

An Roinn Cumarsáide,  
Mara agus Acmhainní Nádurtha  
Baile Átha Cliath 2.



Department of Communications,  
Marine and Natural Resources  
Dublin 2.

3<sup>rd</sup> August 2004

Our Ref: MS56/11  
(Please quote on all correspondence)

Ciaran Somers  
An Bord Pleanála  
67 Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1


<b>AN BORD PLEANÁLA</b>	
TIME _____	BY _____
05 AUG 2004	
LTR-DATED _____	FROM _____
PL _____	

RE: CORRIB GAS FIELD

Dear Ciaran,

Please find enclosed as requested, copy of the Ministerial Approval granted 15<sup>th</sup> April 2003 in relation to the foreshore licence for the Corrib Gas Field.

Yours sincerely,

  
Neill Guha  
Foreshore Section  
Coastal Zone Management Division

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**DEVELOPMENT OF CORRIB GAS FIELD  
PROPOSED 30-YEAR FORESHORE LICENCE FOR PIPELINE, SEA OUTFALL  
AND SUBSEA UMBILICAL SYSTEM**

1. Secretary General *9pm 12/4*
2. MINISTER- from Thomas J. Tobin

**DECISION SOUGHT**

Your approval in principle is recommended, please, for the grant of a 30-year Foreshore Licence under section 3 of the Foreshore Act, 1933 (to match duration of Petroleum Lease granted in November 2001) for

- the pipeline and subsea umbilical to cross the State-owned foreshore (i.e. area extending 22.24 kilometres from HWM) en route between the Gas Field and Terminal on land, and
- the sea outfall which will cross State-owned foreshore out to a point not closer than 12 kilometres from the landfall site; the outfall point of the sea outfall shall be located outside the candidate Special Area of Conservation in Broadhaven Bay.

**BACKGROUND**

The Corrib Gas Field Development including the foreshore aspects referred to underwent a rigorous Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in accordance with the following regulatory requirements:

**Requirement for EIA**

Section 13A of the Foreshore Act, 1933 (as amended) requires an application for a foreshore licence to be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS") where that application proposes development of a specified class. Class 16 of Part I of the First Schedule to the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989 (as amended) ("EIA Regulations") specifies "pipelines for the transport of gas, oil or chemicals with a diameter of more than 800 millimetres and a length of more than 40 kilometres". The Corrib pipeline extends beyond 40 kilometres in length and is thus of a specified class.

**Scope of EIA**

Section 3 of the Foreshore Act empowers the grant of a Licence in respect of State-owned foreshore. For this purpose the foreshore is considered to be the area between the high water mark (HWM) and the limit of the territorial seas. The assessment in respect of State-owned foreshore addresses the:

- (a) Placement of material on the foreshore;
- (b) Placement, erection of articles, things, structures or works on the foreshore;
- (c) Removal or disturbance of beach material in the foreshore; and,
- (d) Use or occupation of the foreshore (for any purpose).

**Matters for Consideration as part of EIA**

Section 13A(2B) of the Foreshore Act 1933 (as amended) requires the Minister to have regard to the criteria specified in Article 27 of the EIA Regulations (set out in Attachment A), in deciding whether a proposed development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Section 19B(1) of the Foreshore Act, 1933 (as amended) requires the Minister to have regard to the EIS and any objections and representations made to him during the prescribed period in relation to effects on the environment of the proposed development. These must be considered in respect of each of the issues that should be addressed.

*agreed.*  
*Frank Fitz*  
*15/4/03*

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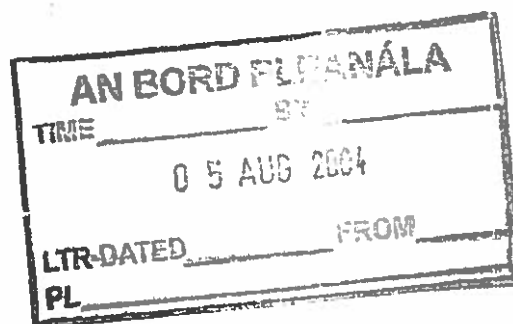
In support of their application for a Foreshore Licence, the developers submitted a two-part Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), on which submissions were invited from the general public and a wide range of statutory consultees including Mayo County Council, An Taisce and the Environmental Protection Agency. The environmental aspects of the project, including predicted impacts and proposed mitigation measures as set out in the EIS, were examined by the Marine Licence Vetting Committee, (MLVC), a group of technical, scientific and engineering specialists which advises in relation to the environmental impacts of projects involving foreshore. Having considered the matters prescribed in the EIA regulations described above the MLVC reported to you on 3 April 2002. Due process under the Foreshore Acts has been fully completed in relation to all foreshore aspects of the development.

#### **DRAFT FORESHORE LICENCE TO BE COMPLETED**

In addition to giving effect to the particular MLVC recommendations in regard to the sea outfall, as indicated above, the proposed Foreshore Licence will also take due account of other MLVC recommendations relevant to foreshore aspects of the development, as well as including standard requirements and enabling powers relating to major pipeline projects involving foreshore. Those requirements and powers require to be appropriately expressed and our legal advisers are drafting a Foreshore Licence having regard to best legal practice. Notwithstanding MLVC Recommendation 8/Figure 1 and with the agreement of DÚCHAS – The Heritage Service we recommend that the appropriate requirement should be to oblige the developer to prepare a detailed Construction Constraints Schedule demonstrating compliance with the ecological sensitivities; this shall include details of the timing of construction works and protection measures for each of the species concerned; the construction methodology and timing shall be agreed with DÚCHAS and included in the required Environmental Management Plan.

