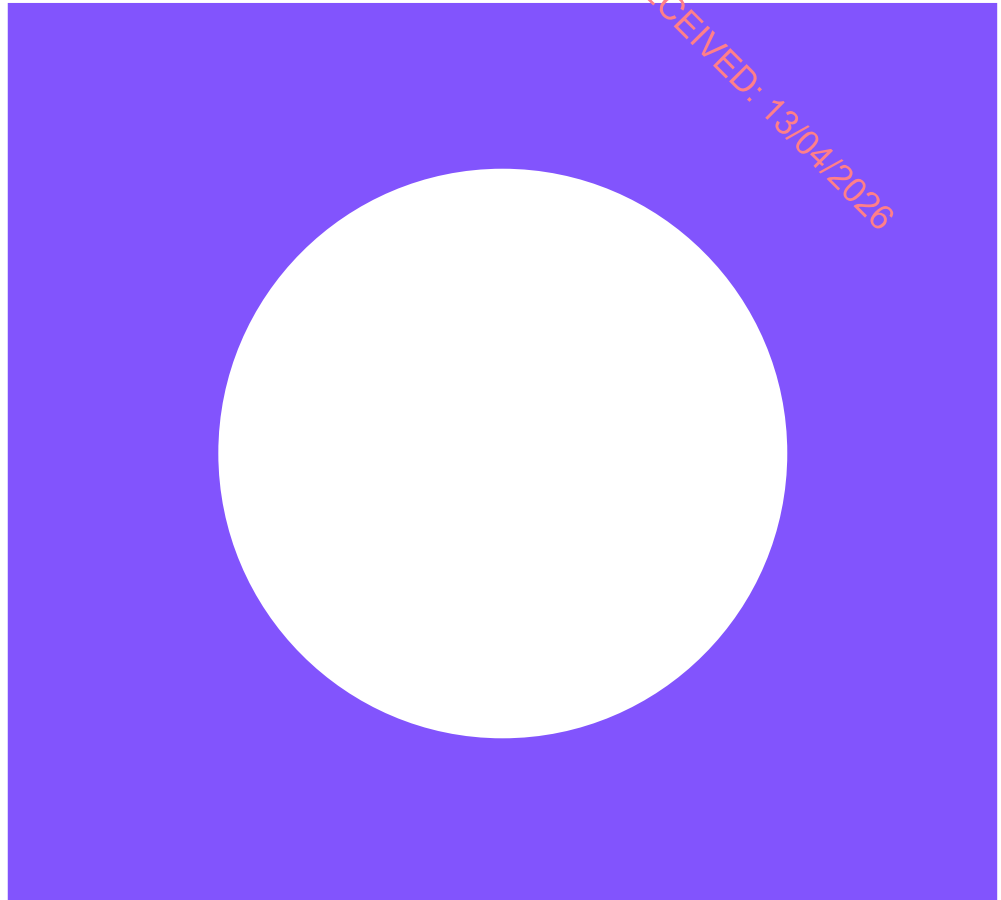




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# **Shelburne Energy Farm Environmental Impact Assessment Report**

Chapter 17 Major Accidents and / or Disasters

April 2026

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# Shelburne Energy Farm Environmental Impact Assessment Report

## Chapter 17 Major Accidents and / or Disasters

April 2026

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# 17 Major Accidents and Disasters

## 17.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the potential for significant adverse effects of the Proposed Project on the environment deriving from vulnerability of the Proposed Project to the risks of relevant major accidents and/or disasters. This chapter considers:

- Major accidents and / or disasters that the Proposed Project may be vulnerable to;
- Whether a major accident and / or disaster occurring could result in likely significant adverse environmental impacts, and if so, what these would be; and
- Existing and proposed mitigation measures to prevent or mitigate the likely significant adverse impacts of such events on the environment.

