

Ireland's EIA Conference 2026

Learnings from EIA to Delivery in Strategic Infrastructure

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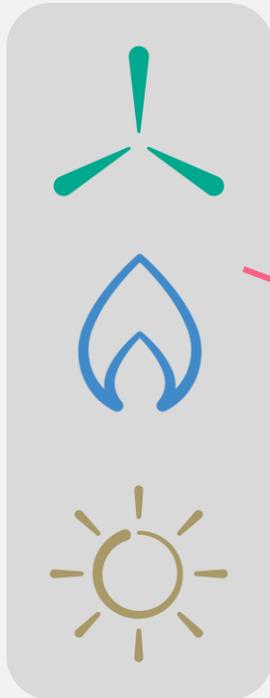
Agenda

- 01 **Introductions/the Celtic Interconnector Project**
- 02 **Delivery and Consenting Context**
- 03 **Mitigation that Delivers**
- 04 **Targeted Outcomes to Facilitate EIA Delivery**
- 05 **Building a Major Project**
- Summary and Open Discussion**

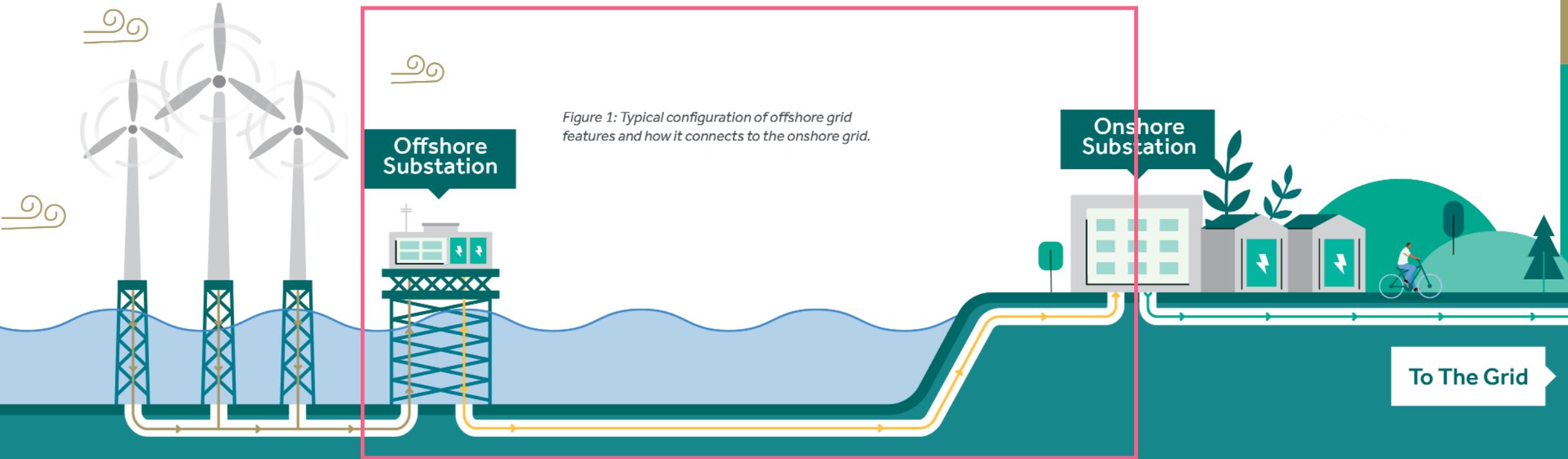


Ireland's Electricity Grid

Electricity generation



Offshore Transmission Asset Owner



Offshore Substation

Figure 1: Typical configuration of offshore grid features and how it connects to the onshore grid.

