



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of Meeting ABP-313676-22 1<sup>st</sup> meeting

<b>Description</b>	ABP-313676-22 – Proposed development of a substation and associated grid connection in the Townlands of Tincurry, Croy and Ballylough near Ferns, Co. Wexford		
<b>Case Type</b>	Pre-application Consultation		
<b>1st / 2nd / 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting		
<b>Venue</b>	Virtually by Microsoft Teams		
<b>Date</b>	11/08/2022	<b>Time</b>	11:00am –11:32am

<b>Representing An Bord Pleanála</b>			
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)			
Breda Gannon, Senior Planning Inspector			
Sarah Caulfield, Executive Officer	s.caulfield@pleanala.ie	01-8737287	
<b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b>			
Mark McCarthy – Terra Solar II			
Donal Fewer – Terra Solar II			

## **Introduction:**

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 27<sup>th</sup> May 2022, requesting pre-application consultations and advised the prospective applicant that the instant meeting essentially constituted an information-gathering exercise for the Board; it also invited the prospective applicant to outline the nature of the proposed development and to highlight any matters that it wished to receive advice on from the Board. The Board mentioned the following general procedures in relation to the pre-application consultation process:

- The Board will keep a record of this meeting and any other meetings, if held. Such records will form part of the file which will be made available publicly at the conclusion of the process. The record of the meeting will not be amended by the Board once finalised, but the prospective applicant may submit comments on the record which will form part of the case file.
- The Board will serve notice at the conclusion of the process as to the strategic infrastructure status of the proposed development. It may form a preliminary view at an early stage in the process on the matter.
- A further meeting or meetings may be held in respect of the proposed development.
- Further information may be requested by the Board and public consultations may also be directed by the Board.
- The Board may hold consultations in respect of the proposed development with other bodies.
- The holding of consultations does not prejudice the Board in any way and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or in any legal proceedings.

## **Presentation by the prospective applicant:**

The prospective applicant began its presentation by providing a brief introduction to the project team. Lodgewood Solar Farm Limited is a special purpose vehicle company set up by Terra Solar II to develop a substation and associated grid connection within the townlands of Tincurry, Croy and Ballylough, Co. Wexford.

The prospective applicant noted that the purpose of this development is to serve the proposed Tincurry Solar Farm. A planning application for the solar farm development is expected to be submitted to Wexford County Council in September 2022.

The proposed development consists of a 110kV Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) single bay, tail fed substation with the associated grid connection comprising 110 kV underground cabling which will connect into the existing 220/110 kV Lodgewood substation. It was submitted that the substation will comprise two compounds: an Eirgrid compound, and an Independent Power Producer (customer owned compound).

It was submitted that the wider rural area can generally be characterised by a mix of linear and one-off residential dwellings. The nearest large settlement is Enniscorthy town, which is located approximately 7 kilometres to the south.

The prospective applicant noted the presence of a stream on the boundary of the proposed substation which the underground cable will be required to cross. It was noted that there are other streams in the area, all of which have hydrological connections to the Slaney River Valley Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 000781). This SAC is located approximately 200 metres downstream of the proposed site access and over 1200 metres from the proposed 110 kV substation and underground grid connection. Wexford Harbour and Slobs Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004076) is located 7.5 kilometres south of the site.

The prospective applicant said given the hydrological connections to the SAC, it is proposed to submit a Natura Impact Statement as part of the planning application.

The prospective applicant said access to the site includes the M11, N80, N30, R745 and several regional and local roads. It is proposed to widen an existing agricultural access road to facilitate the development, and this will consist of a gravelled track

running from the R772 to the substation site which covers a distance of approximately 2 kilometres.

It was submitted that the grid connection will require routing through an area of forestry. The prospective applicant said Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) is the preferred method of crossing this forestry.

The prospective applicant said there are a number of national plans and policies which are relevant to the proposed development including the Climate Action Plan 2021, and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region 2020. It also noted the Governments recent commitment to double the solar target to 5,500MW for 2030. The prospective applicant said the proposed development also aligns with several objectives of the recently adopted Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028.

It was noted by the prospective applicant that the proposed development does not involve a class of development as set out in Parts 1 and 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended and therefore there is no requirement for EIAR.

The prospective applicant is of the opinion that the proposed 110 kV substation and underground grid connection is 'transmission' and therefore constitutes strategic infrastructure as defined in section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

## **Discussion**

The following matters were discussed:

- The prospective applicant confirmed that the site is located within an area that is identified as 'open for consideration' for solar farm developments within the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028.
- The Board's representatives gave their preliminary view that the proposed development would constitute a strategic infrastructure development but said the final decision would be a matter for the Board.

- The Board’s representatives advised consulting with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Inland Fisheries Ireland regarding the stream crossing and the hydrological links to the SAC.
- In response to a query on the matter, the prospective applicant said it is not anticipated to cross Ballycarney Bridge (protected structure) for access to the site. The prospective applicant noted the good transport infrastructure in the area and said there is a more direct route to the site, from the east, which would avoid crossing Ballycarney Bridge.
- The prospective applicant said a comprehensive suite of ecological studies have been completed on the site and freshwater pearl mussel surveys are ongoing on the Slaney River.

## **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. It will be a matter for the prospective applicant to revert to the Board if it requires a further meeting or if it wishes to close the pre-application consultation process.

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**Ciara Kellett**  
**Assistant Director of Planning**