

# Submission HLG 00278-21: FS007050 Foreshore Application by Greenlink Interconnector Limited in respect of a subsea electricity interconnector cable between Irish and UK electricity grids, landing at Baginbun Beach, Co. Wexford

TO: Minister of State Burke  
STATUS: Completed  
PURPOSE: For Decision

AUTHOR: [REDACTED] (Housing)  
OWNER: [REDACTED] (Housing)  
REVIEWERS: [REDACTED] (Housing)  
[REDACTED] (Housing)

DIVISION: Foreshore  
DECISION BY: 30/07/2021

## Final comment

Approved by minister, 28/07/2021

## Action required

Ministerial approval is sought to grant a Foreshore Licence to Greenlink Interconnector Limited under section 3 of the Foreshore Act 1933, as amended.

## Executive summary

The approval of the Minister is sought to grant a Foreshore Licence to Greenlink Interconnector Limited under section 3 of the Foreshore Act 1933, as amended, for a term of 40 years, for the purpose of carrying out associated works in connection with the laying of a new Subsea electricity interconnector cable between Irish and UK electricity grids, landing at Baginbun Beach in Co. Wexford. This includes associated works on the foreshore under the Campile River in Co. Wexford.

## Detailed information

The proposed new subsea and underground electricity interconnector will run between the existing electricity grids in the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain with a nominal capacity of 500 megawatts. Greenlink comprises of subsea and underground cables associated converter stations to connect EirGrid's Great Island transmission substation in County Wexford (Ireland) and the National Grid's Pembroke transmission substation in Pembrokeshire (Wales) by laying and burial of submarine cables. The power will be able to flow in either direction at different times, depending on supply and demand in each country.

The converter stations will be connected by two HVDC cables under the Irish Sea. A fibre optic cable will also be laid for control and communication purposes.

The applicant advised that the Greenlink Interconnector will have key strategic importance providing significant additional interconnection between Ireland, the UK and onwards to mainland Europe. The development and construction of Greenlink will deliver increased security of supply, fuel diversity, greater competition and benefits to consumers in Ireland, Wales, Great Britain as a whole and mainland Europe. Greenlink is designated as a Europe Union Project of Common Interest (PCI project number 1.9.1) under the provisions of European Union Regulations No. 347/2013 on guidelines for Trans-European Network for Energy (TEN-E Regulations) making it one of Europe's most important energy infrastructure projects and granting it the highest national significance.

Part of the project development will be onshore which will consist of a connection to the Great Island substation Wexford to the planned Great Island Converter station by short underground cable and to the landfall site at Baginbun Beach that will require separate permission under the Planning and Development Act through a Strategic Infrastructure Development Application to *An Bord Pleanála*.

### Proposed Works

The Foreshore Licence Application is related to works in respect of the Main Lay section on the Irish side extending from the landfall at Baginbun Beach, County Wexford, out to the 12-Mile limit off the Wexford coastline (approximately 36km long). Included in the application is a horizontal direction drill (HDD) section beneath the Campile River (foreshore) associated with the Greenlink onshore

cable.

The proposed development comprises:

- Two high voltage direct current (HVDC) electricity power cables;
- A smaller fibre-optic cable for control and communication purposes;
- All associated works required to install, test and commission and complete the aforementioned cables; and
- All associated works required to operate, maintain, repair and decommission the aforementioned cables, including five repair events of the 40 year lifetime of the Greenlink Interconnector Cable.

The Proposed Development is approximately 36km long and generally 500m wide, between Baginbun Beach, County Wexford and the 12nm limit. A small part of this width will be required for installation (of the order of 10-20m) once the final cable route within this corridor is agreed. It is proposed to finalise the precise position of the submarine cables within the corridor after permits are granted but before installation has commenced. This will allow for optimisation of the final laid submarine cables to minimise engineering and environmental challenges. Cables will be bundled together with no separation between the cables.

The programme is expected to take approximately 36 months from start to finish. The project is envisaged to commence on-site construction in early 2022 and be fully operational in 2024.

