



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report Strategic Infrastructure pre-application consultation 303587-19

Development	New 110kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation.
Location	Lanesborough Village, County Longford.
Planning Authority	Longford County Council.
Prospective Applicant	Eirgrid plc.
Type of Request	Section 182E request for SID Pre-application consultation – whether project is or is not strategic infrastructure development.
Inspector	Brendan Wyse.

1.0 Proposed Development

1.1. The proposed development comprises:

- A new 110kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation.
- The substation building would have a typical footprint of 15m by 50m and an approximate height of 15m. The design has not been finalised yet but plans and elevations of a similar GIS building permitted in Galway are submitted for illustrative purposes.
- The site is located in Lanesborough Village on the east bank of the River Shannon. It is the site of the former Lanesborough power plant now demolished.
- Adjacent to the west of the site there is an L-shaped compound that houses a 110kV and a 38kV air insulated switchgear (AIR) substation facility. The Lough Ree power plant is located to the east of the site.

2.0 Applicant's Case

2.1. This includes:

- The new 110kV GIS substation will connect into the national electricity transmission grid system and, therefore, constitutes a 'type' of development under the provisions of Section 182A and 182B of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Board needs to determine whether or not it constitutes SID.
- The substation is intended to replace the existing 110kV AIS substation which will be decommissioned once the GIS substation comes into operation.
- The principle of a 110kV substation at this location has previously been determined and its replacement with a new GIS substation should be acceptable in principle to the Board.
- Given the brownfield nature of the site and its location between an existing 110/38kV substation and a power generation plant, Eirgrid is of the opinion

that the principle of this type of development has already been established at this location.

- It is not considered, therefore, that the Board should determine that the proposed development constitutes SID.
- The proposed 110kV substation is not of a class of development listed in the 7th Schedule to the 2000 Act. It is also not of a class within either Part or Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).
- The Galway case referred to above also related to a brownfield site and replacement of an existing 110kV substation. It was deemed by the board not to be SID having regard to the provisions of Section 37A of the Planning and Development Act (as amended) [ABP Ref. VC0110].

3.0 Legal Provisions

3.1. Under section 182A(1) of the 2000 Act (inserted by section 4 of the 2006 Act) where a person (thereafter referred to as the 'undertaker' intends to carry out development comprising or for the purposes of electricity transmission (hereafter referred to in this section and section 182B as 'proposed development'), the undertaker shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, an application for approval of development under section 182B and shall apply to the Board for such approval accordingly.

3.2. Subsection 9 states that:

In this section 'transmission' in relation to electricity, shall be construed in accordance with section 2(1) of the Electricity Regulation Act 1999 but, for the purposes of this section, the foregoing expression, in relation to electricity, shall also be construed as meaning the transport of electricity by means of

(a) a high voltage line where the voltage would be 110 kilovolts or more, or

(b) an interconnector, whether ownership of the interconnector will be vested in the undertaker or not.

3.3. In section 2(1) of the Electricity Regulation Act, 1999, 'transmission' is defined in relation to electricity as meaning:

the transport of electricity by means of a transmission system, that is to say a system which consists, wholly or mainly, of high voltage lines and electric plant and which is used for conveying electricity from a generating station to a substation, from one generating station to another, from one substation to another or to or from any interconnector or to final customers but shall not include any such lines which the Board may, from time to time, with the approval of the Commission, specify as being part of the distribution system but shall include any interconnector owned by the Board.

4.0 Assessment

- 4.1. The Board will note previous decisions it has made on SI pre-application consultation requests in relation to electricity transmission infrastructure under S.182E and involving amendments, additions and expansion of electricity substation infrastructure (including the case referred to by the prospective applicants – file attached). In this case, and in others, due to lack of clarity in the interpretation of s.182A and its requirements in relation to developments of such a nature, the Board has exercised some discretion and used the broad definition of the SI Act, “developments of strategic importance to the State”, and the criteria contained in s.37(A)(2) to determine such matters (although not specifically cited in regard to cases coming forward under s.182A).
- 4.2. Whilst in this case a new GIS substation on the national grid is being proposed this is within the context of the existing substation and power plant infrastructure. A need, precedent and role for the presence of a substation in the location is well established. The stated purpose for the proposed GIS substation is to replace the existing AIS substation at this location.
- 4.3. Following from the above, and having regard to the stated purpose of the 2006 Act as set out in the long title and to the general description and scale of strategic infrastructure development set out in Section 37A(2) of the Act, I consider that the proposed development as described in the submissions and drawings does not fall within the scope of Section 182A of the 2000 Act (as amended) and does not, therefore, constitute strategic infrastructure necessitating an application directly to the Board.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1. I recommend that EirGrid plc. be informed that the proposed development consisting of a new 110kV gas insulated switchgear (GIS) substation adjacent to and to replace an existing 110kV air insulated substation (AIS) at Lanesborough Village, County Longford as set out in the plans and particulars received by An Bord Pleanála on the 30 January 2019 does not fall within the scope of section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and that a planning application should be made in the first instance to Longford County Council.

Brendan Wyse
Assistant Director of Planning

11 March 2019