



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-319042-24.

Development

110kV 'loop-in loop-out' electricity substation and approximately 6.5km of underground electricity cables

Location

Moyvannan, Feamore, Lisbaun, Lissygreaghan, Gortacoosan, Ballycreggan, Corrantotan, Knocknanool and Ballymullavill Co. Roscommon.

Prospective Applicant

Energia Renewables ROI Limited

Planning Authority

Roscommon County Council

Type of Application

Pre-Application consultation under Section 182E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

Date of Site Inspection

4th April 2024.

Inspector

Sarah Lynch

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. The Board received a request on the 13th February 2024 from Energia Renewables ROI Limited to enter into pre-application consultation under Section 182E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, in relation to 110kV electrical infrastructure and connection to the National Grid at a proposed 110kV substation in Moyvannan, Co. Roscommon.
- 1.2. It is important to note at the outset that the proposed development is associated with the permitted Seven Hills windfarm which has been the subject of permission by the Board under ref: ABP-313750-22 and includes a grid connection.
- 1.3. The grid connection permitted within the aforementioned consent proposed to connect into the Athlone town substation. It is stated by the applicant that at present there is no capacity at this substation as other projects are ahead of the permitted windfarm in terms of the connection priority at this location.
- 1.4. It is therefore proposed to redirect the permitted connection at a point near to Brideswell along the public road network to the proposed new substation at Moyvannan, north of Bridewell. It is this section of grid that is the subject of this pre application.
- 1.5. The Board's representatives met with the prospective applicant and agent on the 8th April 2024. The meeting was held virtually, the prospective applicant's representative outlined the proposed route and outlined the relevant legislation pertaining to the proposed development.
- 1.6. The prospective applicant requested closure of the pre-application process on the 7th August 2024.

2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1. The proposed development will be located within Southeast County Roscommon, circa 8km northwest of Athlone town, immediately north/northeast of Brideswell. The current use of the lands at the proposed substation location is agriculture and the proposed grid connection will be located predominantly within the road edge. The area is sparsely populated and is characterised by one off housing and agricultural development.

3.0 Proposed Development

3.1. The proposed development consists of:

- Proposed 110kV Substation;
- Grid connection from permitted windfarm grid connection route at Brideswell to proposed substation.

4.0 Planning History

- *ABP-313750* – Permission for 20-turbine windfarm and associated infrastructure including grid connection to existing 110kV substation at Monkstown, Athlone.
- *ABP PL20.244346*: permission refused for a 16 x turbine windfarm at Cronin and adjoining townlands following a Third Party appeal and subsequent JR of the Board's original decision to grant permission. Permission was refused for 1 x reason related to the absence of adequate data to assess potential adverse impacts on turloughs and their inter-connectivity several SPAs and their QI bird species.
- *ABP PL20.244347*: permission refused for a 19 x turbine windfarm at Skyvalley and adjoining townlands following a Third Party appeal and subsequent JR of the Board's original decision to grant permission.

5.0 Prospective applicant's case

5.1. The prospective applicant's case can be summarised as follows:

- It is the prospective applicant's opinion that the proposed development would constitute Strategic Infrastructure Development as it consists of 110kV infrastructure.

6.0 Legislative Provisions

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.

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.

In section 2(1) of the Electricity Regulation Act, 1999, "**transmission**" is defined as

"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."

"**Distribution**" is defined as

"The transport of electricity by means of a distribution system, that is to say, a system which consists of electric lines, electric plant, transformers and switch gear and which is used for conveying electricity to final customers."

"**Electric plant**" is defined as:

any plant, apparatus or appliance used for, or for the purposes connected with, the generation, transmission, distribution or supply of electricity other than –

- (a) An electric line.

6.1. Environmental Impact Assessment

- 6.1. The prescribed classes of development and thresholds that trigger a mandatory EIAR are set out in Schedule 5 of the Regulations. The Board should note that the prospective applicant proposes to submit an EIAR with the proposed development as it forms part of a permitted windfarm development for which EIA is mandatory.

7.0 Assessment

- 7.1. This pre-application consultation concerns the development a 110kV substation and grid connection. The Board should note, as mentioned above, that the applicants have permission for a grid connection from the Seven Hills Windfarm development to an existing substation at Monkstown Athlone. However as mentioned above, this connection is no longer available as the substation is currently at capacity. It is therefore proposed to utilise a section of the permitted grid connection route which commences at the permitted windfarm to a point near to Brideswell and then create a new spur off this connection towards the proposed substation at Moyvannan.
- 7.2. The applicant stated at the meeting that it is their intention to submit a 146B application in relation to the permitted Windfarm development (ABP-313750) to omit the section of the permitted grid connection from Brideswell to Athlone.
- 7.3. The proposed transmission link will be provided via an underground cable from the connection point of the permitted grid connection at Brideswell and will follow the road network from this point to the proposed substation at Moyvannan.
- 7.4. Section 182A (9) of the Act sets a threshold of 110kV in order for a high voltage electricity transmission line to be considered strategic infrastructure. I note that no threshold is set in respect of a substation.
- 7.5. With regard to the electricity transmission line, I note that the prospective applicant has stated that the substation and connection point will become nodes on the national transmission grid. Having regard to the information submitted and that presented during the course of the pre-application meeting I consider that the proposed 110kV transmission cable will become an integral part of the national grid transmission infrastructure.

7.6. I conclude that the proposed grid connection, in comprising a high voltage line where the voltage would be 110 kilovolts or more, as per Section 182A(9) of the Planning and Development Act, as amended, constitutes Strategic Infrastructure.

7.7. Prescribed Bodies

7.8. In view of the scale, nature and location of the proposed development, as described in this report, it is recommended that the prospective applicant should consult with the prescribed bodies listed in the attached Appendix in respect of any future application for approval.

8.0 Recommendation

8.1. I recommend that Energia Renewables ROI Limited be informed that the proposed development consisting of a 110kV substation and underground 110kV transmission line from the connection point at Brideswell to the proposed substation at Moyvannan, as set out in the plans and particulars received by An Bord Pleanála on the 13th February 2024, does fall within the scope of section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and that a planning application should be made directly to the Board.

8.2. I attach an Appendix listing relevant prescribed bodies.



Sarah Lynch
Senior Planning Inspector
10th October 2024

Appendix – list of prescribed bodies

The following list identifies the prescribed bodies which are considered relevant in this instance for the purposes of Section 182A(4)(b) of the Act.

- Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Development Applications Unit)
- Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment
- Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport
- Roscommon County Council
- Irish Water
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland
- Environmental Protection Agency
- The Heritage Council
- An Taisce
- An Chomhairle Ealaíon
- Fáilte Ireland
- Irish Aviation Authority
- Department of Defense
- Office of Public Works

Further notifications should also be made, where deemed appropriate.