

Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID)

Renewable Biogas Plant at Inchera, Little Island, Co. Cork

Pre-Application Consultation (PAC)

Prepared for An Coimisiún Pleanála | July 2026



Little Island Bioenergy Plant

- Industrial area within Inchera at the western end of Little Island.
- Brownfield site previously occupied by Pfizer; Pfizer ceased operations at the site in 2010.
- Permitted to accept 90,000 tonnes per annum of non-hazardous biodegradable organic waste.
- Construction of the plant is well advanced, commenced in April 2025, with estimated completion in Q3 2027.
- IED Licensed Facility

Planning History

2015

Ref: 15/4926

Original renewable bioenergy plant permission; 90,000 tpa; EIS/NIS.

2023

Ref: 23/5586

Amendment: biogas upgrade, gas grid entry, carbon capture; tank farm rationalisation.

2020

Ref: 20/5549

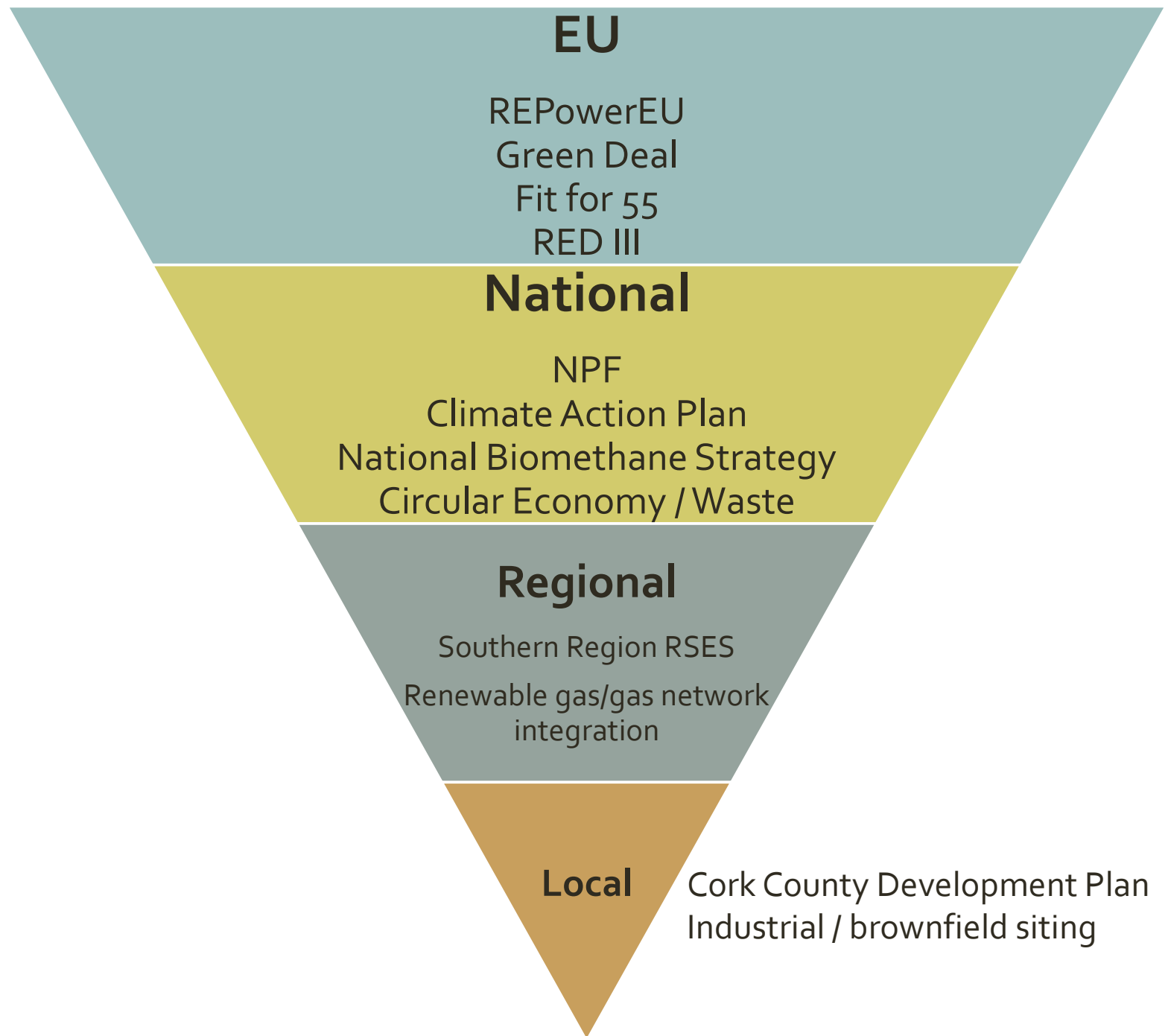
Extension of appropriate period to 22/10/2025.