The project description includes the deposit and burial of the cables in the seabed; a horizontal direction drill (HDD) underneath the beach at Baginbun Beach; the contingency for the deposit of two areas of external cable protection (each 20m x 5.2m by 0.7m high) at the HDD exit points; and the contingency for one unexploded ordnance detonation. The Project Description includes up to five discrete repairs of the submarine cables, including as a worst case deposition of external cable protection, should it be required. The Project also includes a horizontal direction drill under the Campile Estuary associated with the Greenlink onshore cables.

A detailed project description of the Proposed Development and Campile River is provided in Chapter 4 of the attached Greenlink Marine Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) – Ireland.

The main cable lay marine area is approximately 1756.42ha or (17.5462km<sup>2</sup>).

### **Campile Estuary**

The onshore cable route between Baginbun Beach and Great Island crosses the Campile Estuary which is state owned foreshore controlled under the Foreshore Act. It is proposed to use HDD under the Campile Estuary to make the crossing. The depth of the ducts will be greater than 10m below the river bed. Compounds either side of estuary will be setback above HWM, within areas of improved agricultural grassland primarily used as pasture. The Irish Onshore EIAR provides a description of the layout of the drilling compounds and works. The foreshore area comprises of approximately 0.5006 ha or (5006m<sup>2</sup>).

### **Type of Cable**

Greenlink will be a submarine cable system including two HVDC cables, laid alongside each other. A fibre optic cable will also be laid for control and communication purposes. It is likely that cables will be bundled together and installed with no separation between the cables. The cable will be a cross linked polyethylene (XLPE) cable, XLPE is an extruded polyethylene material that is thermoset after extrusion through a controlled heating process. XLPE cables have been in use for alternating current (AC) applications since the 1980s and for HVDC applications since around 2000 and have proven to be reliable.

The cable will have a lead sheath, to ensure no moisture can penetrate the insulation, and steel wire armour to protect the cable from external damage during installation and burial/protection. The armouring is made from round or flat steel wire wound in a helical form. Over the armour wires a polyethylene sheath is applied to make the cable easier to handle and ensure the armour wires remain in place during bending. The cable conductor will be either Aluminium or Copper. Each cable will be approximately 120-130mm in diameter (260mm per bundle) and will weigh approximately 35-40kg/m. They will operate at a voltage of 320kV.

### **Cable landfall**

The landfalls are where the marine cables come ashore. In Ireland, the landfall is Baginbun Beach, Co. Wexford. The shore-crossings will be accomplished by horizontal directional drilling (HDD) which will exit seaward of the low water mark, avoiding any activity on the beach. The landfall will be prepared in advance of the arrival of the Cable Laying Vessel CLV, so that that vessel is not delayed in its operations. This will involve the digging of transition joint pits (TJPs) above HWM and the installation of cable ducts from the TJP to below mean low water, avoiding any activity on the beach.

### **Installation**

The cable lay operation will be performed on a 24-hour basis. Two cable installation techniques are being considered for the

Proposed Development:

- Simultaneous lay and burial – in this operation the CLV may tow the burial equipment or it is deployed by another vessel navigating close behind, creating effectively a single large spread. The cables are fed into the burial equipment directly from above and the cables are buried as the spread progresses along the route.
- Post-lay burial – in this operation the CLV lays the cables on the seabed first. A post-lay burial vessel follows to bury the cables. The post-lay burial vessel may be some physical distance, or indeed some days, behind the lay vessel, so there are two discrete operations separated physically and in time.

### **Burial depths**

The recommended target burial depths along the cable length were determined in a detailed Cable Burial study completed in 2019 (Intertek EWCS 2019) using the Carbon Trust cable burial risk assessment (CBRA) methodology. This considered cable design, regulatory requirements, route, seabed composition and dynamics, and risk of hazards (shipping, existing infrastructure, UXO) and potential for damage from external sources (fishing gear and ship's anchors). The cables will be buried into the seabed along the maximum length possible.

