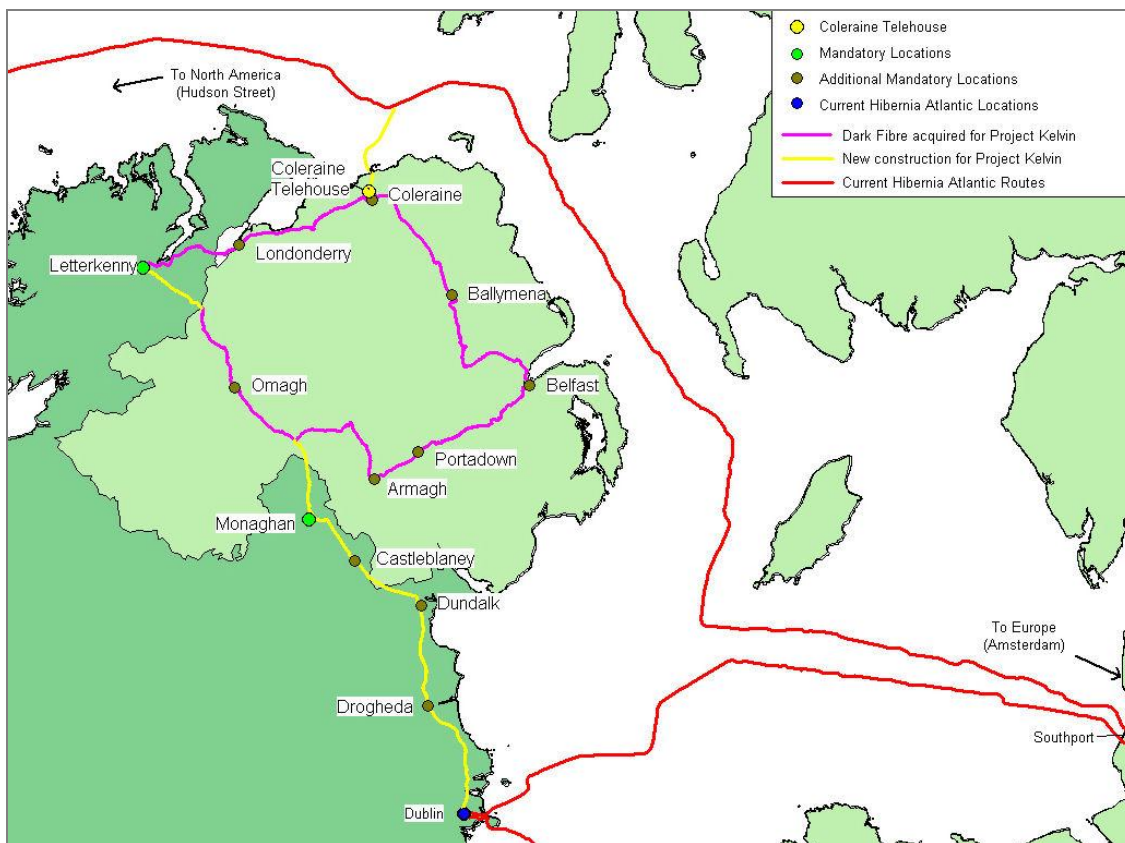




PRESS RELEASE

“New Fibre Optic Connection to the US a Significant Economic Boost to the Border Region”



Source: Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

The Director of the BMW Regional Assembly, Mr. Gerry Finn welcomed the commencement of the €85m Kelvin Project. Speaking following the 57th meeting of the Regional Assembly in Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon he stated, “this strategic investment in the North West represents a major and significant economic boost to the Border Region, this transatlantic telecommunications link will deliver direct, cost-effective high-speed international connectivity to the region and will considerably improve the attractiveness of the area as a place to invest and do business”.

The Kelvin Project is a cross-border initiative between the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and the Northern Ireland Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and is co-financed under INTTREG IVA. Cable provider Hibernia will connect the

new system to its existing northern transatlantic submarine cable network by installing a branching unit which will link Northern Ireland to the US and Canada and another which will link Northern Ireland to the UK. The new cable system will link Letterkenny, Castleblayney, Dundalk, Drogheda and Monaghan to Europe and North America. In addition, the cable will also provide links to Armagh, Ballymena, Belfast, Coleraine, Derry, Omagh, Portadown and Strabane.

Commenting on a presentation by Mr. Aidan Ryan from the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources to the Regional Assembly, the Director added, “by providing direct international links to North America and improved connectivity to Europe there is greater potential for economic development in high-value added sustainable sectors in the Border Region”. This new link will establish the Border Region as one of the most globally connected regions in the world. The new submarine cable and the associated terrestrial cable network will be complete and operational by no later than November 2009 and access to the network should come into effect in April 2010 or earlier.

Finally, the BMW Director stated, “given the opportunities that the Kelvin Project will bring to the Border Region and the current difficult economic environment, it is now imperative that the relevant State Agencies ensure that the Border Region is promoted and positioned to take full advantage of these developments”.

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