## 17.2 Policy and Guidance

### 17.2.1 Legislation

EIA Directive 2014/52/EC requires:

*“A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the development to risks of major accidents and / or disasters...”*

*In order to avoid duplications, it should be possible to use any relevant information available and obtained through risk assessments carried out pursuant to Union legislation, such as Directive 2012/18/EU of the European Parliament and the Council (13) and Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom (14), or through relevant assessments carried out pursuant to national legislation provided that the requirements of this Directive are met”*

The SEVESO III Directive 2012/18/EU was transposed into Irish legislation through the Chemicals Act (Control of Major Hazards involving Dangerous Substances), S.I. No. 209 of 2015 (referred to commonly as the ‘COMAH Regulations’); both the Seveso III Directive and the COMAH Regulations outline the legal obligations for operators of industrial establishments where dangerous substances are stored.

The Proposed Project is not categorised as a COMAH<sup>1</sup> establishment under the SEVESO III Directive 2012/18/EU and/or the COMAH Regulations. The Proposed Project does not fall within the consultation zone for any Seveso sites.

Relevant Health and Safety legislation within the State includes:

- S.I. No.10 of 2005 - Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (HSWA) (ISB, 2005). Including associated amendments:
- S.I. No. 231 of 2021 - Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Chemical Agents) (Amendment) Regulations (ISB, 2021).
- S.I. No. 291 of 2013 - Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations (ISB, 2013) Including associated amendments:
- S.I. No. 299 of 2007 - Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations (ISB, 2007) Including associated amendments:

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<sup>1</sup> The acronym stands for Control of Major Accident Hazards

- S.I. No. 13 of 2008 – Chemicals Act (ISB 2008) including associated amendments
- S.I. No. 272 of 2008 - European Communities (Classification, Packaging, Labelling and Notification of Dangerous Substances) Regulations (CLP) (ISB, 2008).
- S.I. No. 699 of 2001 - Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Chemical Agents) Regulations (ISB 2001) Including associated .amendments:
- S.I. No. 572 of 2013 - Safety Health and Welfare at Work (Biological Agents) Regulations (ISB 2013) Including associated .amendments:

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### 17.2.2 Guidance

The following guidance documents were consulted in order to prepare the risk methodology within this chapter:

- Major Accidents and Disasters in EIA: A Primer (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), 2020)
- A National Risk Assessment for Ireland 2023 (Government of Ireland, 2023)
- Strategic Emergency Management National Structures and Framework (Department of Defence 2020)
- Guidance on Assessing and Costing Environmental Liabilities (EPA, 2014)
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) A Framework for Major Emergency Management (DHLGH, 2021)
- A Framework for Major Emergency Management. Guidance Document 1. A Guide to Risk Assessment in Major Emergency Management (DEHLG, 2010)
- Major Emergency Plan 2024 (Wexford County Council, 2024)

For the purpose of this assessment the following definitions, defined in the IEMA document *Major Accidents and Disasters in EIA: A Primer* September 2020), are used:

- **Accident:** something that happens by chance or without expectation.
- **Major Accidents:** Events that threaten immediate or delayed serious environmental effects to human health, welfare and / or the environment and require the use of resources beyond those of the client or its appointed representatives to manage. Whilst malicious intent is not accidental, the outcome (e.g. train derailment) may be the same and therefore many mitigation measures will apply to both deliberate and accidental events.
- **Disaster:** May be a natural hazard (e.g. earthquake) or a man-made / external hazard (e.g. act of terrorism) with the potential to cause an event or situation that meets the definition of a major accident.
- **Risk:** For a risk to arise there must be hazard that consists of a 'source' (e.g. high rainfall); a 'receptor' (e.g. people, property, environment); and a pathway between the source and the receptor (e.g. flood routes).
- **Risk event:** an identified, unplanned event, which is considered relevant to the Proposed Development and has the potential to result in a major accident and / or disaster, subject to assessment of its potential to result in a significant adverse effect on an environmental receptor.
- **Vulnerability:** Describes the potential for harm as a result of an event, for example due to sensitivity or value of receptors. In the context of the EIA Directive, the term refers to the 'exposure and resilience' of the development to the risk of a major accident and / or disaster. Vulnerability is influenced by sensitivity, adaptive capacity and magnitude of impact.
- **Significant environmental effect** (in relation to a major accident and / or disaster assessment): could include the loss of life, permanent injury and temporary or permanent destruction of an environmental receptor which cannot be restored through minor clean-up

and restoration. In addition, a 'Significant' impact resulting from major accidents and / or disasters is identified if it meets the criteria for 'Significant', 'Very Significant' or 'Profound' under the EPA Guidelines.

