



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting
ABP-315045-22 1st
meeting

Description	ABP-315045-22 - Proposed Farranrory Wind Farm Grid Connection- 38kV Electrical Connection to the National Grid and all associated works, Farranrory, Co. Tipperary and Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny		
Case Type	Pre-application Consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st Meeting		
Venue	Virtually by Microsoft Teams		
Date	19/01/2023	Time	15:00pm – 15:30pm

Representing An Bord Pleanála		
Ciara Kellett, Assistant Director of Planning (Chair)		
Conor McGrath, Senior Planning Inspector		
Sarah Caulfield, Executive Officer	s.caulfield@pleanala.ie	01-8737287
Representing the Prospective Applicant		
Breena Coyle - Jennings O'Donovan		
Dermot Guilfoyle - Jennings O'Donovan		
David Kiely – Jennings O'Donovan		
Sarah Jones – Jennings O'Donovan		
Emer Sexton - Ørsted		
Fiona Maxwell - Ørsted		
Shane Kiely - Ørsted		

Introduction:

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 28th October, 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 provided a brief company overview and a background to the proposed development. Ørsted are a global energy company with a portfolio of 332MW of onshore wind farms throughout Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The proposed development consists of a 38kV underground cable grid connection which is designed to 110kV underground cable design standards, to connect the consented Farranrory Wind Farm 38kV substation to the existing 110kV Ballyragget substation.

The prospective applicant said planning permission was granted by Tipperary County Council (Planning Reference: 20/9720) in March 2021 for a nine-turbine wind farm, to include a 38kV on-site substation. Planning permission was also granted separately for a 38kV grid connection from the on-site substation to the 110kV Ballyragget substation. The route comprises an underground cable with a length of 33.4 kilometres and the grid connection is located within the jurisdiction of Tipperary County Council (approximately 2.25 kilometres) and Kilkenny County Council (approximately 31.15 kilometres). Planning permission for the grid connection was granted by both local authorities in Q3 2022.

The prospective applicant noted that no objections were received on the wind farm application or the grid connection applications. The consented grid connection route consisted of 24 water crossings, 11 Horizontal Directional Drill locations, 35 joint bays and the route traverses the River Barrow & Nore Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002162) and the River Nore Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004233). It was noted that both an EIAR and NIS accompanied the grid connection planning applications.

The prospective applicant said the need for the proposed development is driven by EirGrid policy on grid system planning and associated grid connections. Following discussions with EirGrid and ESB Networks, the prospective applicant said it had been confirmed that the consented Farranrory windfarm development would receive a 38kV grid connection offer and would operate at 38kV, but the prospective applicant would be requested to install the underground cable to 110kV underground cable design standards. This is known as a "System Operator Preferred Connection

Method" and is understood to be a future-proofing requirement on the part of Eirgrid. The prospective applicant said the 110kV design standard will only be applied to the underground cable sections of the grid connection design and installation. The windfarm substation would be a standard 38kV substation design and all elements of the grid connection, including the windfarm substation and underground cable grid connection would be operated at 38kV.

The prospective applicant said there would be no change from the grid connection route corridor previously consented, running underground for the entire 33.4 kilometre route.

In relation to the differences between the consented and proposed grid connection, the prospective applicant said the 110kV underground cable design standard requires larger ducts and cables to be installed and larger joint bay chambers. The spacing between joint bays would be reduced and additional joint bays may also be required.

From a legislative and planning policy context, the prospective applicant referred to section 182A(9) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended which sets a threshold of 110kV for high voltage electricity lines to be considered as strategic infrastructure development. However, the prospective applicant is of the opinion that the proposed development does not fall within the scope of SID as the development would operate at 38kV.

Discussion

The following matters were discussed:

- A general discussion was had surrounding the need for the proposed development and the interpretation of the legislation under section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.
- The prospective applicant noted that no change to the permitted 38kV substation is proposed. The 38kV connection contract will be with ESB, as this will comprise a distribution line.

- In response to a query on the matter, the prospective applicant said there is no proposal to transmit 110kV through the cable, which will continue to operate at 38kV. The requirement for the higher specification is essentially EirGrid planning for the future, given the length of the proposed connection .
- Any future use of the line for 110kV transmission would require further substation works and give rise to separate planning applications requirements.
- The prospective applicant said the proposed development is being developed as an independent project and is not connected with and does not form part of any wider infrastructure development such as the Laois-Kilkenny Reinforcement Project.
- The Board's representatives stated their preliminary opinion is that the proposed development would not constitute strategic infrastructure development but noted that the ultimate decision is a matter for the Board.

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.

 23.1.23

Ciara Kellett

Assistant Director of Planning