The target burial depth is:

- 1.0m for all areas of loose sediment (sands / gravels); and
- 0.6m for areas of glacial till.

### **Maintenance and repair**

It is likely that routine inspection surveys using standard geophysical survey equipment and/or remotely operated vehicles to monitor buried depth and integrity of rock berms will be undertaken, particularly in the initial years of operation, and should the local environmental conditions change or be suspected as having changed. Once installed, marine cables are not expected to require routine maintenance. If a cable fault is detected, usually as a consequence of damage cause by external interaction e.g. trawlers and commercial ship anchors, the relevant section of the cable will be located and retrieved to surface for inspection and replacement. It may be necessary to de-bury the cable prior to cable recovery. A repair will typically be carried out by a single vessel. A shallow water repair, in less than 10m of water, will typically be made using an anchored barge. In deeper water a dynamically positioned cable vessel will be used. As the fault location may be uncertain up to 1km has been allowed for as a replacement length. The extra length of a repaired short cable section means it cannot be returned to its exact previous alignment on the seabed. The excess cable will be laid on the seabed in a loop off to one side of the original route. The additional joints and the extra cable length will be buried, typically using jetting machines deployed from either the repair vessel itself or a separate specialised vessel.

### **Crossing and Proximity Agreements**

The Proposed Development will cross a number of third-party telecommunication cables. The crossing of third party infrastructure is made with prior agreement of the owners following a negotiated formal Crossing Agreement. The Crossing Agreement describes the rights and responsibilities of the parties and also the detailed physical design of the crossing. The design addresses the need to protect both the cables and the third-party infrastructure and other aspects such as crossing angle and vertical separation. The exact physical design of the crossing will depend on both the negotiated Crossing Agreement and the Installation Contractor methodology and may vary from location to location. A worst case footprint has been assessed by the EIA process. Greenlink Ireland Limited is in the process of negotiating formal Crossing Agreements with existing telecommunication owners. External cable protection will be required at the third-party asset crossing locations.

### **Decommissioning**

Decommissioning will be undertaken as instructed by the lease in accordance with the standard industry protocol at the agreed time. At the end of the cable's life the options for decommissioning will be evaluated. The objectives during the decommissioning process will be to minimise both the short and long term effects on the environment whilst making the sea safe for others to navigate. For further information please see the following linked application documents submitted by Greenlink Interconnector Limited:

[Application Form](#)

[Foreshore Licence Map](#)

[Foreshore Licence Map - Campile](#)

Natura Impact Statement (NIS)

Summary of Onshore and Offshore Environmental Effects

Vol 1 Environmental Impact Assessment Report: Non-Technical Survey

Vol 2 Environmental Impact Assessment Report

Vol 3 Appendix A - Stakeholder Meetings

Vol 3 Appendix B - Competent Experts Table

Vol 3 Appendix C - Underwater Noise Assessment

Vol 3 Appendix D - Herring and Sandeel Assessment

Vol 3 Appendix E - Commercial Fisheries Assessment

Vol 3 Appendix F - Marine Archaeology

Vol 3 Appendix G - Cable Route Survey

Vol 3 Appendix H - Environmental Survey

Vol 3 Appendix I - Intertidal Habitat Survey Report

Vol 3 Appendix J - UXO Risk Assessment

Vol 3 Appendix K - Greenlink, Magnetic Fields and Induced Voltages

Vol 3 Appendix L - Landfall Selection

Request for Further Information in relation to the effects on the environment FS007050

Applicant's response to request for further information in relation to the effects on the environment FS007050

A map showing the location of the proposed works for the main lay is attached at **Tab 1**.

A map showing the location of the proposed works for the Campile Estuary is attached at **Tab 2**.

**Policy Context:** Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) supports this application and the increased capacity it will bring between Ireland and the UK and internationally for enhanced electricity interconnection.