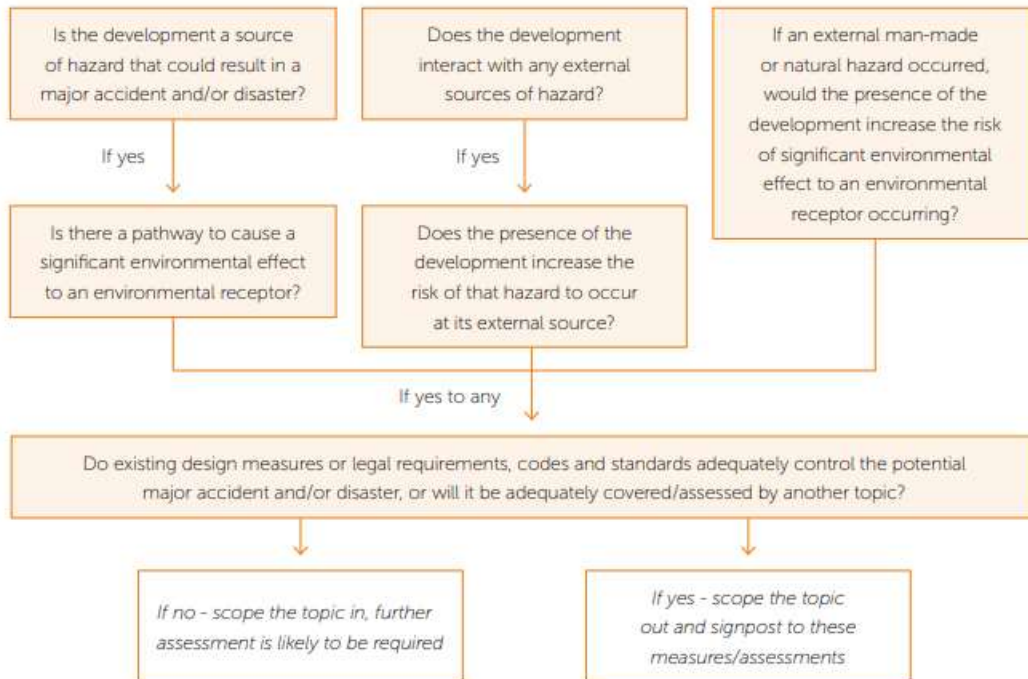
### 17.3 Methodology

The methodology applied is based on the scoping decision process flow provided in Figure 17.1 Scoping Decision Process Flow within the Major Accidents and Disasters in EIA: A Primer (IEMA, 2020). The potential for source, pathway, receptor linkages is first established having regard to the location, type, context, existing and future constraints and likely receptors relevant to the Proposed Project.

For established linkages, the risks of major accidents and / or disasters are low / unlikely where existing design measures or legal requirements, codes and standards adequately control the potential for major accident and / or disaster, or where such risks are adequately covered/assessed by another topic in this EIAR.

Where required, additional mitigation measures are proposed to manage the identified risks to the environment.