Onshore Substation

To The Grid



Celtic Interconnector

La liaison électrique entre la France et l'Irlande
Connecting the electricity grids of Ireland and France

total length

500km under the sea

700MW total exchange capacity

the equivalent of supplying power to around 450,000 homes



Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040



Vantage Planning

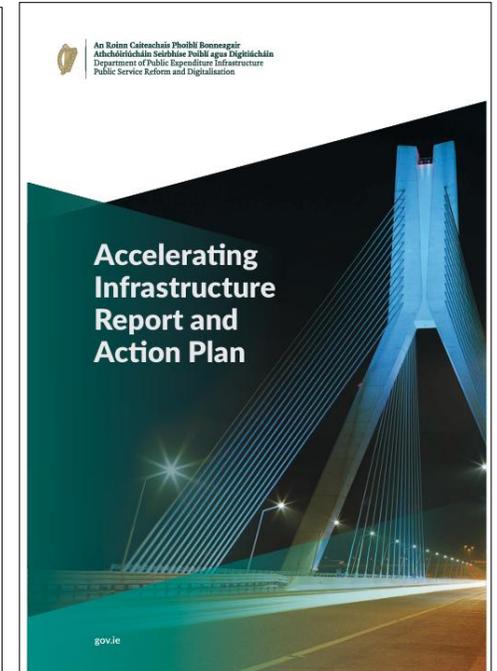
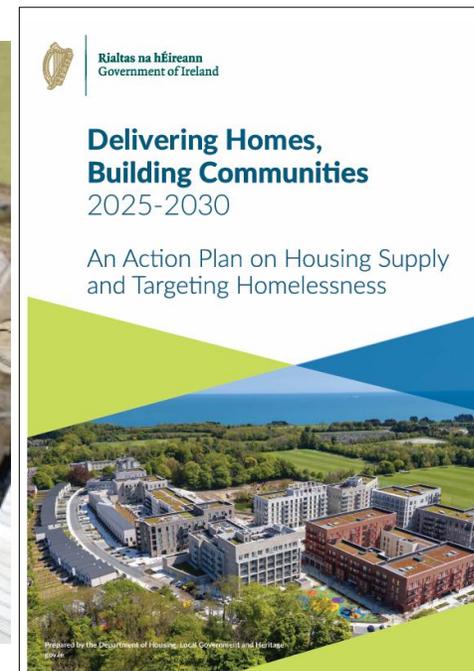
- Vantage Planning established in January 2026
- Des Cox, Director Vantage Planning. Formerly:
- EirGrid 2010-2025
 - Lead, Planning & Environmental Division
 - Lead, Celtic Interconnector Project Consents
 - Lead, Transmission Projects
 - Interim Head of Programme Management Office
 - Senior Planning Consultant
- RPS 2007-2010
 - Operational Director of Dublin Office
 - Lead Planning Consultant for SID - Corrib Gas, EirGrid EWIC/NSIC
- An Bord Pleanála 2003-2007
 - Senior Planning Inspector

Focus on Strategic Infrastructure Consenting and Delivery



Delivery and Consenting Context

- EIA as an enabler of project delivery
 - establishing and understanding baseline;
 - designing development in the context of the baseline;
 - application of mitigation measures to ensure acceptable impact;
 - public and stakeholder involvement in project evolution;
 - facilitate timely consenting and effective and sustainable delivery.