The Valuation Office advised a valuation yielding a once-off Foreshore Licence fee of €3.05 million + €1 p.a. if demanded, and the developer is aware of that. These fees will be specified in the draft Foreshore Licence which has to be considered by the developer before finalisation between the parties. We are working to have that draft available as early as possible next week.

12 April 2002



## Attachment A

### Assessment Criteria set out in Article 27 of the EIA Regulations

The "characteristics of the proposed development", which is specified to include, in particular:

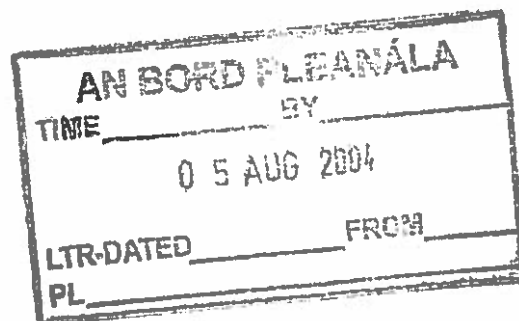
- size of the proposed development;
- (e) cumulation with other proposed development;
- (f) use of natural resources;
- (g) production of waste;
- (h) pollution and nuisances;
- (i) risk of accidents, having regard to substances or technologies used.

The "location of the proposed development" include the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by proposed development having particular regard to:

- (j) existing land use;
- (k) relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area;
- (l) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:
  - wetlands;
  - (i) coastal zones;
  - (ii) mountain and forest areas;
  - (iii) nature reserves and parks;
  - (iv) areas classified or protected under legislation, including special protection areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;
  - (v) areas in which the environmental quality standards laid down in the legislation of the EU have already been exceeded;
  - (vi) densely populated areas; and,
  - (vii) landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

The "characteristics of potential impacts" include the potential significant effects of proposed development in relation to criteria set out in the two categories above and regarding, in particular:

- (m) extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population);
- (n) transfrontier nature of the impact;
- (o) magnitude and complexity of the impact;
- (p) probability of the impact; and duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.



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## Background Note for Information

The proposed Corrib development will consist of up to seven subsea wells tied to a 91km long gas export pipeline from the field, via a landfall at Dooncarton on the coast of County Mayo, to a gas reception terminal some 9km inland near Bellanaboy Bridge, Co. Mayo.

The Corrib Gas Field was discovered in 1996. It is the first significant find in over 20 years and is the first gas discovery to be developed off the west coast. The field is located in the Slyne Basin, some 65 km west of the nearest coastline, the Mullet Peninsula, Co. Mayo.

The Minister granted a Petroleum Lease for the Corrib Field to the developers in November 2001, under the terms of which they were required to submit a Plan of Development for the Minister's approval. A detailed evaluation of the application for the Plan of Development was carried out in the Department in relation to the technical, economic, social, safety and environmental implications of the project.

The Minister also ensured that the development underwent a rigorous Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in accordance with EU regulations for offshore petroleum projects. This involved the submission by the developers of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on which submissions were invited from the general public and a wide range of statutory consultees including Mayo County Council, An Taisce and the Environmental Protection Agency.

The environmental aspects of the project, including predicted impacts and proposed mitigation measures, were examined by the Marine Licence Vetting Committee, (MLVC), a group of technical, scientific and engineering specialists who advise the Minister in relation to the environmental impacts of various projects. The MLVC have reported that the EIS meets all legal requirements. The report of the MLVC is available on the Department's website at [www.marine.gov.ie](http://www.marine.gov.ie)

Having regard to the report of the MLVC and the advice of his officials, the Minister is satisfied that the project should proceed subject to a number of detailed conditions which will be attached to the relevant statutory permissions.

The principal conditions are as follows:

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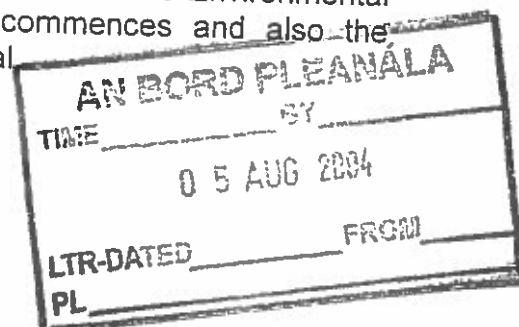
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- All works are to be carried out in accordance with national and international laws, the most up to date best national and international industry practice and the Department's Rules and Procedures for Petroleum Production Operations.
- The outfall point of the discharge pipeline is to be located outside the candidate Special Area of Conservation in Broadhaven Bay and not closer than 12 km from the landfall site.
- An Environmental Management Plan is to be drawn up for the approval of the Minister, in respect of each aspect of construction and operations and is to be in place prior to work commencing.
- The methodology of pipelaying will be agreed with the Department of Marine & Natural Resources before commencement of construction and will be developed in full consultation with Dúchas to ensure that it meets their requirements for the protection of habitats and species and the preservation of archaeological artefacts.
- The Minister will, in consultation with Mayo County Council, set up an Environmental Monitoring Group inclusive of local interests, charged with monitoring the development during all stages of construction and subsequent operation.

Planning Permission was granted by Mayo County Council for construction of the onshore terminal but this has been appealed to An Bórd Pleanála, which held an oral hearing in February 2002 and is expected to announce its determination shortly. The developers must get an Integrated Pollution Control Licence from the Environmental Protection Agency before production in the terminal commences and also the approval of the Health and Safety Authority for the terminal.

**ENDS.**



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