



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting
ABP-309913-21 2nd
meeting

Description	ABP-309913-21 – ‘North Connacht Project’, comprising a new 110 kV transmission circuit, comprising an underground cable between two existing stations - Moy 110 kV Substation in County Mayo and Tonroe 110 kV Substation in County Roscommon.		
Case Type	Pre-application Consultation under Section 182E of the P&D Act 2000, as amended.		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	2 nd Meeting		
Venue	Virtually by Microsoft Teams		
Date	19/10/2021	Time	11:00am – 12:04pm

Representing An Bord Pleanála		
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)		
Una Crosse, Senior Planning Inspector		
Sarah Caulfield, Executive Officer	s.caulfield@pleanala.ie	01-8737287
Representing the Prospective Applicant		
Tomás Bradley, Senior Lead Planner (EirGrid)		
Jason Kenna, Project Manager (EirGrid)		
Donna Hassett, Senior Environmental Scientist (Mott McDonald)		
Caroline Lew, Senior Environmental Scientist (Mott McDonald)		
Lara Gough, Principal Town Planner Team Lead (Mott McDonald)		

Introduction:

The Board referred to its previous meeting with the prospective applicant of the 1st June, 2021 and the record of this meeting. The Board asked if the prospective applicants had any comments it wished to make on the record of this meeting; the prospective applicant replied that it had no comments to make.

Presentation by the prospective applicant:

The prospective applicant provided a brief recap of the 1st meeting and outlined the focus for this meeting was the proposed 110kV underground cable from Moy in Co. Mayo to Tonroe in Co. Roscommon. They noted that the final alignment for the cable route is expected to be finalised shortly.

The prospective applicant made reference to the information pack submitted to the Board since the previous meeting, which included photographs of Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) developed under another project, and a list of precedent cases where 110kV cable infrastructure was determined to be SID.

The prospective applicant gave a recap of the overall project and said the proposed development is needed in order to bring the significant wind resource in the West of Ireland onto the transmission network and onto the demand centres in the East. It said the uprate works proposed as part of this development are routine in nature and necessary to bring the existing assets up to a suitable standard.

The prospective applicant provided a comprehensive overview of the proposed 110kV underground cable route from the existing Moy substation in Co. Mayo to Tonroe substation, Co. Roscommon by way of an interactive map. The map highlighted and displayed the main planning and environmental considerations along the route, most notably the crossing points of the River Moy and the proposed HDD and open cut trench locations, the proximity to the SAC and residential receptors. It also outlined the constraints in the town centres, primarily Ballina and Swinford where several route options are currently being considered. The prospective applicant said the majority of the route will follow the public road network however there are some areas where the cable will need to divert onto private lands. It emphasised that this will be done carefully, in areas of low ecological impact and in

consultation with landowners. The prospective applicant said ecological surveys have been carried out within all areas where it is proposed to divert from the public road.

It was noted that minimising social impacts in addition to environmental considerations were central in the route selection. The prospective applicant said engagement is ongoing with landowners, the local community, and other stakeholders.

The prospective applicant considers the proposed development is not a type of development which falls within Annex I and Annex II of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive. It is proposed to undertake environmental impact assessment screening and to submit same as part of any subsequent planning application. The prospective applicant stated that a Natura Impact Statement will be submitted with any subsequent application to facilitate an appropriate assessment of the proposed development. It said mitigation measures will be required to avoid any impacts on the River Moy SAC.

The prospective applicant said it expects 1-2 further meetings would be required before concluding the pre-application consultation process with the intention to request a further meeting in December 2021 when the design is more advanced.

The prospective application intends to submit a planning application for the proposed development in Quarter 1/Quarter 2, 2022.

Discussion

The following matters were discussed:

- In relation to a query on the matter, the prospective applicant said they have engaged with Mayo County Council Roads Department in relation to providing ducting along a stretch of the N26, which is currently at an advanced stage of construction. It is not yet known whether this will be facilitated during the construction stage or if it will be installed after the new road is complete.
- Given the extensive cultural heritage in the area, the Board's representatives queried whether discussions had taken place with the National Monuments Service. The prospective applicant said they were notified of the proposed

development and they have recently requested a meeting to discuss the proposed development. The prospective applicant said an application for an excavation license will be submitted shortly in the context of watching briefs for intrusive works. It also noted that geotechnical investigations are proposed at the HDD locations and an archaeologist is engaged to oversee the requirements in relation to these works.

- In response to a request by the Board, the prospective applicant said a suite of drawings and a link to a virtual exhibition space will be submitted to the Board following this meeting.
- In response to a query on the matter, the prospective applicant said the route through the town of Swinford is challenging given the layout and existing infrastructure within the town centre and the presence of archaeological features in the surrounding area. It said the final route will be cognisant of both the social and environmental impacts in the area. The Board's representatives advised providing clear justification for the finalised cable route and the alternatives considered.
- The Board's representatives noted that the crossings of the River Moy SAC and the route of the cable through the town centres would likely be the critical factors of the proposed development. It advised providing clear and detailed photographs/drawings of the work involved in Horizontal Directional Drilling and suggested including previous examples.
- The prospective applicant said it is their opinion that an EIAR is not required for the proposed development however they are using a precautionary principle and said EIA screening will be carried out.

Conclusion

The record of the meeting will issue to the prospective applicant and it will then be a matter for the prospective applicant to submit any comments on this if it wishes to do so. The prospective applicant anticipates requiring 1-2 further meetings before closing the consultation process. It is up to the prospective applicant to request a further meeting or request closure of the pre-application consultation process.

Ciara Kellett 26/10/21

Ciara Kellett

Assistant Director of Planning

