



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-302725-18 2nd meeting

Case Reference / Description	ABP-302725-18 Proposed Celtic Interconnector to facilitate an electrical link enabling the movement of electricity between Ireland and France via a connection point at Knockraha, Cork.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	2 nd		
Date	29/04/19	Start Time	11.15 a.m.
Location	1 st Floor Meeting Room	End Time	12.15 p.m.
Chairperson	Brendan Wyse	Executive Officer	Kieran Somers

Attendees		
Representing An Bord Pleanála		
Staff Member	Email Address	Phone
Brendan Wyse, Assistant Director of Planning		
Una Crosse, Senior Planning Inspector		
Josephine Hayes, Senior Executive Officer		
Kieran Somers, Executive Officer		

Representing the Prospective Applicant		
Des Cox, Head of Programme Delivery and Senior Planner		
Bernard Dee, Senior Planner		
Eoghan Tuite, Senior Project Engineer		
Eoin Brady, Solicitor		

The meeting commenced at 11.15 a.m.

The Board referred to its previous meeting with the prospective applicant (which was held on the 7th March, 2019) and the written record of same. The Board enquired if the prospective applicant had any comments it wished to make on the written record. The prospective applicant replied that it had no comments to make.

The Board summarised the key points which had arisen during the course of the previous meeting and also referred to the constituent elements of the project as outlined by the prospective applicant.

The prospective applicant said that the two main purposes of the instant meeting were to provide the Board with an update on the progress of the project and also to discuss the grant application to the European Commission which must be formally submitted no later than the 13th June, 2019. The prospective applicant emphasised the particular urgency with respect to the grant application as this needs to be finalised circa mid-May 2019.

With regard to the progress of the project, and the project roadmap which pertains, the prospective applicant reported that it is currently close to the completion of Stage 3 (consultation stage). The prospective applicant informed the Board that public and stakeholder consultations (which commenced on the 11th April, 2019) are on-going and that two public meetings have taken place to date. There are several further

open days scheduled to take place prior to the closure of the consultation stage (which is due to be completed on the 10th June, 2019). The prospective applicant set out the key milestones which will take place following the conclusion of consultations; these include the lodgement of the formal planning application (circa mid-2020) and the final investment decision (end of 2021). The prospective applicant also advised of its intention to have firmed up on the main elements of the project (such as the cable route and the converter station) and their proposed locations by the end of 2019.

The prospective applicant also raised the question of a grant application which has to be submitted to the European Commission within the coming weeks. The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) is the relevant programme within which the prospective applicant intends to apply for a substantial amount of funding to support the development of this joint project between Ireland and France. The prospective applicant referred to the grant application mechanism in this case and, whilst acknowledging that process is somewhat unconventional with respect to its approach and timetabling (prior to the consent application being made), it has been utilised previously by other member states to acquire financing.

The prospective applicant referred to the two questions as they appear on the Part C Application Form (Compliance with EU Policy and Law) which would require completion by the relevant competent authority. Question 3 of the said application form relates to the matter of EIA, namely whether or not the action is a class of development covered by Annex I or Annex II of the EIA Directive or neither of the two Annexes. Question 5 relates to Appropriate Assessment – whether or not the action in question is likely to have significant effects on sites included or intended to be included in the Natura 2000 Network. The prospective applicant pointed out that both questions permit the competent authority to qualify their answer by way of commentary and it presented the Board with a suggested draft for its consideration.

With regard to question 3 (EIA Directive), the prospective applicant offered its own opinion that the main elements of the project (namely the underground cables, the submarine cables and the converter station) do not constitute a type of development listed in either Annex I or Annex II of the EIA Directive. The prospective applicant

further stated its opinion, therefore, that the proposed development would not be sub-threshold requiring consideration for EIA.

In relation to Question 5 (significant effects on European Sites), the prospective applicant said that, at this point in time, it is envisaged that Appropriate Assessment will be undertaken with regard to the proposed development and that any Natura Impact Statement (NIS) prepared will include mitigation measures to avoid any significant impact on a European Site.

The Board said that it will require some further time to consider the matter of these questions having regard to its own internal processes and general position.

Conclusion:

The prospective applicant undertook to revert to the Board on the matter of Question 5, Appropriate Assessment, as it was decided that this required some further consideration given the specific terms of the question as put.

The record of the instant meeting will issue in due course and the prospective applicant may submit any comments it has on this in writing or at the time of a further meeting.

The meeting concluded at 12.15 p.m.

Brendan Wyse
Assistant Director of Planning