



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-302725-18 4th meeting

Case Reference / Description	ABP-302725-18 Proposed Celtic Interconnector to facilitate an electrical link between Ireland and France.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	4 th		
Date	08/09/20	Start Time	9.30 a.m.
Location	N/A	End Time	11.30 a.m.

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Staff Members
Brendan Wyse, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)
Una Crosse, Senior Planning Inspector
Kieran Somers, Executive Officer
Representing the Prospective Applicant
Tomas Bradley, Eirgrid
Des Cox, Eirgrid
Eoghan Tuite, Eirgrid
Ciaran Murray, Eirgrid
Valerie Brennan, Eirgrid
Donna Hassett, Mott MacDonald

The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m.

With regard to the previous pre-application consultation meeting (held on the 13th September 2019), the Board enquired as to whether the prospective applicant had any comments it wished to make on the record of this meeting. The prospective applicant replied that it had no comments to make on this record.

The Board's representatives reviewed the progress of pre-application consultations to date and noted that, at the time of the previous meeting, options were being considered by the prospective applicant vis-à-vis the main components of the proposed development and also that legal advice was being taken in relation to preparation of an EIAR in the Irish jurisdiction. With respect to the matter jurisdiction, the Board's representatives confirmed that the Board has determined that its jurisdiction extends as far as the high-water mark only.

Presentation by the prospective applicant:

The prospective applicant recapped on the nature and extent of the project as a whole (first direct electrical link between Ireland and France with 700 megawatts capacity) and said that a significant amount of work has been done since the previous meeting with the Board. The prospective applicant noted that it is presently at the end of step four of its six-step process in bringing the project forward. The prospective applicant said that legal advice received to date is evolving but that it intends to share this as part of the pre-application process in due course. It noted the fact that there are a number of competent authorities involved in respect of the project as a whole and outlined the consents required to carry out the proposed development. The Board has jurisdiction with regard to the onshore element to the high-water mark on the Irish side and consents are also required from the Foreshore Unit of the Department and the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and the Environment. The prospective applicant expressed its current intention to make a SID application to the Board by the end of March 2021.

Site selection:

With respect to the landfall option, the prospective applicant advised that Claycastle Beach (Youghal) has emerged as a preferred option with a transition bay proposed north of the beach which provides the transition between the subsea cable and the onshore cable.

The emerging preferred underground DC cable route from landfall to the converter station site was outlined by the prospective applicant; this will traverse the villages of Killeagh and Castlemartyr. With respect to these two historic villages, the prospective applicant said that it was examining options to see if the proposed route could avoid the main streets with the intention to minimise impacts. The prospective applicant outlined its current intention to run the proposed HVDC cable route to the north of Midleton via local roads. In answer to the Board's query on the matter, the prospective applicant said it did not believe that any future expansion of Midleton town would have significant consequences for the local road network in this area and thereby impact on the proposed HVDC cable route. In terms of continuing the cable route along the existing N25, the prospective applicant outlined proposals for the upgrade of the section of the N25 from Midleton to Carigtwohill and stated it is engaged in on-going consultations with TII on this matter.

In relation to the site for the proposed converter station, the prospective applicant said that three sites had been shortlisted and that Site 1 (at Ballyadam between Midleton and Carrigtohill just north of the N25) while not confirmed, has emerged as the preferred option for this element of the proposed development. The prospective applicant noted that the site in question is located on zoned lands owned by the IDA. Within the Ballyadam site, Site B has emerged as the preference and the prospective applicant submitted an initial concept design. In response to the Board's query on the matter, the prospective applicant confirmed that Ballyadam House lies just to the north of the subject site of the proposed converter station. It said that further screening work is required with respect to this sensitive receptor and that any potential noise impacts will have to be examined.

In response to the Board's query on the matter, the prospective applicant said that six AC cables will be carried from the converter station to the grid connection at the Knockraha 220kV substation and that they are investigating using the existing OHL to carry 3 of these with the remaining 3 carried in underground trenching within the public road in order to minimise disruption to landowners in the vicinity; this would also minimise effects on the local road network. In response to the Board's question, the prospective applicant said that a new overhead line would not be considered given the existing prevalence of overhead lines already in the Knockraha area.

Consultations:

The prospective applicant reported that it is continuing with assessments with a particular focus on options for the proposed converter station element. It also said that consultations are on-going with landowners in the vicinity.

Scope of SID application and PCI:

The prospective applicant set out the scope of the prospective SID application. It said that it was intending to follow the model pursued for the North-South interconnector and that a multi-volume EIAR is being proposed for the various components of the project as a whole. A multi-section NIS is also intended to be compiled and a Joint Environmental Report (JER) will be prepared. The JER will encompass the totality of the project with individual EIARs for the three jurisdictions in question. The prospective applicant said that the EIAR for the French jurisdiction is due to be completed shortly. With regard to the EIAR for the Irish jurisdiction, the prospective applicant wishes to avoid any perceptions of project-splitting.

The prospective applicant provided the Board with an update on their compliance with the Ten-E Regulations. Some of the specific requirements here have been completed whilst others are on-going. It was noted that a new Concept of Public Participation (CPP) had to be compiled.

The prospective applicant said that geotechnical investigations are on-going as well as landowner and community consultations. A final decision on the project options is now due by November 2020 and a draft EIAR and NIS will be prepared by then.

Board's comments/queries:

The Board's representatives enquired as to whether there would be further works required at the existing Knockraha substation and how extensive these might be.

The prospective applicant replied that a simple connection to the existing infrastructure at the proposed grid connection is required.

The Board's representatives noted the transboundary nature of the proposed development and commented that transboundary impacts will need to be addressed in the EIAR in addition to cumulative impacts. The prospective applicant replied that the individual EIARs and JER will address such matters; it added that it will further elaborate on the structure of the documents at a further meeting. The Board referred to its own remit under pre-application consultations in relation to the issue of significant transboundary effects on a member state.

With regard to the matter of the jurisdiction and the landfall location, the Board said that there should be sufficient clarity on what is included in each of the separate applications for consent. The Board acknowledged that there may be some crossover at this location but that the red line boundary should delineate the Boards jurisdiction.

The Boards representatives sought an update on the preparation of the Natura Impact Statement and whether any potential for adverse effects had been identified. The prospective application noted that, while there was potential hydrological links to Natura 2000 sites via watercourses, it is intended that any adverse effect could be appropriately mitigated.

Conclusion:

The prospective applicant stated its preference for a further meeting in the pre-application process for October 2020. It said that it would revert to the Board within approximately six weeks to arrange same.

The prospective applicant confirmed that it would forward its legal advice on EIA to the Board in the interim.

The record of the instant meeting will issue in due course and the prospective applicant can submit any comments it may have in writing.

The meeting concluded at 11.30 a.m.

Brendan Wyse**Assistant Director of Planning**