DECC have advised that from the perspective of Government policy, support for enhanced electricity interconnection is emphasised in the National Policy Statement on Electricity Interconnection, published by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) in July 2018. In addition to articulating the Irish policy position, this statement has provided clarity to investors in potential interconnector projects, including the two proposed interconnectors currently at a pre-construction phase of development – the Celtic Interconnector and the Greenlink Interconnector

The National Policy Statement has also assisted the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) in determining an appropriate regulatory approach to electricity interconnection, by drawing attention to key policy parameters for consideration in its evaluation of interconnection applications from project promoters. In this regard, following a cost benefit analysis, the CRU has determined that the development of the Greenlink interconnector is in the interest of Irish electricity consumers.

In addition to the policy statement of 2018, Government support for enhanced interconnection as a means of driving the transition to a low carbon energy future is further reflected in the 2019 Climate Action Plan and in the 2020 Programme for Government. Government support for enhanced electricity interconnection, including interconnectors that have been designated EU Projects of Common Interest (PCI), such as the Greenlink Interconnector.

In addition to the above, electricity interconnection is viewed as critical infrastructure by the European Commission, with enhanced interconnection between EU member states an essential component of creating a pan-EU internal energy market. EU policy is therefore explicit in its support of electricity interconnection, with interconnection projects facilitated under the EU PCI process. Letter of support from DECC is attached at **Tab 3**.

#### **Companion Consents:**

Planning Permission for the Onshore Ireland components of the development was granted by An Bord Pleanála under Section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, subject to ten (10) Conditions, on 23 June 2021 under An Bord Pleanála

Reference Number: ABP-308906-20 (**Tab 4**).  
Commission for the Regulation of Utilities

The Greenlink Interconnector Limited's connection application is being progressed by EirGrid (the transmission network operator). EirGrid issued a formal connection offer to Greenlink Interconnector Limited for a grid connection to the existing Great Island substation which was accepted on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

#### **Public Consultation:**

**The public consultation in respect of this application was held between 12<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and 08<sup>th</sup> January 2020.**

Public notices for this application appeared in the "*Irish Independent*", the "*New Ross Standard*" and the "*Wexford People*" paper on 12 November 2019 and in the December 2019 issue of "*The Skipper*".

The application documents were made available for inspection by the public Waterford Garda Station, New Ross Garda Station, Wexford Public Library and Wexford County Council for the full eight (8) week consultation period (12<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and 08<sup>th</sup> January 2020). The documents were also made available on the Department's website and on Greenlink Interconnector Limited's website.

There were no (0) public submissions received on foot of the public consultation.

**A second consultation was held on further information furnished containing significant data in relation to the effects on the environment was held between 06<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and 06<sup>th</sup> May 2021.**

Public notices for this application appeared in the "*Irish Independent*", the "*New Ross Standard*" and the "*Wexford People*" papers on 06 April 2021 and in the April 2021 issue of "*The Skipper*" and the "*Marine Times*".

The application documents were made available for inspection by the public at Waterford Garda Station, New Ross Garda Station and Wexford County Council for 30 calendar days consultation period (06<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and 06<sup>th</sup> May 2021). The documents were also made available on the Department's website and Greenlink Interconnector Limited's website.

Three (3) public submissions were received on foot of the second public consultation **Tab 5**.

Detailed responses to the public submissions were received from the applicant and these have been considered as part of the overall assessment of the proposed application. The applicant's responses to the public submissions are attached at **Tab 6**.

