



14 March 2025

Circular RW 07 of 2025

**'Electricity Transmission Infrastructure Development - Roads Sector
Engagement Framework'
and
'Interim Guidance'**

Dear Chief Executive,

The Government's 'Climate Action Plan 2024 - CAP 24', prepared under the 'Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015', as amended, sets out key targets for the electricity sector, including a requirement to "accelerate renewable electricity generation in order to reach 80% of electricity demand from renewable sources by 2030, through the expansion of onshore wind and solar energy generation, developing offshore renewable generation, and delivering additional grid infrastructure". To achieve this target 'CAP 24' states: - "All relevant public bodies will carry out their functions in a manner which supports the achievement of the renewable electricity targets, including, but not limited to, the use of road and rail infrastructure to provide a route for grid infrastructure where this is the optimal solution."

In recognition of the unique challenges presented by the accommodation of transmission network infrastructure in public roads, a 'HV Forum' was established by key partners within the electricity (*the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, the Commission for Regulation of Utilities, EirGrid and ESBN*) and the roads sector (*the Department of Transport, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, the City and County Managers Association, Road Management Office and Local Authorities*), for the purpose of establishing effective and efficient ways of working together to deliver on 'CAP 24' and support the development of high voltage electricity networks associated with the delivery of renewable energy generation, with due regard to mitigating and minimising potential impacts to public road where their use has been determined to be the **'optimal solution'**.



Building on the high level '*Cooperation Agreement*', which was developed and agreed by all engaged in the '*HV Forum*' in August 2023, the '*HV Forum*' has agreed and published the '***Electricity Transmission Infrastructure Development - Roads Sector Engagement Framework***', a copy of which is attached to this Circular.

The purpose of the '*Engagement Framework*' is:

- to establish a clear and consistent engagement, consultation, and agreement protocol, between EirGrid, ESBN, and Road Stakeholders, for all EirGrid/ ESBN high voltage transmission network projects that have the potential to impact public roads, without affecting the respective parties' statutory rights and obligations;
- to provide an agreed protocol for interactions and collaboration between EirGrid/ ESBN and the Road Stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle, including project introduction, technology selection, route optioneering, route selection, preliminary design, planning consultation, detailed design, construction and operation;
- to ensure that potential impacts and risks of high voltage transmission lines under public roads are effectively identified, understood and addressed, as an integral part of project development and optioneering, and mitigated where an in-roads option is determined to be the '*optimal solution*';
- to provide transparency on the multi-criteria assessment for such projects and infrastructure routing decisions; and
- to ensure efficiencies and reduce potential project delay through effective consultation between all parties.

The '*HV Forum*' has also established:

- A working group to develop and agree a protocol for the purpose of addressing ensuing '***costs and liabilities***' affecting roads authorities, as a result of accommodating HV transmission lines in public roads. This includes costs associated with the participation of roads authorities through all project phases including project development, design, construction, and operation; direct project costs including reinstatement and all ancillary costs; and future cost liabilities post construction.



- A working group to develop and agree a '**Code of Practice for the Construction of High Voltage Transmission Underground Cable Systems**'. The purpose of this document will be to establish '**enduring standards and technical protocols**' for the design, construction and operation of HV Transmission lines in public roads, with due regard to the technical, regulatory, and environmental, considerations associated with the development of HV transmission projects.

It is intended that the '*Engagement Framework*', which defines an overarching approach, is to be read together with the outputs from the '*costs and liabilities*' and the '*enduring standards and protocols*' working groups. As the work of these groups is ongoing and not yet finalised, the Department of Transport, in collaboration with the Road Authorities and Transport Infrastructure Ireland, has produced '**Interim Guidance**' for the purpose of assisting Road Authorities, in their role licensing road openings or making submissions to Planning Authorities, regarding the proposed placement of Medium or High Voltage electricity assets, including ducts, cables and associated infrastructure under public roads.

These '*Interim Guidelines*' are issued pro tem until the development of any procedures for the planning, regulation, construction and management of Medium or High Voltage cables under public roads by the '*HV Forum*' and the conclusion of any outcomes from the Private Wires Consultation undertaken by the Department of Energy, Climate and Communications. **A copy of the '*Interim Guidance*' is attached to this Circular.**

To provide guidance on the application and use of the '*Engagement Framework*' and the '*Interim Guidance*' the Department of Transport, in collaboration with the Road Management Office and Transport Infrastructure Ireland, intends holding an online workshop with roads authorities in the near future and details will be provided in due course.

Any queries in relation to this circular should be addressed to techqueriesrlr@transport.gov.ie or your Departmental Inspector.



Yours sincerely,

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