Issue 5: November 2024

Celtic Interconnector

La liaison électrique entre la France et l'Irlande

Connecting the electricity grids of Ireland and France

Project Overview

The Celtic Interconnector project will create an electrical interconnection between Ireland and France to allow the exchange of electricity between the two countries. The connection will link the existing electricity substation located in Knockraha (in east Cork) to the substation in La Martyre (Finistère, France). It will contribute to a more secure and a more sustainable electricity supply by providing Ireland's only direct energy connection to an EU member state. The project is being developed by EirGrid, the electricity transmission system operator in Ireland, and its French counterpart Réseau de Transport d'Électricité (RTE). It is expected to be completed in 2026.

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Project Update

Teams continue to make steady progress on the cable routes. Trenching and ducting on the 400 kV AC cable route is now complete, with road reinstatement continuing, in cooperation with Cork County Council. Trenching and ducting continues on the 320 kV DC main route sections, on the N25 and local roads. Cable jointing is ongoing on the 400 kV AC main route sections.

Archaeological investigations (pictured) are complete on the beach at Claycastle, the landfall location, with outcomes awaited.



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What's Happening Now

Cable

With significant portions of underground cable now in place, the next stage of the cabling process, joining cables, is now taking place.

This work is taking place in the joint bays which are placed along the route.

Converter station

At the heart of the interconnector's development, the converter station site, at Ballyadam, near Carrigtwohill, continues to see rapid progress, with Siemens Energy and contractors continuing with main civil works at the site.

The steel work for the converter building is advancing apace, marking a critical milestone in the station's construction. The converter station will play a vital role in transforming high-voltage direct current (HVDC) to alternating current (AC) and vice versa, enabling seamless energy flow between Ireland and France.

Goggansтown Substation

Work continues at the network connection point at Goggansтown 400 kV substation, under construction adjacent to the Knockraha 220 kV substation. This is a substation where the 400 kV HVAC electrical supply from the interconnector will be converted down to 220 kV and connect to the transmisison grid.

Landfall

With archaeological investigations complete on the beach at Claycastle, important preparations in advance of works starting at the landfall are under way.

Marine

Works in Irish waters have been completed for 2024.





Steel works assembly of the converter building at the converter station site, Ballyadam.

In the Marine

As we reflect on this year's marine survey activities, we want to take a moment to acknowledge the vital role our local fishing communities have played in making this campaign a success. The cooperation has been invaluable, allowing us to carry out our work effectively while minimising disruptions to daily fishing operations.

We also want to thank them for their openness and input throughout the process. We've listened carefully to their concerns, particularly the importance of staying out of the area during shrimping season, and we have endeavoured to respect that balance. The feedback received has guided our efforts and made it possible to achieve our goals, while maintaining harmony with fishing livelihoods.

We look forward to continuing this positive engagement going into 2025, ensuring that both future electricity needs and fishing activities can coexist sustainably in the future.



Ronan Lynch
Fisheries Liaison Officer
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Project of Common Interest

Projects of common interest (PCIs) are key EU infrastructure projects aimed at building the European internal energy market and helping the EU to achieve its energy and climate objectives: delivering affordable, secure and sustainable energy for all Europeans, while pursuing a climate neutral economy by 2050.

Selected as a EU Project of Common Interest (PCI) as early as 2013, the Celtic Interconnector Project will play a key role in strengthening Europe's energy infrastructure. It will facilitate energy security in Ireland, while enhancing the capacity for clean energy transmission between Ireland and France. It will exert downward pressure on the cost of electricity and facilitate a more resilient and modern grid, helping Ireland to achieve its climate action goals.

Inclusion as a PCI project makes this project eligible for financial assistance under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and the project benefits from a grant of €530.7 million. This support played a key part in Ireland being able to proceed with this hugely critical infrastructure project alongside our project partners, RTE. The project is scheduled for completion in 2026 and will be Ireland's only current electrical interconnection with another EU member state.



