



**An  
Bord  
Pleanála**

## **Inspector's Report 29S. VC0101.**

**Case Ref. No:** 29S. VC0101.

**Issue:** SID Pre-application – whether project is or is not strategic infrastructure development.

**Proposed Development:** Proposed new gas insulated switchgear (GIS) building and new control room at existing Inchicore 220kV substation.

**Location:** Inchicore 220kV sub station, Inchicore, Co Dublin.

**Applicants:** EirGrid plc.

**Planning Authority:** Dublin City Council.

**Inspector:** Philip Green.

### **Proposed Development.**

This is a proposed development by EirGrid consisting of a new GIS building and control room at the existing Inchicore 220kV substation. This will constitute of:

- New GIS building to north of existing GIS building
- New control room adjacent to new GIS building
- Associated works to accommodate transfer of switchgear equipment
- Associated works to accommodate existing cable relocation.

It is stated that at this stage the physical details of the proposal are not confirmed. Typically the footprint of the new infrastructure would be approx..600 sq.m. and which will include a single storey structure approx. 6m. in height.

In the submitted correspondence the prospective applicants state:

- Existing 220kV substation is an indoor substation with four 220/110 kV transformers. ESB compound is extensive and is also used as a storage yard by ESB Networks for spare cables, equipment, oil and other general electrical equipment. Substation compound consists of a 220kV GIS substation to the west, a 110kV substation to the east and a 38kV indoor substation to the north (aerial photographs provided)
- Existing compound located within a mixed use industrial area approx. 100m. south of Kylemore road and Grand Canal is immediately to south.
- The 220kV GIS has been developed in three stages. The first in the 1980's the second in early 2000's and third commissioned in last five years. Existing Stage 1 and Stage 2 circuit breakers and current transformers short circuit ratings are not sufficient to meet current transmission requirements. Refurbishment of the Stage 1 equipment would be difficult due to location and orientation of the equipment. In order to comply with safety standards it is advisable to construct a new GIS building in a less constrained location.
- Proposed development contained within existing substation compound and will read physically and visually as part of the existing GIS substation. Given the location of the substation and that proposed works are within the existing substation compound visual impact will be imperceptible.

### **Applicant's opinion.**

The prospective applicant states that given its nature and function, modest scale and being primarily required to relocate existing equipment the proposed development is not of strategic importance to the State. Eirgrid therefore seek the Board's written advice as to whether the proposed development should be

submitted to Dublin City Council or whether it should be the subject of pre application consultations with the Board pursuant to s. 182E.

### **Legal Provisions.**

Under section 182A(1) of the 2000 Act (inserted by section 4 of the 2006 Act) where an 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 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.*

### **Assessment.**

It is not entirely clear from the above, given the stated purpose of the proposed development, whether it would fall within section 182A of the 2000 Act. In these circumstances I consider that it is reasonable to refer to the long title of the 2006 Act, which provides for the making directly to An Bord Pleanála of applications for permission for "developments of strategic importance to the State". Section 37A(2), while referring to 7<sup>th</sup> Schedule development, generally describes strategic infrastructure development as:

- development of strategic economic or social importance to the State or the region in which it would be situate,
- development which would contribute substantially to the fulfilment of any of the objectives in the National Spatial Strategy or in any regional spatial and economic strategy in force in respect of the area or areas in which it would be situate,
- development which would have a significant effect on the area of more than one planning authority

The Board should note that this general description of strategic infrastructure development is not repeated under section 182A.

The Board may recall that a number of previous proposals in other locations for relatively small scale and minor electricity transmission type infrastructure proposals have been determined by the Board to not fall within the scope of section 182A of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended. I consider that the current proposal could reasonably be interpreted as falling within a similar category. I attach for example file 08. VC0065 for a similar proposal by Eirgrid at Tarbert Island Co Kerry (determined not SI by the Board).

Having regard to the stated purpose, nature and scale of the proposed development and location within the existing substation compound, and 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), I conclude that the proposed development consisting of the construction of a proposed new gas insulated switchgear (GIS) building and new control room at the existing Inchicore 220kV substation, Inchicore, Co Dublin. does not fall within the scope of section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

### **Recommendation.**

I recommend that EirGrid be informed that the proposed development consisting of the construction of a proposed new gas insulated switchgear (GIS) building and new control room at the existing Inchicore 220kV substation, Inchicore, Co Dublin. 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 Dublin City Council.

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**Philip Green,**  
**Assistant Director of Planning.**  
**8<sup>th</sup> November 2016.**