

3 SCREENING AND SCOPING

3.1 LEGISLATION

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are carried out by competent authorities pursuant to the requirements of the European Union Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment. The principal national legislation which implements these obligations into Irish law, for the purposes of the within application for planning approval, are Part X of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Part 10 of the Planning and Development Regulations, as amended. These EU and Irish national legislative provisions outline, inter alia, the classes of projects subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and the content of an EIS.

3.2 SCREENING

An Bord Pleanála requested that a full EIS is prepared for the subject proposal. The Board noted the following:

“Amongst the development specified in Part 2 of Schedule 5 is “Industrial Installations for ... transmission of electrical energy by overhead cables not included in Part 1 of this Schedule, where the voltage would be 200 kV or more”. Having regard to the latter, and to the new length of 400 kV overhead line proposed, the Board is of the opinion that the project requires the submission of a full environmental impact statement, rather than the environmental report which accompanies the application”.

Accordingly, this EIS has been prepared in response to the request for Further Information.

3.3 SCOPE OF THIS EIS

The determination of potential concerns to be addressed in this EIS was largely based on:

- the requirements of the EIA Directive and the Irish regulations;
- consultation with relevant statutory bodies (See 3.4 below);
- the Environmental Protection Agency's 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements' (EPA 2002);
- European Commission documents “Guidance on EIA, Scoping” (2001) and “Guidance on Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into Environmental Impact Assessment” (2013); and
- experience of previous EISs.

3.4 CONSULTATION

The following bodies were consulted throughout the EIA process:

- An Taisce
- Arts Council
- Birdwatch Ireland
- Coillte
- Commission for Energy Regulation
- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Development Applications Unit)
- Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (National Parks and Wildlife Service)
- Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government
- Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
- Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Fáilte Ireland
- Geological Society of Ireland
- Heritage Council
- Health and Safety Authority
- Health Service Executive
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Irish Aviation Authority
- Irish Farmer's Association Environment and Infrastructure Executive
- Irish Farmer's Association Laois Offaly
- Irish Farmer's Association Regional Development Officer
- Irish Peatland Conservation Council
- Kilkenny Archaeological Society
- Kilkenny Chamber of Commerce
- Kilkenny County Council Enterprise Board
- Kildare County Council
- Laois Chamber of Commerce
- Laois County Enterprise Board
- Laois County Council
- Laois Heritage Society
- Midlands Heliport
- Midlands Regional Authority
- National Roads Authority
- South East Regional Authority
- Teagasc
- Wicklow County Council

The consultation included circulation of a letter inviting input (a sample scoping letter is included as part of Appendix 3.1). Public input was sought by way of the public notice (the newspaper advertisement is included as part of Appendix 3.1) and letters were also sent to landowners.

It is acknowledged that the scope of the overall EIA will be determined by ABP as competent authority in this matter.

All of the comments, suggestions and written responses provided were taken into account in the preparation of this EIS and any other data received as appropriate in relation to the preparation of the original Environmental Report. The scope of the EIS continued to be developed throughout its preparation.

A summary of responses to submissions made in response to the May 2013 EIS notice - as well as a sample scoping letter and newspaper advertisement - is provided as Appendix 3.1.