

**REPORT OF THE MARINE LICENCE VETTING COMMITTEE (MLVC)**

**on**

**FORESHORE LICENCE APPLICATION FOR THE INSTALLATION OF  
SUBMARINE ELECTRICITY POWER CABLES ACROSS THE SHANNON  
ESTUARY BETWEEN MONEYPPOINT, CO. CLARE AND GLENCLOOSAGH  
BAY CO. KERRY**

**by**

**EIRGRID PLC**

**Dr. Terry McMahon  
Chair, Marine Licence Vetting Committee  
01 February 2012**

**EirGrid– Foreshore Licence Application for the installation of submarine electricity power cables between Moneypoint, Co. Clare and Glencloosagh Bay, Co. Kerry (MS51/9/613)**

**Background**

In April 2010 Eirgrid PLC submitted an application for a Foreshore Permit to facilitate the installation of submarine electricity power cables between Moneypoint, Co. Clare and Glencloosagh Bay, Co. Kerry. The development is part of the ongoing national transmission reinforcement project.

Eirgrid propose to develop 2 High Voltage submarine electricity circuits crossing the Shannon estuary connecting the transmission system at the Moneypoint Generation Station in Co. Clare to the transmission system adjacent to Glencloosagh Bay in Co. Kerry along the route shown on Drawing No. 231538 02E 033. Each circuit would comprise of 4 cables, 3 operational and one spare phase. It is proposed that 1 cable circuit would be operated at 220kV and be installed in 2013. A second circuit would be operated at 440kV and it is intended that this would be installed in 2014.

The proposed cable route across the foreshore is approximately 2.8 Km long and the deepest point along the route is approximately 60m. The total area of foreshore within the cable corridor would be 51.23 hectares. The cables would be installed using a post-lay burial water jetting system and it is intended to bury the cable along the proposed route to a preferred depth of 1.5m below the seabed where the seabed conditions and local geology allows. Where burial is not possible the cable would be placed on the seabed and protected using rock armour or cable mattresses. Each cable would be placed in a separate trench 20 - 25m from one another. The cables will be brought ashore, across the intertidal zone, in 8 individual trenches and will be connected to a terrestrial cable circuit at 2 No. individual jointing bays situated above the high water mark, one at each landfall site, as shown on Drawing No. 231538 02E 030.

In the intertidal area the cable trench would be approximately 0.6 wide and 1 – 1.5m deep. Cable laying in the intertidal area is to be carried out using the water jetting method where possible. Where this is not possible a conventional digger is to be used. In some areas where bedrock outcrops on the shoreline a rock breaker may be required to break through the rock. Where a conventional digger is to be used, 4 separate trenches are to be dug on a falling tide. During a rising tide the cable will be placed in the trench, a concrete slab will be put in place to protect the cable and the trench backfilled with excavated material. Any excess excavated material will be transported offsite to a licenced disposal facility.

Each cable is expected to be laid in approximately 2 days with the contractor working 6 – 8 hrs /day. The 4 individual cables would be laid one at a time with a gap of 1 day between the laying of each subsequent cable. It is estimated that the total duration of the works would be approximately 8 weeks in each year. This 8 week period would comprise a number of activities carried out consecutively or concurrently including the

construction of the jointing bays ( approximately 6 weeks), works in the intertidal area (approximately 4 -6 weeks)and works in the subtidal (approximately 6 weeks)

The proposed works are not of a class that would require the submission of an Environmental Impact Statement

### **Natura 2000 designation**

The proposed cable route and landing points are within the Lower River Shannon SAC (Site Code 002262) and adjacent to (approximately 3.5Km) from the boundary of the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA (Site Code 004077). A site synopsis and Conservation Objectives for each of the sites were sourced from the NPWS of DAHG.

### **Public Consultation**

A public notice concerning this application was published in the “Kerryman” and “Clare Champion” on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2011. The relevant documents were on display Listowel Garda Station and Kilrush Garda Station from 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2011 to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011. No representations or observations were received. .