2025

Ref: 25/5034

Permission to complete Renewable Biogas Plant; confirms renewable biogas / biomethane facility.

**Policy Context
Supports
Renewable
Biomethane
Infrastructure**



National, Regional And Local Policy Alignment

National Targets

5.7 TWh indigenous biomethane production by 2030; Climate Action Plans identify biomethane as a key component of decarbonisation.

Permitted Output

Permitted development will produce approximately 81 GWh of renewable biomethane annually.

Suitable Location

Commercial-scale bioenergy facilities are appropriately located on industrially zoned lands or brownfield sites, such as Inchera, Little Island.

Pre application Consultation

Purpose of the request

Seek the Commission's opinion as to whether the proposed development constitutes Strategic Infrastructure Development.

Seek confirmation that the proposed modification may proceed by standard planning application to Cork County Council.

Whether the proposed increase of 20,000 tonnes per annum, assessed on its own merits as a modification to an already permitted development, constitutes Strategic Infrastructure Development.

Increase in permitted intake
of non-hazardous,
biodegradable,
predominantly source-
separated domestic and
commercial feedstock.

90,000 tpa

Permitted Feedstock
Throughput

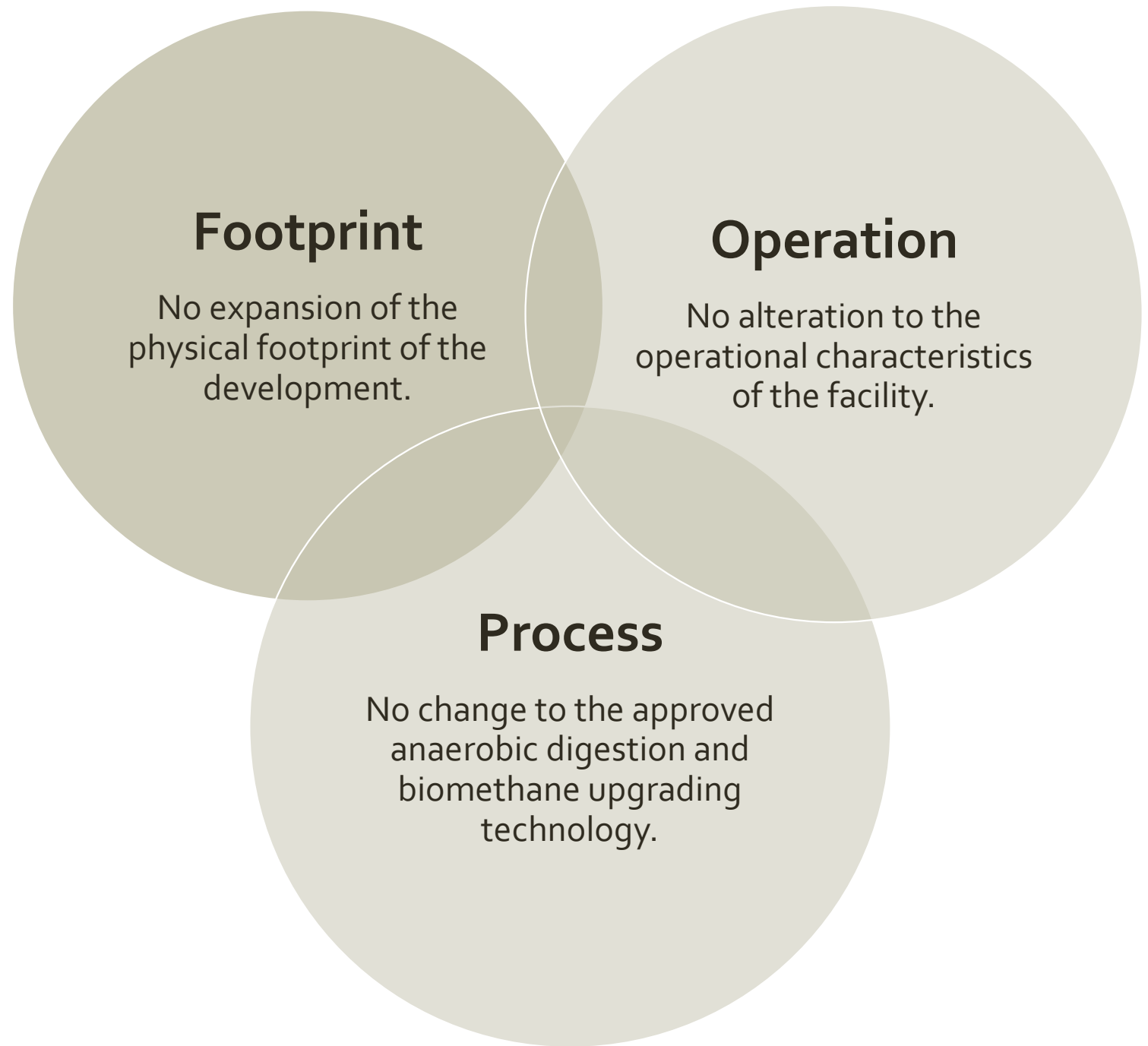
+20,000 tpa

Proposed Increase

110,000 tpa

Resultant Total Intake

The proposed increase does not require any material alteration to the approved site layout, plant infrastructure or technology.



