



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-302725-18 6th 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	6 th		
Date	23/02/21	Start Time	11 a.m.
Location	Microsoft Teams	End Time	12.35 p.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
Valerie Brennan, EirGrid
Donna Hassett, Mott MacDonald

The Board enquired as to whether the prospective applicant had any comments to make on the record of the previous pre-application consultation meeting (held on the 3rd November 2020). The prospective applicant replied that it had no comments to make on this.

Presentation by the prospective applicant:

The prospective applicant's presentation provided the Board's representatives with a recap and an overview of the proposed development which is for a direct electrical link between Ireland and France; the proposed Celtic Interconnector will have a capacity of 700 megawatts. The proposed development will be approximately 575 kilometres in length with approximately 500 kilometres of it submarine.

As regards the proposed landfall point, the prospective applicant said that this is now confirmed at Claycastle Beach, Youghal, County Cork. The HVDC cable to facilitate the proposed development will run between Youghal and Ballyadam and will primarily traverse the N25 (with the route avoiding the main streets of the villages of Killeagh and Castlemartyr); it will also utilise local roads north of Midleton. The proposed converter station will be located on IDA lands at Ballyadam, east of Carrigtwohill; the HVAC cable to facilitate connection to the national grid will utilise regional and local roads; connecting into the grid within the existing Knockraha 220kV substation.

The prospective applicant referenced the contents of the PCI draft application file for the project which includes the SID application, the Foreshore Licence Application and the CRU consent applications. It is proposed that the SID application will include a Planning Report, an EIAR for the Irish onshore element, an EIAR for the Irish offshore element and an Environmental Report for the UK offshore element. An NIS (for Irish onshore and offshore elements) and a Joint Environmental Report (JER) will also be included. The prospective applicant said that it hopes to forward the draft application file to the PCI Unit in March 2021 with the intention to lodge the planning application to the SID unit in May 2021.

Going forward, the prospective applicant set out its intended timeline for the project in 2021; it intends to hold one further pre-application consultation meeting in the instant process and to then lodge the SID application and Foreshore Licence application circa May 2021 following which the statutory time period for relevant bodies and members of the public to make a submission/observation to the Board in respect of the proposed development will commence.

Discussion:

In relation to the cumulative impacts of the proposed development in the EIAR, the proposed approach is to consider the Irish offshore jurisdiction first and then to consider other plans and projects. As a point of clarity, the prospective applicant confirmed that it is the intention to address cumulative impacts within each chapter of the EIAR; a summary of these would then be provided at the end of the EIAR.

The prospective applicant said that the legal advice it has received is that a degree of separation should exist between the two EIARs (onshore and offshore elements) so as to avoid confusion for members of the public and other interested parties. The Board agreed that clarity is essential from a public information point of view.

With regard to the issue of the Board's jurisdiction vis-à-vis the high water mark, the prospective applicant outlined the proposal to interpret same as per the OSI 25 inch series. The Board replied that it would accept the competency of the Foreshore Unit in relation to the interpretation of the high water mark and would be guided by this and the definition of the Foreshore contained in the Planning and Development Act.

With regard to the Marine Bill, the Board noted that, were this to come into effect, it may affect the jurisdiction of the competent authorities. The prospective applicant said that it is due to receive an update on this shortly and is keeping a watching brief on the situation generally; it added that its own understanding is that the project would be considered under the existing regime of legislation.

With respect to procedural matters, the prospective applicant said that it would expect to receive further advice from the Board at the time of the final meeting in this

process. The prospective applicant questioned whether site notices are mandatory with respect to a linear project such as this. The Board noted the approach taken on another similar SID project and suggested that key urban areas and road junctions might be considered. The Board and the prospective applicant agreed that this matter could be further discussed at the final meeting in the process.

In relation to the matter of transboundary effects, the Board noted that the application for proposed development in the French jurisdiction has already been lodged with the competent authority there (December 2020). The Board enquired as to whether a transboundary process has been initiated with the relevant authorities in Ireland and the UK. The prospective applicant replied that it was not certain if such was the case.

The Board referenced Article 210 (3)(a) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, which states that 'where the Board is of the opinion that the proposed development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment in a transboundary State, it shall indicate to the prospective applicant:

(i) which bodies, in which States, should be notified for the purposes of Section 37E(3)(d), 181A(3)(c), 182A(4)(c) or 182B(4)(b)(iv), as appropriate, and

(ii) how many copies of the application and EIAR should be sent with the notification referred to in (i).

The Board also noted that, in such a scenario, Section 182A(4)(a)(i)(III) requires that if the Board determine that the proposed development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment in a transboundary State, public notices for the proposed development shall state, where relevant, that the proposed development is likely to have significant effects on the environment of a Member State of the European Communities or other party to the Transboundary Convention.

A discussion ensued as to whether an element of the instant project within the jurisdiction of the Board would have a significant effect on the environment of a transboundary state. The Board for its part noted the approach which had been taken by the applicant for the Greenlink project. The prospective applicant noted this case and said that it would consider the matter further prior to the lodgement of the planning application.

Conclusion:

It was agreed that there will be one final meeting in the instant pre-application consultation process. The prospective applicant will revert to the Board when it wishes to arrange this.

The meeting concluded at 12.35 p.m.

Brendan Wyse**Assistant Director of Planning**

26 February 2021