### **MLVC Assessment**

The following documents were considered and assessed

- Foreshore Licence Application and accompanying Environmental Report<sup>1</sup> prepared by ERM Consultants and Otter Assessment Report<sup>2</sup> prepared by Wildlife Surveys Ireland, submitted by EirGrid
- Written submissions from DEHLG (Engineering, NPWS, and Underwater Archaeology Unit), DAFF, Marine Institute, Central Fisheries Board, Sea Fisheries Protection Authority and the Marine Survey Office.
- Site Synopsis and Conservation Objectives for the Lower River Shannon SAC and the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA ( available on the NPWS Web site at

<http://www.npws.ie/protectedsites/specialprotectionareasspa/rivershannonandriverfergusestuariesspa/>

<http://www.npws.ie/protectedsites/specialareasofconservationsac/lowerivershannonsac/>

No objections to the proposal were raised.

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<sup>1</sup> Moneypoint Generating Station – Glencloosagh Bay Submarine Cable Project, Environmental Report, April 2010, ERM Job No 0058561

<sup>2</sup> An Otter Assessment of the Site if the proposed submarine power cable landfalls at Moneypoint, County Clare and Glencloosagh Bay, Tarbert County Kerry, Brian Keely and Barry Ryan, Wildlife Surveys Ireland, for ERM September 2011.

## **MLVC Conclusions**

Having regard to:

- The Environmental Report and environmental management and mitigation measures set out in the Environmental Report
- The Submissions received from consultees
- A report of the Assessment of the likely effects of the installation of submarine electricity power cables between Moneypoint, Co. Clare and Glencloosagh Bay, Co. Kerry on the integrity of the Lower River Shannon SAC and River Shannon and River Fergus SPA

the MLVC concludes that, subject to compliance with the specific conditions set out below, the proposed works would not have a significant negative impact on the marine environment, archaeology or navigational safety, would not have a significant adverse impact on the Conservation Objectives of the Lower River Shannon SAC or the River Shannon and River Fergus SPA and that the integrity of these sites will not be affected and therefore recommends that a permit be issued.

## **Recommended Licence Conditions**

1. The Licensee shall use that part of the Foreshore the subject matter of this licence for the purposes as outlined in the application and for no other purposes whatsoever.
2. The Licensee shall notify the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government at least 14 days in advance of the commencement of the works on the foreshore.
3. The Licensee shall ensure that all environmental management and mitigation measures detailed in the Environmental Report accompanying the application are implemented.
4. The Licensee shall liaise with the Shannon Foynes Port Company prior to and during the cable laying phase of the proposed works.
5. The Licensee shall liaise with Inland Fisheries Ireland – Limerick in relation to the timing of works.
6. The Licensee shall furnish the names/registered number of all vessels involved in the operation to the Marine Survey Office in Dublin to ensure compliance with respect to Irish Load line and other relevant vessel certification.

7. The Licensee shall arrange the publication of a Marine Notice giving general description of operations and approximate dates of commencement and completion.
8. The Licensee shall arrange the publication of a local marine notice giving general description of operations and approximate dates of commencement and completion in respect of near shore and landfall cable laying operations
9. An Exclusion Zone for marine mammals (whales, dolphins and seals) shall be established, extending to 500 metres away from the cable laying operations, prior to the commencement of operations. All cable laying operations shall commence during suitable weather and visibility to ensure that this Exclusion Zone can be achieved.
10. A qualified Marine Mammal Observer shall be on site during the commencement of all cable laying operations to ensure that the Exclusion Zone is clear of marine mammals.
11. The Marine Mammal Observer shall undertake thirty minutes of survey prior to commencement of the soft-start procedure to ensure that no marine mammals are within the Exclusion Zone.
12. Cable laying may continue if weather conditions deteriorate or if marine mammals enter the Exclusion Zone following the appropriate start up.
13. The Licensee shall engage the services of a suitably qualified archaeologist to carry out archaeological monitoring of the proposed works under licence from the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The works on the foreshore for both landfall sites and underwater for the cable laying shall be subject to an agreed scaled monitoring strategy. This scaled monitoring shall be agreed in advance by the applicants archaeologist(s) engaged to undertake the monitoring and the National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. A find's retrieval strategy shall be incorporated into the monitoring methodology where possible.
14. Should archaeological material be found during the course of monitoring, the archaeologist shall have the power to have works suspended, pending a decision by the National Monuments Service of Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht as to how best to deal with the archaeology. The Licensee shall comply with directions from the National Monuments Service with regard to any necessary mitigating action (e.g. preservation *in situ*, dive and/or geophysical survey or excavation) and shall facilitate the archaeologist in recording any material found.

15. The National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht shall be furnished with a report describing the results of all archaeological monitoring on completion of the works.
  
16. An as constructed survey of the cable route shall be provided to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on completion of the works.