As a PCI project, the project benefits from EU wide interest. A group including Sinead Dooley, Head of Public Engagement, EirGrid and Prof. Brian Ó Gallachóir, MaREI participated in a MaREI, UCC engagement exercise in Paris earlier this year where the mutual societal benefit of interconnection between EU countries and communities was explored.

Road Closure Updates

Ongoing

- Section M: Trenching and ducting on L-7629 from Monday, 21 October to Friday, 20 December.
- N25: Trenching and ducting continues on the N25
- Phase 1 between Churchtown Junction (North) and Castlemartyr is nearing completion.
- Phase 2 between Castlemartyr and Killeagh will follow.
- Speed restrictions of 60 km/h are in place on sections under works.
- Works will go off road around the villages of Castlemartyr and Killeagh.

For more information on road closures please see www.eirgrid.ie/celticinterconnector
All dates may be subject to change.



Joint bays placed along the cable route.

Focus On Cabling

High Voltage cabling installation requires work to be carried out over three separate stages.

1. Preparation of a trench and installation of plastic ducts.
2. Placement and pulling of the power cable through the ducts and associated works.
3. Jointing of cable sections.

Road users and residents in east Cork will have witnessed this work over the past months. At intervals along the recognisable cable route trenches, junction boxes have been installed to facilitate the jointing of adjacent cable sections. Cable jointing is an extremely important activity and is carried out under controlled conditions to a very high standard to ensure the integrity of the cable systems and the Celtic Interconnector. This work can take several weeks and must be done at regular intervals along the full length of the cable.

To ease traffic restrictions at these locations, wherever possible on narrow roads, the team has cleared a passing bay so that traffic can continue to flow around the junction box area. While temporary traffic closures and traffic management is required on narrow roads, to ensure the health and safety of workers and road users and facilitate the rapid progress of works, the passing bays allow regular traffic circulation to resume as quickly as possible. This is designed to greatly reduce the impact of the works on road users and is only possible through collaboration and agreement with local landowners who facilitate works.



Tommy Collins, Youghal Community Transport Group Chairman with EirGrid Community Liaison Officer, Michelle Walsh.

Community Benefit Fund

The first phase of the Celtic Interconnector Community Benefit Fund was awarded in December 2023. Twenty-nine community groups throughout the project area were successful and received a total of €838,987. Over the course of the project a total of €2.4 million will be distributed through this fund.

To gain further insights into the projects, a selection of project representatives and community members were met with recently, to capture their stories for sharing with other potential participants, their communities and neighbours.

Youghal Community Bus / The Youghal Community Transport Group

The Youghal Community Transport Group received €70,000 from the Celtic Interconnector Community Benefit Fund for the purchase of a wheelchair accessible adapted EV 6-seater with wheelchair space.

Speaking about the funding, The Youghal Community Transport Group Chairman, Tommy Collins said:

> **"In Youghal we're very aware of the environment and climate change and we want to thank EirGrid for giving us €70,000 towards the purchase of a brand-new electric bus, it's going to help the environment and the number of people we can help in Youghal."**

Youghal Rugby Football Club (RFC) LED Floodlights Upgrade

Youghal Rugby Football Club received €30,000 through the Celtic Interconnector Community Benefit Fund to upgrade its floodlights to LEDs.

Outlining the project, Wayne Fitzgerald, President of Youghal RFC said:

> **"LED floodlights are more environmentally friendly, they're more durable and they use less CO2, this will mirror what EirGrid are doing on their journey to a low carbon future. A thank you to EirGrid for supporting this project because without their help we would not have been able to complete it."**



Wayne Fitzgerald, President of Youghal RFC spoke to EirGrid representatives about the importance of EirGrid funding in helping to bring the project to realisation.

Clonpriest National School Sensory Garden Development

Clonpriest National School was successful in applying for funding to help in its efforts to develop a sensory garden for all students at the school. EirGrid awarded the school €5,000.

James Leahy, Principal, Clonpriest National School said:

> **Our plan is to develop a space into a sensory garden to meet the needs of all our pupils, we're conscious as a school to meet the well-being needs of our pupils and to include everybody in this project. We're grateful to EirGrid for the funding for this, it will make a huge impact on the school, the community and most importantly, for the pupils.**

Visit eirgrid.ie/celticinterconnector#CBF to see more on the successful projects.