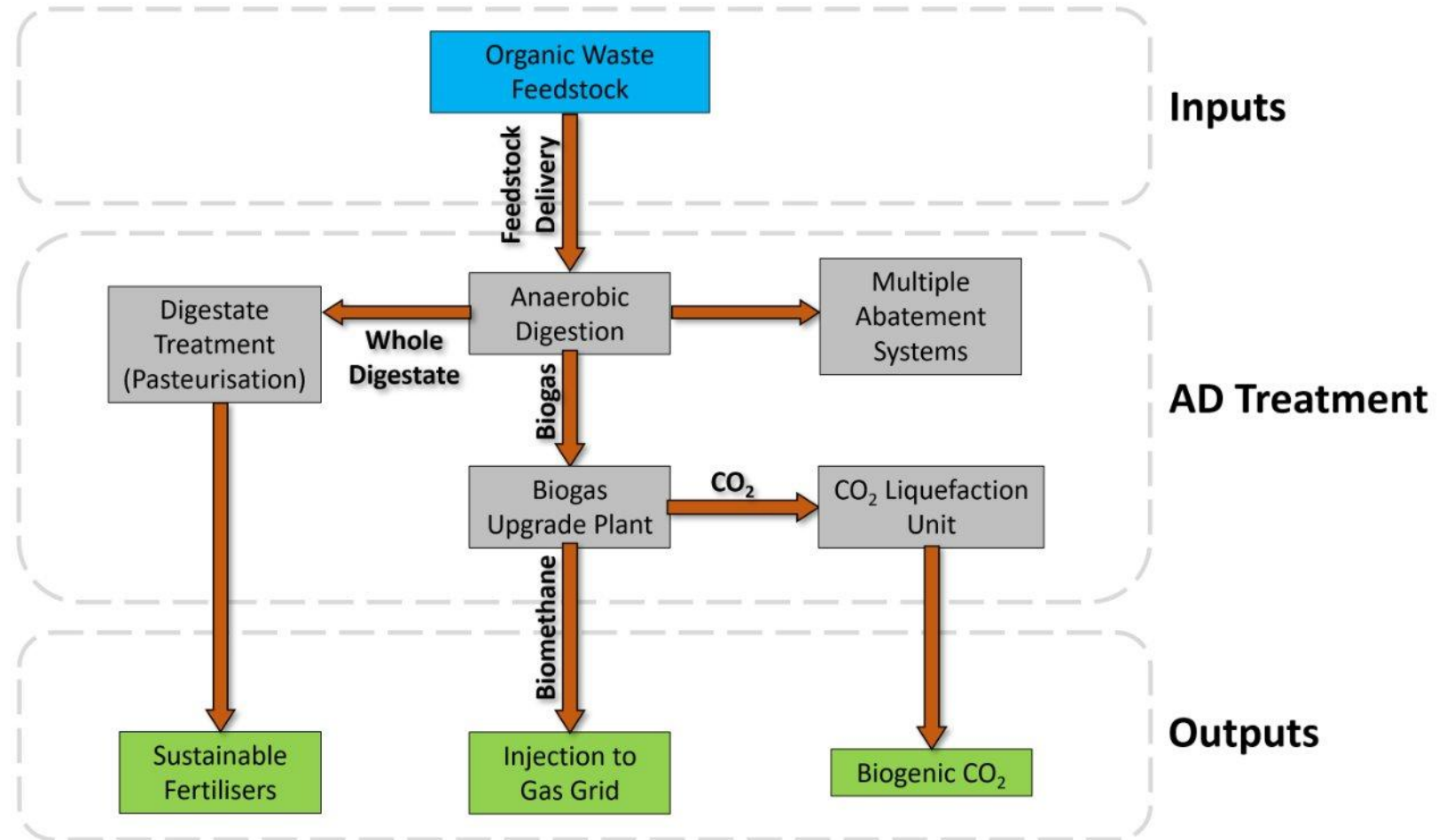
Renewable Energy Infrastructure

Primary function: generation of renewable energy (renewable gas) through anaerobic digestion and biomethane upgrading.

The acceptance of biodegradable feedstocks is ancillary to the plant's primary energy-recovery function.

The biogas produced is upgraded on-site to biomethane and injected directly into the adjacent Gas Networks Ireland network.

Current 81 GWh would increase to 104 GWh



Energy Infrastructure Classes Identified in the Seventh Schedule

Electricity generating stations

Output of 300 megawatts or
more.

Electricity transmission infrastructure

Infrastructure of 220 kV or
greater.

Major gas infrastructure

Large gas pipelines, gas
storage installations and LNG
terminals.

The proposed development is not captured by the energy infrastructure provisions of the Seventh Schedule.

SID Screening

Section 37A PDA

Applications for permission for development specified in the Seventh Schedule shall, where the relevant criteria are met, be made directly to An Coimisiún Pleanála.

Seventh Schedule

Identifies specific classes of development which may constitute SID and where applicable thresholds are exceeded must be determined directly by the Board.

Applicable Class

An installation for the disposal, treatment or recovery of waste with a capacity for an annual intake greater than 100,000 tonnes.

Threshold

The relevant threshold relates to installations for waste with a capacity greater than 100,000 tonnes per annum.

The proposed development comprises an increase of 20,000 tonnes per annum in the permitted throughput of an already permitted facility.

While the resultant total intake would exceed 100,000 tonnes per annum, the relevant consideration is whether the proposed development itself constitutes SID.

The proposal does not involve creating a new installation designed from the outset to exceed the statutory threshold.

Environmental And Planning Context:

No Materially
Different Effects
Identified

Land Use

- No alteration to approved land use, site footprint, or overall character.

Traffic

- Associated increase remains modest; no significant adverse traffic or transport effects.

Air Quality