#### **Prescribed Bodies Consultation:**

The first prescribed body consultation in respect of this application commenced on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and a second prescribed body consultation on further information furnished containing significant data in relation to the effects on the environment in respect of this application commenced on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

Over the course of the two prescribed bodies consultation observations on the application were received from;

- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (Marine Advisor),
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (Formerly Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Nature Conservation and Underwater Archaeology)).
- Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine (Aquaculture and Foreshore Management Division)
- Marine Institute
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Sea Fisheries Protection Authority
- Marine Survey Office
- Geological Survey Ireland
- Department of Defence
- Bord Iascaigh Mhara
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Wexford County Council

- *Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications,*
- Commissioner of Irish Lights
- *Irish Coast Guard*
- Health and Safety Authority
- Met Éireann

There were no objections in principle to the proposed installation of the Greenlink Interconnector. A number of the submissions from the prescribed bodies raised particular observations and put forward suggested conditions to be included in the Foreshore Licence, if granted, to address their specific interests. **Tab 7 and 8.**

Detailed responses to the prescribed bodies submissions were received from the applicant and these have been considered as part of the overall assessment of the proposed application. The applicant's responses to the prescribed bodies' observations are attached at **Tab 9 and 10.**

## Environmental Assessment

### Independent Environmental Consultant (IEC)

The Department engaged the services of RPS Group Plc to prepare the statutory environmental assessments of this foreshore licence application. The IEC conducted an independent assessment of the application including the information provided by the applicant, having regard to the Habitats Directive, the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations, and the prescribed bodies and public submissions. The following reports have been considered:

- EIAR Technical Review 23 July 2021 **Tab 11**
- Screening for Appropriate Assessment (and Article 12 Assessment) Report 23 July 2021 **Tab 12**
- Appropriate Assessment Report 23 July 2021 **Tab 13**

### Appropriate Assessment Screening

**AA Screening:** RPS Group Plc were commissioned as IEC to conduct an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening (stage 1 screening) and if required, an AA (stage 2), of the likelihood of significant impact on Natura 2000 sites.

A number of application documentation informed the AA Screening Conclusion by the IEC including:

- The information provided in the licence application, including supporting documentation and drawings.
- The responses of the applicant to the submissions of the public and the observations of the prescribed bodies.
- The submissions from the public.
- The observations of the prescribed bodies (statutory consultees).

After a review of the proposed project a screening assessment was conducted by the IEC which determined that an Appropriate Assessment was required in this case.

**Appropriate Assessment Screening (Stage 1) – Determination:** Minister of State Burke, upon a review of all materials of the application concurred with the IEC and Recommending Officer, and accepted and adopted the IEC Screening for Appropriate Assessment and its conclusions (**Related submission link:** [HLG 00271-21: Screening for Appropriate Assessment Determination. Foreshore Licence Application by Greenlink Interconnector Limited in respect of a subsea electricity interconnector cable between Irish and UK electricity grids, landing at Baginbun Beach, Co. Wexford](#)). On 27/07/2021 the Minister determined the following:

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) and Regulation 42(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended ('The Regulations'), the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has undertaken Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and the conservation objectives of relevant European sites, if the proposed project to lay subsea and underground electricity interconnector cable from the 12nm territorial limit to landfall in Co. Wexford, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effect (s) on a European site(s).

In addition, and with respect to the Habitats Directive, an Article 12 Assessment of the proposed project was prepared based on information provided in the application. This examination is under Article 12 of the Habitats Directive and does not form part of the Screening for Appropriate Assessment Report which has examined the Natura 2000 sites and their qualifying interests.

## Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2)

RPS Group Plc prepared an Appropriate Assessment report in July 2021 which concluded that:

It can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the proposed Greenlink Interconnector Cable, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not have adverse effects on the integrity of the following European sites:

- Hook Head SAC
- Saltee Islands SAC
- Slaney River Valley SAC.
- River Barrow and River Nore SAC
- Lower River Suir SAC
- Pembrokeshire Marine/Sir Benfro Forol SAC
- West Wales Marine/Gorllewin Cymru Forol SA
- Bristol Channel Approaches/Dynesfeydd Môr Hafren SAC
- North Anglesey Marine/Gogledd Môn Forol SAC
- North Channel SAC
- Llyn Peninsula and the Sarnau/Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau SAC
- Cardigan Bay/Bae Ceredigion SA

**Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2) – Determination:** Minister of State Burke, upon a review of all materials of the application concurred with the IEC and Recommending Officer, and accepted and adopted the IEC Appropriate Assessment and its conclusions (**Related submission link:** [HLG 00276-21: Appropriate Assessment Determination Conclusion Statement. Foreshore Licence Application by Greenlink Interconnector Limited in respect of a subsea electricity interconnector cable between Irish and UK electricity grids.](#)). On 28/07/2021 the Minister determined the following:

The Appropriate Assessment Screening process determined that likely significant effects could not be ruled out with respect to underwater noise for Annex IV species.