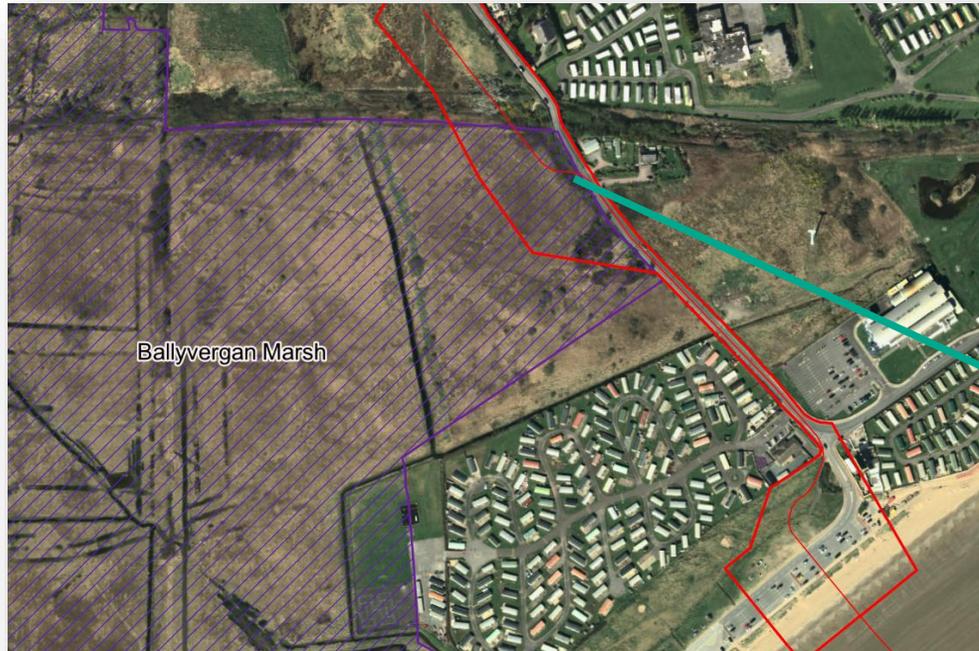


Delivery and Consenting Context

- **Standard Condition for All Consents**
(1) The proposed development shall be carried out in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application....except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions....
- **EirGrid Kildare-Dublin 400kV - 316372-23 - an EIA development:**
(3) The mitigation measures contained in the submitted Environmental Impact Assessment Report shall be implemented in full....
(4) All of the environmental, construction and ecological mitigation measures, as set out in theConstruction and Environmental Management Plan, and other particulars submitted with the application, shall be implemented by the undertaker
- **Kilsaran Ltd C&D waste recovery facility - PA27.321255 - an EIA development:**
(5) The mitigation measures and monitoring commitments identified in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, and other plans and particulars submitted with the application shall be carried out in full.....
(11) Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall prepare a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), incorporating all mitigation measures indicated in the Natura Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Assessment Report.....
(12a) All mitigation measures in relation to archaeology and cultural heritage as set out in Chapter 12 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report shall be implemented in full.....
(13a) The road improvement works on the local road L1157 shall be carried out in accordance with the details set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and associated drawings.....

Mitigation that Delivers

Sensitive Birds in Designated Reedbed (Ballyvergan Marsh pNHA, Claycastle)



Evidence-Based Specification from EIAR

“Noise barrier shall have mass per unit area exceeding 7kg/m² following [BS 5228 Part 1:2009+A1:2014 Part B.4](#)”