**Figure 17.1: Scoping Decision Process Flow**



Source: Major Accidents and Disasters in EIA: A Primer (page 11, IEMA, September 2020)

#### 17.3.1 Risk Identification

The identification of potential reasonable and foreseeable risks (i.e. plausible and non-standard) through the lifetime of the project, during construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning, has been identified in respect of:

- Potential to cause accidents and/or disasters

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- Vulnerability to potential accident and/or disasters

### 17.3.2 Classification

The rating criteria adopted for the assessment follows that used in A Guide to Risk Assessment in Major Emergency Management (DEHLG, 2010). The EPA Guidelines (EPA 2022) state that the risk assessment must be based on a 'worst-case' approach. Therefore, the assigning of ratings assumes that all proposed mitigation measures and safety procedures have failed to prevent the occurrence of a major accident and / or disaster. The rating classification of likelihood and consequence is used within the assessment as detailed in A Guide to Risk Assessment in Major Emergency Management, and as reproduced in Table 17.1 and Table 17.2, and the categorisation of levels of significance are listed in Table 17.3.

**Table 17.1: Classification of Likelihood**

Rating	Classification	Impact Description
1	Extremely Unlikely	May occur only in exceptional circumstances; once every 500 or more years
2	Very Unlikely	Is not expected to occur; no recorded incidents or anecdotal evidence; and/or very few incidents in associated organisations, facilities or communities; and/or little opportunity, reason or means to occur. May occur once every 100 to 500 years.
3	Unlikely	May occur at some time; and / or few, infrequent, random recorded incidents or little anecdotal evidence; some incidents in associated or comparable organisations worldwide; some opportunity, reason or means to occur. May occur once every 10 to 100 years
4	Likely	Likely to or may occur; regular recorded incidents and strong anecdotal evidence. Will probably occur once every one year to 10 years
5	Very Likely	Very likely to occur; high level of recorded incidents and/or strong anecdotal evidence. Will probably occur more than once a year.

**Table 17.2: Classification of Consequence**

Rating	Classification	Impact	Description
1	Minor	Life, Health, Welfare, Environment, Infrastructure, Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Small number of people affected; no fatalities and small number of minor injuries with first aid treatment</li> <li>● No contamination, localised effects</li> <li>● &lt;0.5 million euro</li> <li>● Minor localised disruption to community services or infrastructure (&lt;6 hours)</li> </ul>
2	Limited	Life, Health, Welfare, Environment, Infrastructure, Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Single fatality; limited number of people affected; a few serious injuries with hospitalisation and medical treatment required. Localised displacement of a small number of people for 6-24 hours. Personal support satisfied through local arrangements</li> <li>● Simple contamination, localised effects of short duration</li> <li>● 0.5 million to 3 million euro</li> <li>● Normal community functioning with some inconvenience</li> </ul>
3	Serious	Life, Health, Welfare, Environment, Infrastructure, Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Significant number of people in affected area impacted with multiple fatalities (&lt;5), multiple serious or extensive injuries (20), significant hospitalisation. Large number of people displaced for 6-24 hours or possibly beyond; up to 500 evacuated. External resources required for personal support.</li> </ul>

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Rating	Classification	Impact	Description
4	Very Serious	Life, Health, Welfare, Environment, Infrastructure, Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simple contamination, widespread effects or extended duration</li> <li>3 million to 10million euro</li> <li>Community only partially functioning, some services available</li> </ul>
5	Catastrophic	Life, Health, Welfare, Environment, Infrastructure, Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 to 50 fatalities, up to 100 serious injuries, up to 2,000 evacuated</li> <li>Heavy contamination, localised effects or extended duration</li> <li>10 million to 25 million euro</li> <li>Community functioning poorly, minimal services available</li> </ul>
5	Catastrophic	Life, Health, Welfare, Environment, Infrastructure, Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large numbers of people impacted with a significant number of fatalities (&gt;50), injuries in the hundreds, more than 2000 evacuated.</li> <li>Very heavy contamination, widespread effects of extended duration.</li> <li>&gt;25 million euro</li> <li>Serious damage to infrastructure causing significant disruption to, or loss of, key services for prolonged period. Community unable to function without significant support</li> </ul>

**Table 17.3: Levels of Significance**

		Consequence of Impact				
Likelihood	5 - Very likely	1	2	3	4	5
	4 - Likely	1	2	3	4	5
	3 - Unlikely	1	2	3	4	5
	2 - Very unlikely	1	2	3	4	5
	1 - Extreme unlikely	1	2	3	4	5
		1 - Minor	2 - Limited	3 - Serious	4 - Very serious	5 - Catastrophic

### 17.3.3 Limitations of this EIAR

There were no difficulties or limitations encountered gathering the information required to inform this Major Accidents and / or Disasters chapter of the EIAR.