Construction continues at the converter station site in La Martyre



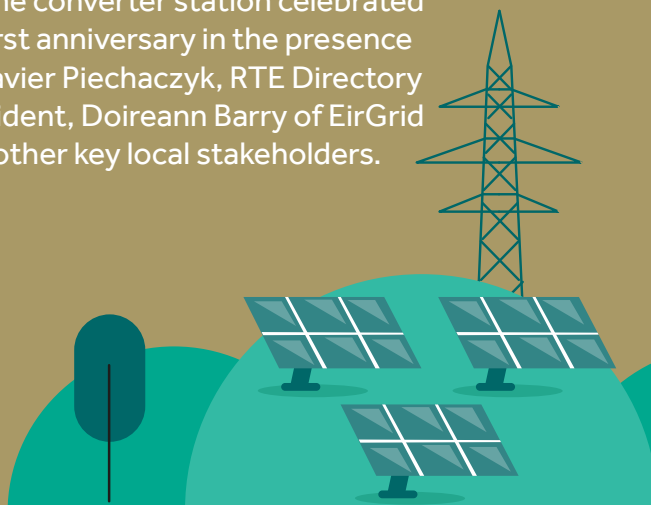
James Leahy, Principal, Clonpriest National School

RTE (Réseau de Transport d'Électricité) Update

Summer 2024 was a successful period for the Celtic Interconnector Project. At sea, the landfall works at Cléder and Saint Pol-de-Léon were completed before the summer season, in line with commitments to the municipalities. By the end of the year, works will focus on the installation of the transition joint bay.

On land, the construction of the trenching and ducting works are progressing through several municipalities. The "Azénor" micro tunnel boring machine has completed works under the Elorn river and the railway line between Brest and Paris.

Simultaneously, the construction site for the converter station celebrated its first anniversary in the presence of Xavier Piechaczyk, RTE Directory President, Doireann Barry of EirGrid and other key local stakeholders.



The Project in Numbers

816,000

the estimated number of work hours dedicated to the project so far, by Celtic Interconnector Designated Activity Company (CIDAC).

Did You Know?

As part of EirGrid's role, it manages 7,500km of electricity circuits, including overhead power line and underground cables. That's enough to stretch across the Atlantic – and back again!

Project Timeline

2024

Marine surveys.

Continuation of trenching and ducting works for HVAC and HVDC land cables.

Commencement of installation and jointing of HVAC and HVDC land cables.

Converter station installations progress.

2025

Commencement of offshore marine cable installation.

Completion of installation and jointing of HVAC and HVDC land cables.

Converter station buildings complete.

2026

Completion of offshore marine cable installation.

Submarine cable protection campaigns.

Commissioning tests.

Interconnector system tests.

Trial operation period commences.



The Celtic Watt Warriors Shane Cooney, Rachel Healy, Wade Poulter and Patrick Kinehan took part in the EirGrid sponsored Cork East Fittest Superstars event in support of CEASC (Cork East Athletics Sporting Community). The team are pictured with event coordinator and hurling manager Davy Fitzgerald.

How to Contact Us

At EirGrid, we are committed to engaging with communities during all phases of project development.

We remain grateful for the continued patience and support of communities, landowners, and stakeholders as we progress this work.



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Scan here to stay up to date on project progress or visit www.eirgrid.ie/celticinterconnector

To subscribe to project updates by email, register at celticinterconnector@eirgrid.com

You can unsubscribe from receiving updates at any time by emailing celticinterconnector@eirgrid.com

Text Updates

If you would like to receive Text Updates on road closures, subscribe to our **FREE** Text service by texting **INTER** to **50015**.

Email Updates

If you would like to receive email updates on road closures, please email celticinterconnector@sorensen.ie

EirGrid

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The Celtic interconnector project is being developed by EirGrid, the operator of the energy transfer system in Ireland, and its counterpart in France, RTE (Réseau de Transport d'Électricité).

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