

To: Section

Re: Corrib Gas Field Development. Ref. PL 16.207212

I recommend that Additional Information be sought as follows:

1. The Risk Assessment in Appendix 3A of Section 3 of Volume 1, Technical Appendix 2 of the EIS appears to involve a very confident assessment of all design aspects of the proposed development and a very optimistic view of the risks associated with the project.

It appears that the values for P and I used in the Register may not be entirely consistent or based on objective evidence. For example, the hazard of “unexpected ground conditions” is given a P rating of 3, while the hazard of the “failure of an excavated slope” due to “encountering previously unknown weaker zone within the rock or mineral soils”..(i.e. also unexpected ground conditions) is given a probability rating of 1. Another example is the hazard of flooding caused by “extended periods of wet weather” which is given a probability rating of 1 i.e. negligible. This appears very optimistic considering the location and nature of the site and the occurrence of the extreme rainfall event that caused bog slides at Pollatomish in September 2003.

You are asked to detail the bases on which probability (P) values of the hazards occurring have been selected. It is expected that these values should be consistent and, where possible, should be based on objective scientific/statistical evidence.

Although a number of different causes have been given for the different hazards, the likelihood of each cause occurring is not evaluated separately. You are asked to submit such an evaluation.

The probability of several hazards occurring simultaneously or sequentially does not appear to have been adequately addressed. (an example would be the hazard of flooding causing the hazard of the failure of ponds). You are asked to address this issue.

As a result of the above assessments and evaluations it is considered that revisions will be required to the Risk Assessment (with more of the hazards receiving an R rating above 5). This in turn may require revised design measures and contingency plans being prepared either to reduce the probability of occurrence or to deal with the hazard should it occur.

2. It is noted that the use of dry cement to strengthen peat is a new technology in Ireland. It is further noted that the tests carried out by Farrell and Hebib, referred to in

the EIS, were on two peats from raised bogs rather than on blanket bog as at Bellanaboy, and that the tests gave marked differences between the strengths of the stabilised mixture formed with the two peats. This may indicate that the risk of not achieving sufficient strength using cement stabilisation is greater than using sheet piles, which is proven technology. It is also noted that the use of sheet piles may have less potential for environmental impact than the use of cement stabilisation.

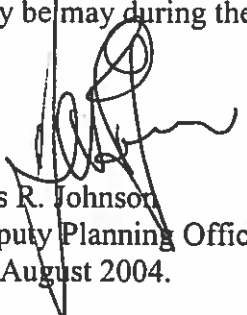
No results of strength tests on stabilised peat appear to have been included in the documents provided to justify the values used in the stability analyses. You are asked to indicate what, if any, field tests have been carried out which would verify strengths obtained from laboratory tests and, if so, to submit results obtained from such field tests.

Please state if any of the contingency measures in the event of the required soil strengthening not being achieved would result in further excavation and removal of peat from the site. If so, please quantify the amount.

3. It is noted that the possible environmental impact of cement stabilisation and how it relates to the EC Water Framework Directive requirements are not considered by Farrell and Hebib and are not elaborated in the EuroSoilStab Design Guide for Soft Soil Stabilisation. You are asked to state if the chemical properties of the cement, and the potential short, medium and long term run-off and/or leaching from stabilised soil have been examined, and to submit details of any such examination.

Allow 3 weeks for submission.

Indicate that this may not be the only request for additional information; other request(s) may be/may during the consideration of the appeal.



Des R. Johnson
Deputy Planning Officer
9th August 2004.