## 17.4 Receiving Environment

The Proposed Project is located into southwest of County Wexford. the closest town is New Ross, located c.6.5km northwest of the Proposed Project, the village of Newbawn is located c.3km north-northeast of the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project occurs across three townlands to the north of the settlement of Gusserane, namely Ballygarvan, Cloonagh and Nash. The area surrounding the Proposed Project is characterised as rural, agricultural land, with typical rural residential settlement patterns comprising dispersed single dwellings along local road networks.

Eight Major Emergency Management Regions have been established in Ireland, and the Proposed Project is located in the south east region. As part of this national framework of emergency management local authorities are categorised a principal response agency for major emergencies alongside An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive. The extant Major Emergency Plan for Wexford Couy Council (dated October 2024) does not identify any sites

which present risk, instead the following are listed as having emergency plans prepared for major accidents;

- Atlantic Industries (trading as Flavour Manufacturing), Wexford, Drinagh, Co. Wexford
- Roche Freight and Warehousing Ltd., Kilrane, Co. Wexford
- Rosslare Europort Emergency Plan
- Waterford Port Emergency Plan
- Local Emergency Plan for Wexford Railway Station (Iarnrod Eireann)
- M11 Motorway Emergency Response Procedure (BAM)

The closest SEVESO site is a Lower Tier establishment, Goulding Chemicals Ltd, Stokestown, New Ross, located approximately 7.1km northwest of the Project site. The closest Upper Tier establishment, Nitrofert Ltd, is located at Raheen Port, New Ross, approximately 8.3km to the northwest of the Proposed Project site.

## 17.5 Characteristics of the Project

Detail of the receiving environment is contained within Chapter 5 –*Description of Development*.

The following presents an overview of the proposed development having regard to whether or not the proposals present a source of hazard that could result in major accident and / or disaster and / or interacts with external sources of hazard.

A solar farm is not a recognised source of pollution. It has no notable discharges and is not subject to the Industrial Emission Directive nor is it a development activity listed in the First Schedule of the Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992 (as amended). Should a major accident or natural disaster occur the potential sources of pollution onsite during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases are limited and of low environmental risk.

Similarly, BESS is not subject to any licencing requirements by the EPA, the potential for fire risk has been identified as part of the iterative design process, with an on-site fire-water supply being provided as part of the fire management due to the distance to the nearest mains water supply (located in the town of New Ross). Fire water attenuation has been provided which will in the event of fire be directed to a separate below ground attenuation tank which will store fire water until it can be tankered off site and thereby ensuring no fire water is released to the local environment.

The Irish transmission network and the Proposed Project will be designed, constructed, operated and maintained in accordance with the highest safety standards complying with the provisions of guidelines published by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Commission of Non-ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP).

The Proposed Project is not regulated, connected with or close to any site regulated under the Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances Regulations i.e., SEVESO sites. A review of the Upper Tier and Lower Tier establishment (SEVESO) sites in County Wexford<sup>2</sup> and their respective distances from the Proposed Project was undertaken. No SEVESO establishments are located within 1 kilometre of the Proposed Project, and therefore, the Proposed Development does not fall within the maximum consultation zone for any SEVESO sites.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Your\\_Industry/Chemicals/Legislation\\_Enforcement/COMAH/List\\_of\\_Establishments/](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Your_Industry/Chemicals/Legislation_Enforcement/COMAH/List_of_Establishments/)  
Upper Tier Establishment list dated 06 September 2024, Lower Tier Establishment list dated 03 December 2024

Due to the distance from any SEVESO site the Proposed Project does not interface with any potential emergency service response routes for any SEVESO sites. Therefore, the Proposed Project is not vulnerable to or does not present a risk to any SEVESO sites and no impact is anticipated as a result of the Proposed Project.