Noise Barrier installed winter 2024

Mitigation that Delivers

Rare Plant Translocation

EIAR Approach to Mitigation

Early Engagement with Prescribed Bodies

Evidence-based measures from successful translocation projects

Ecologist experienced in translocation

Multi-year monitoring and aftercare commitment

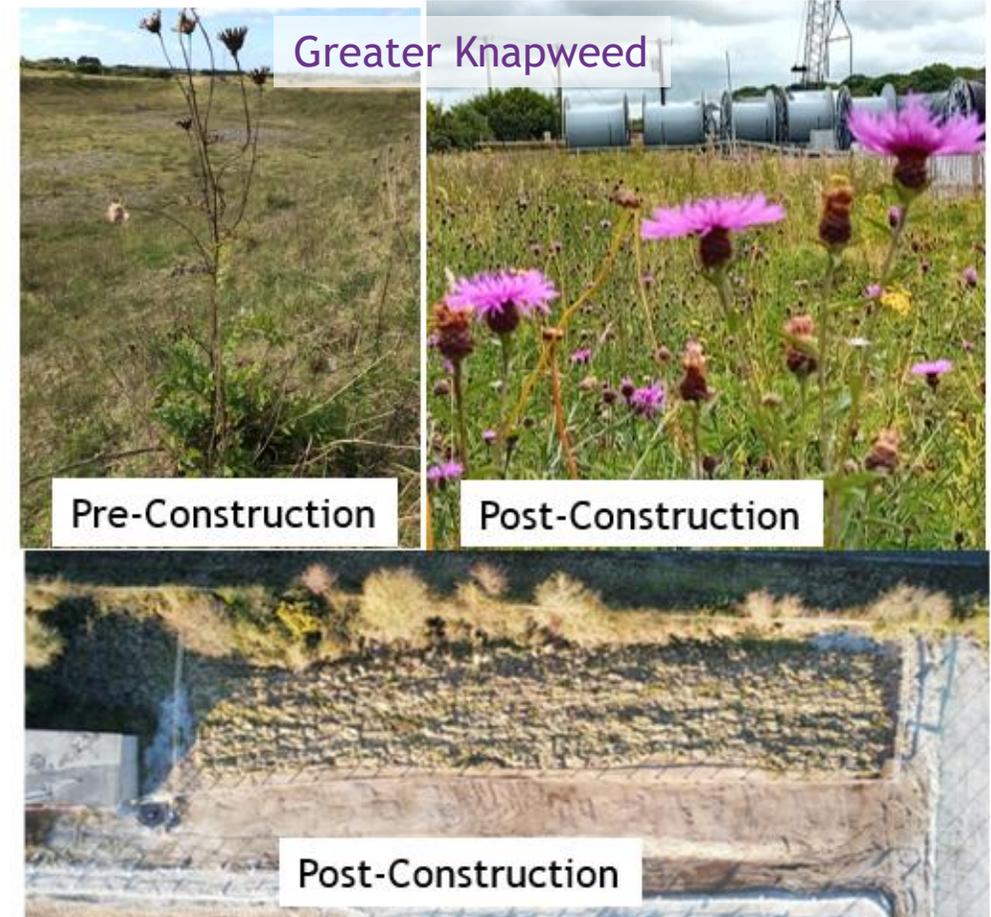
Construction/Monitoring

Further Engagement with PBs on Method Statements

Evidence-Based monitoring to inform adaptive management

Soil testing of green hay donor/receptor sites

Extreme weather: sprinkler system



*Irish Planning Institute
Awards '23
Climate and Biodiversity*

Targeted Outcomes to Facilitate EIA Delivery

Pre-Application Strategy - Pragmatism v Puritanism

- Proactive delivery-focused mitigation - eliminating barriers to delivery
- Have regard to precedent Conditions for implementation of EIA mitigation measures
- Seek agreement of approach to EIA Conditions in pre-application consultation and ongoing engagement with Consenting Authority and Prescribed Bodies
- Identify and avoid unnecessary constraints to delivery



Targeted Outcomes to Facilitate EIA Delivery

Application Strategy - Agreement and Implementation

- Clear statement of mitigation measures in EIAR focussed on accelerated delivery while still ensuring an acceptable environmental impact.
- **Include suggested Conditions of Permission/Approval, based on similar precedent, and stated request to avoid “default” Conditions that will hamper delivery.**
- **Clear agreed programme and approach for discharge of Conditions with relevant Planning Authority - phasing of discharge to align with phasing of development?**
- **Inclusion of Iteration #1 CEMPs, TMPs, WMPs incorporating mitigation measures**



Building a major EIA Project

Navigating Discharge of Planning Conditions

- **Seek to Engage** with Local Authority to understand LA preferences (scheduling, scope, format)
- **Review pre-planning written submissions** from relevant prescribed bodies
- **Plan sufficient time** to align Contractor reports/data to meet local authority requirements
- **Linear Development: ‘Global’** (Scheme-wide; single discharge submission) vs. ‘Locational’ (multiple discharges by location(s))



Building a major EIA Project

Unforeseen Events

Additional Local Authority Requirements during Discharge



Hedge Pruning

Extreme Weather



Dune Post-Construction



Fencing Damaged

Co. Cork P36
Ir
Remark: Sand

Unforeseen Architectural Finds

Third Party Incidents

PR/Info Campaigns/Community Liaison



Irish Examiner

EirGrid, restoring nature in move towards a cleaner energy future

EirGrid is building low-carbon reef cubes and 'fish hotels', creating a friendly habitat for marine life as it brings biodiversity restoration plans offshore