- No change to emission sources or operational processes; no significant adverse effects anticipated.

Climate

- Betterment in net climate benefits

SID Considerations:

Limited Uplift And Localised Effects

Proposed development does not meet the threshold when taken on a standalone basis as a 20,000 tpa increase.

Limited uplift in capacity does not elevate the project to one of strategic national significance.

Even if considered to fall within a Seventh Schedule class, it would not meet Section 37A(2) criteria having regard to limited scale, localised effects, and absence of strategic economic, social or spatial significance.

Falls more appropriately within the statutory functions of the local planning authority.

ACP Relevant Precedent

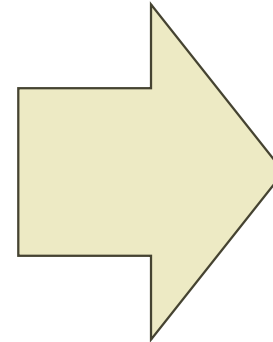
Case ABP-
318276-23

- The statutory threshold is to be applied to the development proposed, rather than by reference to cumulative or combined capacity.

Requested Confirmation

Requested confirmation

That the proposed modification does not constitute Strategic Infrastructure Development requiring a direct application to An Coimisiún Pleanála.



Appropriate pathway

Standard planning application to Cork County Council, unless the Commission determines otherwise under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Summary

The proposed increase of 20,000 tonnes per annum represents a proportionate and controlled modification to an already permitted anaerobic digestion / biomethane facility.

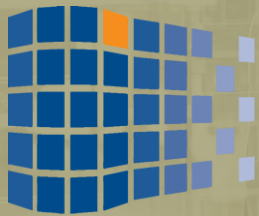
The proposal does not involve any material change to the approved footprint, technology or fundamental character of the development.

The permitted development is properly characterised as a renewable biogas / biomethane facility, the principal function of which is the production of renewable gas for injection into the national gas network.

The proposal should be considered in the context of the existing permitted baseline and the fact that the facility is already under construction.

There is existing precedent that the statutory threshold is to be applied to the development proposed, rather than by reference to cumulative or combined capacity.

Buíochas



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