and new rural transmission stations. These payments will not be made in built-up areas, nor where we uprate or refurbish existing lines or stations.

We calculate the amount of the Proximity Payment using a sliding scale based on distance, and on the capacity of the new line or station. Homes that are closer to higher-powered lines will be eligible for larger payments. Homes that are farther away, or near lower-power lines, will be offered smaller payments.



The largest Proximity Payment is €30,000 for a residential building located 50 m from the centre line of a new 400 kV project. The smallest Proximity Payment is €2,000 for a residential building located 200 m from the centre line of a new 110 kV pylon.

Proximity Payments do not apply to new lines carried by wooden poles.

What do we mean by 'Home'?

For Proximity Payments, the word 'Home' means a currently occupied residential property.

It can also refer to the footprint of a proposed home on a site with full planning permission for a residential property.

In all cases, we make Proximity Payments to the owner of the property.

What if my home is closer than 50m?

EirGrid's aim is to keep transmission routes away from residential areas as much as possible. We know that transmission infrastructure is safe, but we are also aware of its visual impact in residential areas.

In some cases, we cannot avoid placing a new line close to houses. When this happens, EirGrid will try to keep at least 50m between the centre of the pylon and the nearest point of a home.

Despite our best efforts, there are times where we have to locate a new line or station less than 50m away from a home. These situations are rare. When they occur, EirGrid will discuss the situation with the property owner to find a solution that suits everyone.

In most cases, the solution will be an agreed, case-specific payment. Our goal is to find an outcome that is mutually agreed between EirGrid and the property owner. We may ask professional estate agents or valuers to decide the full market value of a home as part of this process.

How can you find out more?

If you want to learn more, or to apply for a Community Fund or Proximity Payments near you, please get in touch with our community liaison officers. You can contact them using the details on our website:

www.eirgrid.com

Glossary

Capacity

The amount of electricity that can be safely transferred on the system or a circuit.

Corridor

The planned area along which an electricity line or cable will be located. This is a broad region that we then use to select a specific route.

Distribution Network

This is the lower voltage network, owned and operated in Ireland by the ESB. It delivers power from the transmission network to households and businesses.

Generator

A facility that produces electricity. Power can be generated from various sources, for example, coal-fired power plants, gas-fired power plants and wind farms.

Grid

See Transmission Network.

Grid infrastructure

The physical structures which make up the transmission grid. These include the cables and lines used to transmit electricity, the pylons that hold the lines, and the substations used to convert the electrical current and raise or lower the voltage of that current.

Infrastructure

This refers to the structures and facilities of a region or country, such as buildings, roads, bridges and the electrical grid. (Please see also Grid infrastructure.)

Kilovolt (kV)

Operating voltage of electricity transmission equipment. One kilovolt is equal to one thousand volts. The highest voltage on the Irish transmission system is 400 kV.

Route

The path that a line or cable takes as it moves across the landscape from its start to its end point.

Station / Substation

A set of electrical equipment used to interlink circuits and change the voltage being sent down a line or cable.

Transmission line

A high-voltage power line running at 400 kV, 220 kV or 110 kV on the Irish transmission system. The high-voltage allows delivery of bulk power over long distances with minimal power loss.

Transmission Network or Grid

This is the network of around 6,800 km of high-voltage power lines, cables and substations across Ireland. It links generators of electricity to the distribution network and supplies large demand customers. It is operated by EirGrid and owned by the ESB.

Voltage

Voltage is a measure of the potential strength of the flow of electricity – similar to ‘pressure’ in a water system. Voltage is the measure of electrical charge or potential between two points (in an electrical field) such as between the positive and negative ends of a battery. The greater the voltage, the greater the potential flow of electrical current.



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