



# Energy Infrastructure: The Challenges and Opportunities

Training Webinar – 13 March 2026

## Q&A Sheet

**Speaker: Jennifer Boyle**

Question	Response
<p><b>Is there adequate existing Grid Infrastructure to transmit the existing and proposed renewable energy generation from the West/Northwest region (north of Galway) to the main grid?</b></p>	<p>Overall, there is not enough existing infrastructure for the targets that we need to meet. New infrastructure is going to be vital to meet those targets but there is a really key role to play for existing infrastructure that's in place and the country as a whole, needs to use existing grid infrastructure as much as we can and this relates to maintenance and uprate works to increase the capacity for electricity to be transmitted on those lines.</p> <p>However, new infrastructure is going to be needed throughout the whole country and as we can see, renewable energy comes from different parts of the country and we need to accommodate those and get electricity to where the demand is as well, which is true for the whole country. So, absolutely, new infrastructure is needed as the grid isn't sufficient as it is.</p>



**Speaker: Leah Kenny**

Question	Response
<p><b>Is there a concern regarding impact of data centres on electricity infrastructure?</b></p>	<p>EirGrid's priority is to maintain a safe, secure, and reliable electricity supply for Ireland. As part of its role as transmission system operator for Ireland, EirGrid connects Large Energy Users (LEUs), including data centres, to the transmission system. Smaller data centres connect to the distribution system, which is managed by the Distribution System Operator, ESB.</p> <p>The connection of large energy users to the transmission system is currently aligned and will in future continue to align with relevant direction from our regulator, the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU). EirGrid acts as directed in this area, while also reflecting Government policy.</p> <p>Since November 2021, new data centres requesting connection to the transmission system have been reviewed on a case-by-case basis in line with the CRU "Direction to the System Operators related to Data Centre Grid Connection Processing". This factors in constraints in high demand regions.</p> <p>Under CRU's new Large Energy Users Connection Policy, published on 16 December 2025, EirGrid and ESB Networks are required to publish an engagement and connection process for data centre connection applicants. Once published, potential new applicants will be provided with the appropriate guidance required to advance new possible data centre connection applications. <i>(continued on page 3)</i></p>



	<p>The Programme for Government from the Irish Government makes a commitment to support key aspects of the digital economy.</p> <p>We're committed to working with Government on progressing the actions set out in the Large Energy User Action Plan (LEAP), the Government strategy to facilitate future investment in energy intensive sectors, while unlocking Ireland's renewable energy opportunity in the medium to long term.</p> <p>LEAP provides pragmatic and practical actions to implement a plan-led approach to the co-location of the most energy-intensive LEU sectors, with renewable energy supply within green energy park locations across regions. EirGrid's Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap, published in 2021 also supports a plan-led approach.</p>
<p><b>Can EirGrid/ESB share datasets for the electricity network so that we can include these within our own GIS internal systems. These would be helpful for policy development and DM planning</b></p>	<p>Yes, certainly and we have shared the existing transmission network, and we also have some of our proposed networks available on GIS.</p> <p>It is also possible for this information to be shared by the ESB, who see it as a two-way street as the ESB sometimes seek spatial data from local authorities as well (Brendan Allen).</p>



## Speaker: Brendan Allen

Question	Response
<p><b>Could you outline the procedures for engaging with ESB Networks during the preparation of masterplans, and how planners should factor power capacity requirements into the early stages of planning for new neighbourhoods?</b></p>	<p>We have a Network Planning Team with responsibility for assisting councils with zoning and planning for new development areas, such as the Nass northwest quadrant Plan, which we assisted Kildare County Council with.</p> <p>Feel free to contact Brendan directly at <a href="mailto:brendan.allen@esb.ie">brendan.allen@esb.ie</a> and he will put you in touch with the Network Planning Team. The team will be able to assist with identifying future needs based on the quantum of housing being planned for. If you are organising collaboration workshops, the ESB can attend, bring the right people and talk through requirements and any issues.</p> <p><u><a href="#">You can access related ESB resources on Our Useful Links document on the main webpage for this webinar.</a></u></p>
<p><b>Local authorities are preparing framework plans for large greenfield areas, many of which are constrained by existing 38 kV and 110 kV overhead lines. But there is not much guidance on how to plan around these constraints.....is there recommended guidance we should follow?</b></p>	<p>ESB Networks staff can advise on issues that may arise at specific locations. 38kv lines are much more flexible and can be undergrounded quite easily. They can usually be undergrounded within estate roads or open space for new developments. The 110kv lines and high voltage infrastructure is however more difficult. This is the transmission system, and it is very expensive to relocate. There are procedures and processes however in place around how this can be done and who pays for it. Contact the ESB for more information.</p>



<p><b>In terms of ESB infrastructure upgrades, especially in rural areas and following severe storms, is there more of a focus on undergrounding infrastructure to reduce the impact from future storms?</b></p>	<p>A lot of the rural network will continue to remain overhead. Whilst I understand where the question is coming from, if we have lines going the last kilometre, for example, there could be two houses on that line and the cost of putting that infrastructure underground is just excessive and ultimately these costs are borne by the electricity customer. So, whilst it's understandable and desirable, ultimately a lot of rural Ireland will still be served by overhead networks.</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Speaker: Aoife Sheridan</b></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Question</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Response</p>
<p><b>Fingal County Council seem to have very good structures in place for collaborating with ESB Networks – is there similar collaboration with other utilities and what advice would you have for local authorities seeking to improve their engagement structures?</b></p>	<p>Yes, we have quite good relationships in Fingal with various companies and wind energy is certainly one that has come up because we're a coastal local authority. Like any relationship, it has been building over time and have been engaging now for 3 or 4 years and it's still moving forward. With other utilities, it can be challenging to get the right people in the room, it is helpful if you can get the contacts for the right people. Once you have the right contacts, then it's a matter of keeping the relationship going. The relationship with the ESB has gone from strength to strength and it's in our mutual interest.</p>

**Note:** Query received regarding meaning of RFI – Request for Further Information. This can be issued as part of the planning process where further information is required to facilitate the assessment of a planning application.