



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-302725-18

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	3 rd		
Date	13/09/19	Start Time	11 a.m.
Location	Parnell Room	End Time	12.10 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		
Ellen Morrin, Senior Administrative Officer		
Kieran Somers, Executive Officer		

Representing the Prospective Applicant		
Bernard Dee, Senior Planner		
Eoghan Tuite, Senior Project Engineer		
Eoin Brady, Solicitor		
Donna Hasset, Senior Environmental Scientist, Mott MacDonald		

The meeting commenced at 11 a.m.

The Board referred to its previous meeting with the prospective applicant (which was held on the 29th April, 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.

Prospective Applicant's Presentation:

The prospective applicant provided the Board's representatives with an update on the project since the previous meeting. It said that the proposed development is now at Step 4 of its six-step process (where to build). At the conclusion of this particular step of the process, the locations for the proposed converter station site, landfall location and the route of the underground cable between these two points will be confirmed. The prospective applicant also advised that the Step 3 Consultation Report, Step 3 Consultation Response Document and the Step 3 Preferred Options Report have been published in the interim. Further public consultations will take place before the end of 2019 as part of Step 4

The prospective applicant provided the Board with a shortlist of the proposed converter station location zones which are under consideration. There are six of these in total at present. A shortlist of the landfall locations which are under consideration was also provided. There are currently three potential landfall points - Claycastle Beach, Redbarn Beach and Ballywilling Beach. By the end of 2019, the prospective applicant expects to have determined the specific locations for both the converter station site and the landfall location. In response to the Board's query on the matter, the prospective applicant said that it expects to have the details of the

proposed development fully confirmed circa February/March 2020. Thereafter, and as part of Step 5 of its process, it intends to lodge the planning application with the Board.

In relation to environmental impact assessment (EIA) in France and Ireland, the prospective applicant noted relevant French legislation which provides that works with a total cost of €1,900,000 and for the construction and installation work of underground cables over 225kV and with a length of more than 15 kilometres require EIA. The prospective applicant in the French jurisdiction has accordingly concluded that the preparation of an EIAR will be necessary in relation to works on land and within the extent of French territorial waters. The requirements in relation to UK Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) were also discussed. Noting that initial screening has established that EIA is not mandatory in the Irish jurisdiction, the prospective applicant stated, nonetheless, that regard must be had to the transboundary nature of the project in its entirety and the implications of the Espoo Convention for EIA. It elaborated on the relevant rules which pertain to the conduct of EIA and added that France and Ireland are signatories to the Espoo Convention. The prospective applicant confirmed that the French jurisdiction also extends to the 12-nautical-mile limit.

In response to the Board's query, the prospective applicant confirmed that the voltage of the proposed interconnector is 320kV.

Following the receipt of legal advice, the prospective applicant advised that it proposes to submit an EIAR as part of the SID application. It said that this decision is based on the logic that the project in its entirety starts at the grid connection point in Ireland and finishes at the grid connection point in France. At the request of the Board's representatives, the prospective applicant undertook to provide the Board with a summary of the legal advice it has received in relation to EIA. It was agreed that a position paper might best suffice in this regard in order to provide more clarity on the issue.

The prospective applicant also suggested that, depending on the extent of dredging works required, the proposed development could potentially be caught by Annex II of the Directive.

Noting the fact that it is a matter, in the first instance, for the prospective applicant to make a decision on the need to prepare an EIAR in respect of the proposed development, the Board said that its position would be to proceed to deal with the application as presented.

The Board requested that the prospective applicant provide it with a full list of the various consents which will be required to carry out the proposed development. The prospective applicant agreed to forward this in due course.

The prospective applicant outlined the five constituent jurisdictions which apply to the submarine cable element of the overall project (namely, Irish territorial waters, the Irish EEZ, the UK EEZ, the French EEZ and French territorial waters).

In relation to the preparation of an EIAR, the prospective applicant stated that the intended approach is to prepare individual EIARs for the relevant jurisdictions and a joint environmental report which will cover the entire project. In response to the prospective applicant's query on scoping, the Board pointed out that this is a separate process to pre-application consultations. The prospective applicant indicated that it has not made a definite decision as to whether it will seek formal scoping from the Board.

Conclusion:

The prospective applicant indicated its preference for a further meeting with the Board circa late November/early December 2019. It was agreed that it will be a matter for the prospective applicant to request this further meeting. In the meantime, the prospective applicant will provide the Board with the position paper on legal advice received and the full list of the various consents for the proposed development.

The Board's representatives indicated that they will probably seek a meeting with the SID division of the Board prior to the holding of a further meeting with the prospective applicant.

The meeting concluded at 12.10 p.m.

Brendan Wyse
Assistant Director of Planning