

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Project Brief

RPS Planning & Environment was requested by Frazer Ferries Ltd. to undertake Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed ferry development. The proposal consists of facilities at both Greenore in Co. Louth and Greencastle in Co. Down to allow operation of an all year round vehicular ferry across the mouth of Carlingford Lough. A full project description is included in Chapter 3.

The proposal is an entirely private sector funded initiative. The members of Frazer Ferries Ltd include business people with over 45 years' experience in the ferry industry - current and founding shareholders in the Killimer to Tarbert ferry service on the River Shannon, the longest running vehicular ferry service on the island of Ireland. Frazer Ferries Ltd is committed to investing substantial private funds into the Carlingford Lough ferry project and strongly believe in the long term need for and long term viability of the service based on the substantial and conclusive due diligence investigations that they have undertaken since 2007. A number of previous private and publicly funded studies all confirmed financial, navigational and operational integrity of the Greenore to Greencastle ferry project.

The coastal regions of Cooley & Mourne have intrinsic natural attractions but restricted access to the area has been, and continues to be, a major problem. The applicant has undertaken intensive public consultation and engagement and understands the importance of developing the project in conjunction with the local communities involved. The applicant is committed to upholding the highest standards of corporate social responsibility and believes that the ferry would be a major tourist attraction with a resulting material positive impact in the promotion of Cooley /Mournes as one destination rather than two separate and distinct locations, a view shared by the tourism agencies in Ireland. As it matures it is anticipated that the Carlingford Lough ferry will become integrated into the local infrastructure

It should be noted that the proposal relates to development within both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (ROI) and as such within this document reference is made to relevant national legislation where appropriate. The terminology for EIA reporting differs from state to state, the relevant terms for both Northern Ireland (Environmental Statement [ES]) and Republic of Ireland (Environmental Impact Statement [EIS]) have been used as follows throughout the document: ES/EIS.

## 1.2 Structure of the ES/EIS

The ES/EIS is comprised as follows:

- Non-Technical Summary
- Volume I. ES/EIS: Main Statement
- Volume II. ES/EIS: Appendices
- Volume III. ES/EIS: Design Drawings, Figures & Photomontages

The ES/EIS should be read in conjunction with the associated planning submissions including Drawings No's. 100-110 and 200-210 respectively.

## 1.3 Planning Authority Context

The project is a cross-border planning application made simultaneously to relevant Planning Authorities in Northern Ireland and ROI as follows:

Authority	Legal Mechanism
DOE Planning NI, Divisional Planning Office, Craigavon	The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 as amended
Louth County Council, Dundalk	The Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended

## 1.4 Methodology

The ES/EIS follows the format of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements (March 2002). The EPA Advice Notes on Current Practices (in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements) (September 2003) details the topics usually addressed for particular project types.

Details of the methodology used in each individual discipline are given in the relevant chapter of the document.

Each of the chapters of the ES/EIS conforms to the following format:

- An Introduction describing the purpose of the chapter;
- A description of the Methodology used in the section;
- A description of the aspects of the Existing Environment relevant to the environmental topic under consideration;
- An assessment of the Impact (including cumulative) of the proposed development on the environmental topic;
- Recommendations for Mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate any significant negative impacts identified; and
- An assessment of the Residual Impact which will remain assuming that the recommended mitigation measures are fully and successfully implemented.

## 1.5 Content of ES/EIS

The aforementioned EIA Regulations outline the formal requirements for the content of the ES/EIS. The schedule states that an ES should include a description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development, in particular the following:

- population
- fauna
- flora
- soil
- water
- air
- climatic factors
- material assets
- architectural and archaeological heritage
- landscape
- inter-relationships between the above factors

Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations puts emphasis on the “main” or “significant” effects that are identified from the process. Such significant issues need to be addressed in detail in the ES/EIS.

## 1.6 Context of Environmental Impact Assessment

EIA is a key instrument of European Union environmental policy. EIA is a procedure required under the terms of European Union Directives 85/337/EEC on assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment

Article 2 of the Directive requires that “Member States shall adopt all measures necessary to ensure that, before consent is given, projects likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue, inter alia, of their nature, size or location are made subject to a requirement for development consent and an assessment with regard to their effects.” Article 8 then requires that “The results of consultations and information gathered pursuant to [the EIA process] must be taken into consideration in the development consent procedure”.

The EIA Directive has been amended three times, in 1997, in 2003 and in 2009:

- Directive 97/11/EC brought the Directive in line with the UN ECE Espoo Convention on EIA in a Transboundary Context. The Directive of 1997 widened the scope of the EIA Directive by increasing

- the types of projects covered, and the number of projects requiring mandatory environmental impact assessment (Annex I). It also provided for new screening arrangements, including new screening criteria (at Annex III) for Annex II projects, and established minimum information requirements.
- Directive 2003/35/EC was seeking to align the provisions on public participation with the Aarhus Convention on public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters.
  - Directive 2009/31/EC amended the Annexes I and II of the EIA Directive, by adding projects related to the transport, capture and storage of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).

As outlined in Section 1.3, in ROI, EIA requirements under domestic planning legislation have been consolidated into Part X of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Part 10 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). In Northern Ireland, the Directive is transposed into domestic planning law through The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999 (as amended).