In accordance with Regulation 42(6) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 SI 477 as amended, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage made a determination following screening that an Appropriate Assessment was required as the project individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on European sites.

The Appropriate Assessment identified the strict adherence to the NPWS guidance underwater noise and marine mammals (2014) as appropriate mitigation to avoid significant effects on Annex IV. Further mitigation measures includes application to NPWS for derogation licenses before the use of the Acoustic Deterrent Devices (ADD) or if UXO detonation is necessary. UXO detonation will not be undertaken within the twaite shad spawning area between the months of April and May, inclusive.

It is therefore concluded, with adherence to the above mitigation measures, that the proposed project, either alone or in combination with other projects, will not adversely Annex IV species or the integrity of European sites, in view of the said sites conservation objectives.

## Environmental Impact Assessment

The proposed interconnector does not constitute a "project" listed within either Annex I or Annex II to the EIA Directive [Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU]. However an EIAR was voluntarily submitted by the Applicant.

An assessment of compliance of proposed Greenlink Interconnector project with the objectives and requirements of the EIA and associated national regulations, took into account the following reports and supporting information that formed part of the Greenlink Interconnector Foreshore License Application package:

- EIA and Appendices
- EIA Non-Technical Summary
- Foreshore Licence Application Form
- Natural Impact Statement

The assessment also took into consideration written observations made by the prescribed bodies to DHLGH in relation to the Foreshore Licence Application and the following documents submitted by the Applicant in response to a Request for Further Information:

- Greenlink Response to Request for Further Information (December 2020)
- Greenlink Information to Inform 2nd Public Consultation (March 2021)

A technical review of the EIA, together with associated documents and Response to Request for Further Information, provide adequate information to inform the assessment of environmental impact.

An examination, analysis and evaluation of the information contained in the Greenlink Marine EIA and supporting documents, including observations of the public and prescribed bodies, and documents submitted as further information was conducted. The Greenlink application documentation identifies and describes adequately the direct, indirect, secondary and cumulative effects of the proposed development on the environment.

RPS Group Plc prepared an EIA Technical review in July 2021. This EIA Technical review along with all relevant material was considered by a Marine Biologist in the Department.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2021 the Minister adopted the the EIA Technical Review prepared by RPS Group Plc and EIA Reasoned Conclusion prepared by the Department's Recommending Officer.

## **Marine Licence Vetting Committee (MLVC)**

### **MLVC Considerations**

The following documentation was considered and assessed:

- Application Form
- Foreshore Licence Map
- Foreshore Licence Map - Campile
- Natura Impact Statement (NIS)
- Summary of Onshore and Offshore Environmental Effects
- Greenlink Marine Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA)
- Vol 1 Environmental Impact Assessment Report: Non-Technical Survey
- Vol 2 Environmental Impact Assessment Report
- Vol 3 Appendix A - Stakeholder Meetings
- Vol 3 Appendix B - Competent Experts Table
- Vol 3 Appendix C - Underwater Noise Assessment
- Vol 3 Appendix D - Herring and Sandeel Assessment
- Vol 3 Appendix E - Commercial Fisheries Assessment
- Vol 3 Appendix F - Marine Archaeology
- Vol 3 Appendix G - Cable Route Survey
- Vol 3 Appendix H - Environmental Survey
- Vol 3 Appendix I - Intertidal Habitat Survey Report
- Vol 3 Appendix J - UXO Risk Assessment
- Vol 3 Appendix K - Greenlink, Magnetic Fields and Induced Voltages
- Vol 3 Appendix L - Landfall Selection
- Written submissions and recommendations received from Prescribed Bodies
- The applicant's responses to the Prescribed Bodies submissions.
- The public submissions received from the public consultation.
- The applicant's responses to the public submissions received.
- Independent Environmental Consultants submissions
- Greenlink Summary of Onshore and Offshore Environmental Effects to Accompany Welsh Marine Licence Application.
- EIA Reasoned Conclusion
- Following requests for further information (RFI), the following documents were provided to DHLGH by Greenlink:

