



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of 1st Meeting ABP-315433-22

Case Reference / Description	Proposed development of a 220kV Air Insulated (AIS) loop in substation with the associated grid connection comprising 220kV underground cabling to connect into the existing 400/220kV Dunnstown substation in the townlands of Delamain and Dunnstown near Kilcullen and Ballymore Eustace in County Kildare.		
Case Type	Pre-application consultation		
1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th Meeting	1 st		
Date	16/02/23	Start Time	11:05 a.m.
Location	Virtually	End Time	11:30 a.m.

Representing An Bord Pleanála		
Staff Members		
Ciara Kellett, Director of Planning (Chair)		
Mairead Kenny, Senior Planning Inspector		
Eimear Reilly, Executive Officer	e.reilly@pleanala.ie	01-8737184
Representing the Prospective Applicant		
Mark McCarthy, Terra Solar Ltd		
Donal Fewer, Terra Solar Ltd		

Introduction

The Board's representatives referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant on the 21st December 2022, requesting pre-application consultations under section 182E of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended in respect of the above-mentioned proposed development. The Board's representatives 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 made by the prospective applicant:

The prospective applicant, Delamain Solar Farm Limited, a special purpose vehicle (SPV) company set up by Terra Solar II, provided an overview of the proposed development. It outlined the characteristics of the development site, stating that there are two proposed grid connection options at the site. Option A is public road connection into the existing Dunnstown 400/220kV substation, and option B is a cross-country option which crosses through agricultural land to the Dunnstown 400/220kV substation. The land in the area was said to be a mixture of unzoned agricultural land and linear and one-off residential development. The next nearest large settlement is Kilcullen which is located approximately 3km to the southwest of the site. There are eight European sites within 15km of the proposed development, the closest being the Poulaphouca Reservoir Special Protection Area (SPA) which is located c.4.6km to the west. Road infrastructure and access to the proposed development includes the R412 and R448 regional roads in its immediate environs and the M9 and M7 are located approximately 2Km to the west.

The prospective applicant explained that the proposed development would consist of a 220kV Air Insulated (AIS) substation which will comprise two separate compounds, an EirGrid compound and an Independent Power Producer (IPP) or customer owned compound. Both compounds contain control buildings, transformers, and other electrical transmission infrastructure. The substation would connect to the existing Dunnstown 400/220kV substation via a 220kV underground cable.

The prospective applicant reiterated that two cable route options are currently being considered: option A is said be approximately 2000m in length in a combination of private lands and the R412 regional road before entering the substation lands, while option B is said to be approximately 1200m in length through forestry and greenfield. Both options will connect into an anticipated new 220kV bay within the existing 400/220kV Dunnstown substation. Along with this, the prospective applicant provided a drawing of a section of typical trench for an underground 220kV cable in a public road which is 1.4m deep and 0.825m in width, which will be used for the cross-country option.

For context and references purposes, the prospective applicant provided an overview of the Solar Farm development as it relates to the proposed development. It explained that the site boundaries and preliminary planning design for Delamain Solar Farm are still being progressed and that, based on discussions with landowners and the design team, it is expected that the solar farm will be spread across multiple parcels of land and will have an electrical output of approximately 230-250 MW. The prospective applicant hopes to submit an application for the Delamain Solar Farm to Kildare County Council in April 2023.

In relation to Planning Policy considerations, the prospective applicant stated that there are several national, regional, and local plans and policies which are relevant to the proposed development.

In relation to legislative considerations as regards to strategic infrastructure, the prospective applicant maintained that the proposed underground cable providing the grid connection from the solar farm substation to the existing 400/220 kV Dunnstown substation is at a voltage of 220 kV and, as such, is considered to fall within the definition of 'transmission' as set out in section 182A(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. Furthermore, it also stated that it is considered that the proposed 220 kV substation also falls within the definition of 'transmission' as set out in section 182A(9) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The prospective applicant maintained that this opinion is consistent with recent determinations made by An Bord Pleanála on similar section 182E pre-application consultations. Consequently, the prospective applicant is of the opinion that this proposed development would constitute strategic infrastructure development.

In the event that the SID determination is made, the prospective applicant intend to lodge the following documents as part of an application to the Board:

- Archaeological Impact Assessment.
- Ecological Impact Assessment.
- Traffic Impact Assessment (including Access Study).
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
- Construction Method Statement.

- Construction Environmental Management Plan.
- Screening for Appropriate Assessment

The prospective applicant also stated that the proposed development does not involve a class of development set out in Parts 1 and 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) and that, accordingly, there is no requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment.

Discussion:

The following matters were discussed:

- In relation to the two grid route options, the Board's representatives advised that if two options are pursued both should be assessed robustly at application stage.
- The Board's representatives gave the preliminary view that the proposed development would likely constitute strategic infrastructure development but advised that this determination would ultimately be up to the Board to make.
- The Board's representatives sought clarity as to why the grid voltage was chosen to be 220kV. The prospective applicant replied that the existing Dunnstown substation is a 400kV/220kV substation and so the connection must be 220kV. The prospective applicant also noted that it has engaged with EirGrid in relation to this and the permitting requirements.
- The Board's representatives noted the adoption of CAP 2023 since the lodging of the pre-application documentation and advised that this be addressed in relation to the proposed development.
- The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to monitor progression of the Draft Planning and Development Bill 2022 and to take into account any relevant implications for the making of an application.
- In relation to timelines, the Board's representatives asked the prospective applicant if the related solar farm application is likely to be appealed. It replied

that a number of objections were received on a similar project and so it will factor in time for a possible appeal to be made to the Board when creating timelines. The Board's representatives advised that this will be noted with respect to assigning Inspectorate resources.

- In response to a query regarding planning and environmental reports, the prospective applicant confirmed that both the solar farm and the proposed development would be detailed in the reports submitted for both applications. In relation to this, the Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant to be clear in the documentation as regards to the redline boundaries for both developments.

Conclusion:

The Board's representatives advised that the onus is on the prospective applicant to either request a further meeting or formal closure of the instant pre-application consultation process. The prospective applicant indicated that it would likely request formal closure. The Board's representatives advised that the record of the instant meeting will issue in the meantime and the prospective applicant can submit any comments it may have in writing.

 27/2/23

Ciara Kellett

Director of Planning