## 17.6 Likely Significant Impacts

Table 17.4 considers the likelihood of significant adverse effects on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the proposed development to risks of relevant major accidents and/or disasters.

Where sources/interactions and pathways have been established, an assessment is carried out as to whether or not design measures, or legal requirements, codes and standards adequately control the potential major accident and/or disaster. Reference is made to other technical chapters of the EIAR, where appropriate.

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**Table 17.4: Likely Significant Effects**

Risk ID	Risk Event	Proposed Project Element	Likelihood Rating	Basis of Likelihood	Likelihood Rating	Consequence Basis of Consequence Rating	Overall Risk Rating
<b>Construction Phase</b>							
C.1	Severe Weather event	All elements of construction	1	<p>The risk of severe weather is very unlikely when weather conditions recorded over the last 30 years within the area.</p> <p>The works programme for the groundworks part of the construction phase of the Proposed Project will take account of weather forecasts and predicted rainfall in particular and construction will be paused if required.</p>	2	<p>Limited.</p> <p>Potential for injuries.</p> <p>Potential for contamination.</p> <p>Potential localised displacement of a small number of people and short duration and localised effects</p>	Low
C.2	Flooding	All elements of construction	2	<p>The risk of flooding is very unlikely - the Flood Risk Assessment undertaken (Volume 3, Appendix 9.1) confirms that there is no part of the Proposed Project within a fluvial Flood Zone A/B with the exception of perimeter fencing.</p> <p>In the event of flooding, construction works will be halted in areas where fluvial or pluvial flooding, until flood waters recede.</p>	2	<p>Minor.</p> <p>Potential injury for nearby personnel and potential displacement of local residences and business in the event of flooding.</p>	Low
C.3	Major road traffic accident	All elements of construction	2	<p>Movement of construction vehicles debris striking traffic /member of public, moreover where abnormal loads are required for example equipment required for the substation compound.</p>	3	<p>Serious.</p> <p>Potential fatalities and serious injuries.</p>	Low
C.4	Utilities emergency	All elements of construction	3	<p>Confirmatory surveys will be carried out by the Contractor to ensure that the Proposed Grid Connection Route is designed to take into consideration any services and utilities with the road network. As such the risk of a utility emergency occurring during the construction of the Proposed Grid Connection Route is considered very unlikely</p>	2	<p>Limited.</p> <p>Potential for injuries.</p> <p>Potential significant damage to infrastructure and disruption to the road network, for a short duration and localised effects.</p>	Low

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Risk ID	Risk Event	Proposed Project Element	Likelihood Rating	Basis of Likelihood	Consequence Rating	Basis of Consequence	Overall Risk Rating
C.5	Contamination event – pollution	All elements of construction	3	Fuel spillage during delivery is considered unlikely, as the construction temporary compounds will have designated banded areas for fuelling and fuel/oil/chemical storage. The CEMP lists the best practice guidance to ensure that accidental spillages are avoided and where they occur the protocol to remediate them.	2	Limited. Potential for injuries. Potential for contamination. Potential localised displacement of a small number of people and short duration and localised effects.	Low
C.6	Exposure to High Voltage	MV and 220kV overhead conductors / LCIMs / 220kV AIS/GIS equipment	1	Construction workers and maintenance staff coming in contact with exposed live conductors.	3	Serious. Potential fatalities and serious injuries. Potential for some minor damage to local infrastructure.	Low
<b>Operation and Maintenance Phase</b>							
O.1	Fire	Risk of fire at substation where electrical equipment and materials are contained.  Risk of BESS unit or multiple units igniting an electrical fire.  Underground cabling fire risk	2	In the unlikely event of a fire there is limited potential for damage to other elements of the Proposed Project, i.e. a fire within a BESS unit will have no impact on the substation compound, or solar farm, and vice versa. Electrical fire is very unlikely due to the embedded fire suppression system for electrical equipment, where fires do occur these are likely to be localised to that particular item of equipment/plant.	2	Limited. Potential for injuries. Potential for contamination. Potential localised displacement of a small number of people and short duration and localised effects.	Low
O.2	Ground collapse	All elements – electrical failure /operational failure	1	The Proposed Project is located in an area of Low landslide susceptibility; no landslide extents are recorded within the Proposed Project site (Chapter 8 of this EIA, Section 8.4.2.6).	2	Limited. Potential for injuries. Potential for contamination.	Low