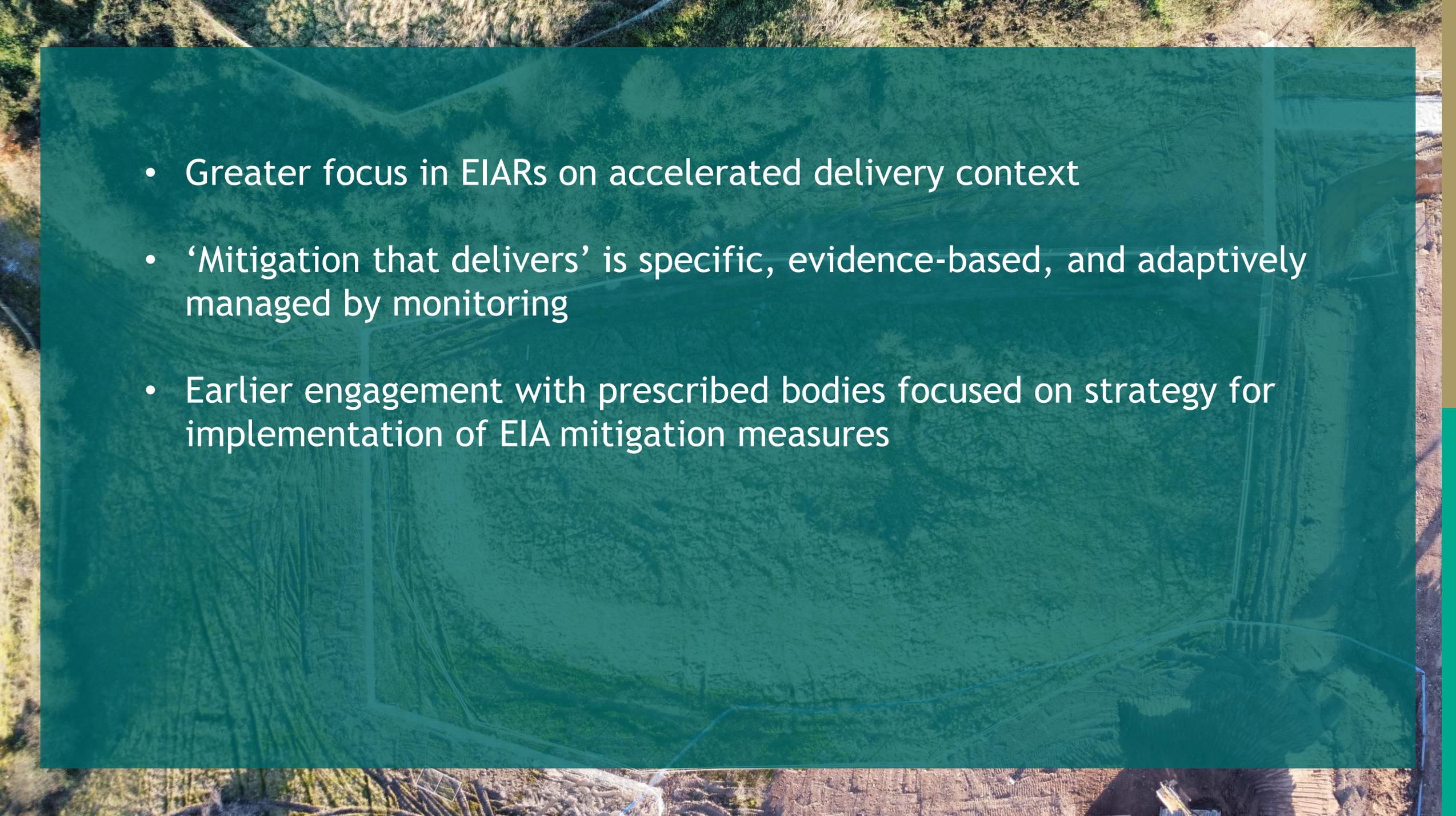


Echo LIVE.ie

Electricity grid operator backs East Cork biodiversity restoration project

Since 2022, EirGrid has spent €543,815 in funding for biodiversity projects in areas hosting the Celtic Interconnector project, which will link the electricity grids of Ireland and France.



- 
- An aerial photograph of a construction site, likely a road or bridge project, with a large green tarp covering the ground. The tarp is the background for the text.
- Greater focus in EIARs on accelerated delivery context
 - ‘Mitigation that delivers’ is specific, evidence-based, and adaptively managed by monitoring
 - Earlier engagement with prescribed bodies focused on strategy for implementation of EIA mitigation measures

Open Discussion



Mitigation that Delivers - Specific yet Adaptable

Reinstating hedges at 'Passing Bays' along Cable Route

EIAR Approach to Methods

- Specific target for hedge diversity (5 native woody species per 30m)
- Evidence-based [Teagasc pruning specification](#)
- Adaptable: “...Unless otherwise agreed with EirGrid, the local authority, or the landowner...”

Additional Construction Phase Methods

- Site-specific planting mixes agreed with landowner suitable to local ecology
- Independent monitoring by EirGrid to adaptively manage for success

Passing Bay (During Construction)