- Greenlink Response to Request for Further Information (December 2020).
- Greenlink Information to Inform 2nd Public Consultation (March 2021).

The Marine Licence Vetting Committee (MLVC) reviewed both technical and scientific aspects of the documentation supplied by Greenlink Interconnector Limited. The Committee is satisfied that the purpose and objective of the proposed works on the foreshore are adequately explained.

In addition, the MLVC is satisfied that the environmental information provided is sufficient to allow an assessment of the environmental impacts of the proposed development be carried out and to make a recommendation.

Submissions by the public and the prescribed bodies have been considered and responded to by way of attached conditions (**Tab 14**). Significant appropriate consideration has been given to environmental matters by Independent Environmental Consultants and the MLVC. The MLVC concludes that, subject to compliance with the specific conditions set out below, the proposed works would will not adversely affect Fishing, Navigation or the Environment and is in the Public Interest. In addition, the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications comments that the Government supports enhanced electricity interconnection, including interconnectors that have been designated EU Projects of Common Interest (PCI), such as the Greenlink Interconnector. EU policy is explicit in its support of electricity interconnection, with interconnection projects facilitated under the EU PCI process.

Therefore, the MLVC recommend that the Minister issues a Foreshore Licence for the installation, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of the electricity interconnector cable as set out in the application. Any Foreshore Licence issued shall be subject to the appropriate conditions outlined below. The MLVC Report is attached at **Tab 15**.

### **Proposed Site Specific Conditions**

The Proposed Site Specific Conditions are attached in **Tab 14**.

### **Agreement of the Applicant**

Greenlink Interconnector Limited have agreed to the recommended site specific conditions, which will be attached to the licence, if granted.

### **Financial Considerations**

Greenlink Interconnector Limited have agreed to pay €135,000.00 per annum subject to a rent review every 5 years based on a 40 year licence.

### **Basis for Recommendation**

Having regard to:

- The application, together with accompanying documentation;
- The submissions received from prescribed bodies (statutory consultees);
- The public consultations undertaken and submissions received;
- The Screening for Appropriate Assessment Report
- Appropriate Assessment Screening (Stage 1) – Determination
- The Appropriate Assessment Determination
- Non-Statutory Environmental Analysis
- The assessment of the proposed development by the MLVC, its conclusions and recommendations in this regard; and
- the consent conditions to be attached to the foreshore licence, if granted.

It is considered that the proposed development on the Foreshore would not have a significant negative impact on the marine environment and would not adversely affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites, and the proposal is in the public interest.

It is recommended that a foreshore licence be granted to Greenlink Interconnector Limited, subject to the conditions recommended by the MLVC, and the financial considerations set out above.

## Notification of Ministerial Determination

If approval is granted by the Minister, Greenlink Interconnector Limited will be informed accordingly, an appropriate licence will issue for execution, and a Notice of Determination regarding the decision (including the reasons) will be published on the Department's website.

The Notice of Determination will address:

- The outcome of the Minister's determination of the application.
- The main reasons and considerations for the Minister's determination.
- A statement that all relevant documentation on which the determination is based is available for inspection both on the website of this Department and at the Department's Wexford office.
- Confirmation that a review procedure is available before the High Court whereby the substantive or procedural legality of the Minister's determination may be challenged, together with practical information on the review procedure.

Submitted for approval, to grant a Foreshore Licence to Greenlink Interconnector Limited, for installation and maintenance of a subsea electricity cable.

## Related submissions

There are no related submissions.