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Risk ID	Risk Event	Proposed Project Element	Likelihood Rating	Basis of Likelihood	Consequence Rating	Basis of Consequence	Overall Risk Rating
O.3	Flooding	All elements – potential for electrical failure	2	The Proposed Project has been designed to be located outside the fluvial Flood Zone AVB. There is no risk of pluvial flooding due to the local topography.	2	Potential localised infrastructure damage of short duration and localised effects.  Limited. Potential for injuries. Potential for contamination. Potential localised infrastructure damage of short duration and localised effects.	Low
O.4	Electricity failure	Electricity failure can be caused by several factors such as extreme weather conditions, failure at the sub-stations or damage to the underground cable along the route.	1	Loss of power supply to the substation compound resulting in disruption to the operation of the GIS/AIS compound.	2	Limited. Potential for injuries. Potential for contamination. Potential localised infrastructure damage of short duration and localised effects.	Low
O.5	Electro-magnetic Fields (EMF)	Substation compound and 220kV grid connection	1	Independent and authoritative international panels of scientific experts have reviewed studies on possible health effects from EMFs. These have concluded, based on the weight of the evidence available, that the power frequency electric and magnetic fields encountered in normal living and working conditions do not cause adverse health effects in humans when properly designed and constructed. These form the basis for guidelines published by the International Council on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) with regard to EMF, to which EirGrid and ESB Networks have strict regard in the design and operation of the transmission system.	2	Limited. Potential for injuries. Potential for contamination. Potential localised infrastructure damage of short duration and localised effects.	Low

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Risk ID	Risk Event	Proposed Project Element	Likelihood Rating	Basis of Likelihood	Consequence Rating	Basis of Consequence	Overall Risk Rating
O.6	Malicious attacks/cyber-attack	GIS substation compound	1	<p>The proposed GIS compound will be operated by EirGrid and will form part of Ireland's electrical transmission grid and could be subject to malicious physical or cyber-attacks.</p> <p>The transmission system will be designed to cater for the sudden loss of supplies, the electricity generated by the solar farm which is provided to the grid can be readily replaced and secured from elsewhere on the grid. The new infrastructure and control systems will be designed to protect against malicious attack and will be in line with the latest standards for new transmission grid infrastructure</p>	2	<p>Limited.</p> <p>Potential for injuries.</p> <p>Potential for contamination.</p> <p>Potential localised infrastructure damage of short duration and localised effects.</p>	Low

### 17.6.1 Summary of Likely Significant Effects

Significant impacts resulting from major accidents and / or disasters are adverse impacts that are described as 'Significant', 'Very Significant' or 'Profound' under the EPA Guidelines (EPA 2022). Consequently, major accidents and / or disasters risk events that fall within the Amber – Medium risk event Red – High risk event, are considered to present risk of significant impacts and require further mitigation. As detailed in Table 17.4, and as a result of the type of development, distance from any industrial activities, the likelihood of the events occurring and embedded mitigation within the design there is no medium or high-risk accidents or disaster which are predicted to occur during the construction or operation and maintenance phases.

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## 17.7 Cumulative Effects

There are no 'Other Developments' as listed in Table 3.2 of Chapter 3 – EIA Methodology that would result in cumulative significant adverse impacts.

## 17.8 Residual Impacts

There is no mitigation specific to potential risks from major accident or disasters, therefore no significant adverse environmental effects are likely to occur.

## 17.9 References

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