



Proposed Galway Port extension PA.0033

ABP hearing presentation
14th January 2015



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Management Team
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- Small (27 employees) environmental charity
- Established in 1968
- Education, research, survey, policy & conservation management
- Volunteer base and network of 30 local volunteer Branches across the country
- Non-executive Board elected by fee-paying members (15,000)
- *Forward Strategy 2020*
- European context - middling in size BirdLife International (global)
- Irish context – largest environmental charity (staff and membership)



- Clarify aspects of submissions to date
- Reiterate our concerns
- Emphasise the importance of the site
- ‘Sustainable’ port policy in Ireland

Submissions to date

March 2014, December 2014

What we know /don't know about the site

- some significant gaps exist
- the onus is on the applicant to address this

Of local, regional, national and global importance

Clarifications

Use of IWeBS data – defining Important Bird Areas (IBAs)

Site integrity (small but part of site coherence, cumulative impacts & death by a thousand cuts, a need for longer term Conservation Objectives etc) = uncertainty

‘The quality or condition of being whole or complete, or in ecological terms, of being resilient and able to evolve in ways favourable to conservation’ - Commission Guidance

‘The coherence of the site’s ecological structure and function, across the whole area, or the habitats, complex of habitats and/or population species for which the site is or will be classified’ – UK DEFRA Planning Guidance (1994)

Waterbird assemblage (top 15 sites)

Great Northern Diver (most important site in Ire)

Light-bellied Brent Goose (Int.)

Black-throated Diver (scarce in Irish waters & most imp in Ire)

Red-breasted Merganser

Sandwich Tern

Black-headed Gull

Cormorant

Common Gull

Ringed Plover

Common Scoter, Lough Corrib SPA

Black-headed Gull, Lough Corrib SPA

Common Gull, Lough Corrib SPA

Common Tern, Lough Corrib SPA

Arctic Tern Lough Corrib SPA

Clarifications

Cumulative effects (piecemeal approach taken)

- Need to assess existing and proposed (pipeline) projects
- Range of combined impacts
- Need to take an ecological approach not just sectoral approach

New bird-related information

(EIS Section 7.5.6 & applicants presentation 13.01.2015 App2)

- Variability of site usage (habitat types, extreme weather events, long term resilience, tidal change)
- Survey effort

Clarifications

Coherence of SPA network (adjacent sites and their interests)

Extreme weather events and changes in ecological needs

Relative importance of development area within the SPA

Disturbance impacts (short term and longer term)

Habitat changes with changes in tidal regime & impacts on prey availability (site integrity)

- A modelling exercise at least, needs data
- Effect on SPA resilience

Reiterate our concerns

Integrity of the SPA, network coherence for a suit of waterbird species, estimating lost value (still a need to know what the lost value would be)

Significant body of work required to determine potential loss of value

Mitigation (to avoid impacts in the first place) proposed is poor

Alternatives before IROPI provision

Identify objectives of the plan/project

Identify all alternative ways of achieving objectives

Assess alternatives against likely impact on COs of Natura site(s)

‘Least harm’ (ecological) must be preferred (economic and social criteria do not override at this stage.

After the process (above) then state IROPI tests

Alternatives (before use of IROPI provision)

- locations, scale or size
- ways to meet objectives of the plan (e.g. reduced demand)
- construction & operational methods & technologies
- time-frames
- do nothing

DEFRA Guidance, Dec 2012

Strict tests under Article 6(4)

- Prove no less ecologically damaging alternative solutions
- Demonstrate damage is justified for IROPI
- Provide compensatory measure to ensure overall coherence of the Natura network is protected

‘Sustainable’ port policy in Ireland

Port IROPI cases in Europe – significant effort required to determine potential impacts.
A need to know what the potential loss of value is for Article 6(3) or 6(4)

Estuarine sites are unique and important – National Ports Policy 2013
Environmental sustainability in Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth & Framework for Sustainable Development in Ireland

*Needs to be reflected by actions in reality?
Regionally important ports need to play a part*

Applicant will leave a legacy if proceeded (not a good one!)

Other ports developing sustainability strategies

Incl. looking at the ecological footprint

Incl. link to local heritage

Incl. filling information gaps proactively

Embrace this local heritage rather than a dismissive approach

PLAY YOUR PART – SUPPORT OUR WORK

- Join 22,000 others by signing up for our free e-zine
- Become a Member and receive our quarterly magazine along with other benefits
- Our Branches hold 450 free events a year – you are welcome to take part!

You can make a difference for the environment we all depend on

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