



European Investment Bank (EIB)

Luxembourg, 28/11/2021

Environmental and Social Completion Sheet (ESCS)

Overview

Project Name:	GAS NETWORKS IRELAND
Project Number:	2016-0357
Country:	Republic of Ireland
Project Description:	Construction of an onshore gas pipeline between Cluden and Brighthouse Bay, in Scotland, Great Britain, and gas network extension and refurbishment programmes on existing assets.

Summary of Environmental and Social Assessment at Completion

EIB notes the following Environmental and Social performance and key outcomes at Project Completion.

The Project consisted of the following main components:

- Construction of a DN900 gas pipeline 49.6 km-long between Cluden and Brighthouse, which is part of the second Scotland to Ireland Gas Interconnector. First phase of this onshore pipeline was constructed in 2002.
- Refurbishment and replacement of transmission networks in the ROI and UK; refurbishment and expansion of distribution networks in the ROI.

Pipeline Cluden to Brighthouse

The Cluden to Brighthouse gas pipeline in Scotland is under Annex I of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU and it was required to undergo an Environmental Impact Assessment; it was the only component in the programme requiring an EIA.

In 2001 a Pipeline Construction Authorisation was granted for the construction of a gas pipeline from Beattock to Brighthouse. Phase 1 of the project was completed in 2002 and includes a 29.6 km section between Beattock and the River Cluden (north west of Dumfries), as well as the landfall pipeline at Brighthouse Bay. Subsequently, as part of the phase two, the Promoter identified the need for a re-route of a 7.2 km section to the west of Dumfries, between Cluden and Lochfoot, to address concerns raised by the Scottish Water regarding potential impacts on groundwater. The Scottish Government has directed that a new and separate Pipeline Construction Authorisation would be appropriate for the re-route. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in support of the application was submitted and the new Pipeline Construction Authorisation was granted by the competent authority in 21.06.2016.

The pipeline route was designed to avoid buildings where possible. Where this was not possible, thicker walled pipes (19mm) were used. The EIA also required Dumfries and Galloway Council to take the location of the pipeline into account when assessing any future planning applications.



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The Cluden to Brighthouse pipeline project had an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECOW) whose responsibility included monitoring the Principal Contractor's activities in relation to ecological legislation and supporting compliance with the ecological and hydrological commitments provided in the EIA, the Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Habitat Management Plan (HMP), and liaison with statutory consultees and NGOs regarding the natural environment.

The following mitigation measures related to the physical environment were taken:

- The main contractor took measures to ensure compliance with SEPA best practice guidelines for fuel storage and refueling by using spill trays and drip kits, double skinned fuel storage containers and they did not refuel within 30m of water courses;
- Adequate facilities were provided for the collection, treatment and disposal of waste and sewage by segregating waste in the compounds and all toilets that were not connected mains sewerage were removed from site, emptied and the volumes recorded in a waste transfer note.
- A Reinstatement Plan was developed by the main contractor to control effective reinstatement to the original contours, to ensure there was a negligible long term effect on topography along the pipeline route or on surface-water run-off patterns. The Reinstatement Plan includes details of soil handling and seed mixes appropriate to the differing soils encountered along the route. Loss of fertility due to disturbance of topsoil and immediate subsoil was remedied by careful land management immediately following reinstatement.
- Where existing soil drainage was compromised through compaction, dense layers were removed in the freely draining soils by use of standard agricultural subsoiling techniques such as sub-soil ripping to a depth of 600mm to allow compacted layers to become loosened effectively. A very comprehensive post-construction drainage solution was installed across the entire pipeline in accordance with ADAS specifications.
- Surface water: channels were created to divert clean ground water into water courses without collecting sediment, surface water containing silt and water pumped from trenches were discharged into a series of siltation ponds within the working width, where permission had been granted the main contractor is discharging surface water on to grass fields on adjoining properties, flocculent blocks were used in siltation ponds where suitable and flumes were used to divert minor water courses above open trenches. Ensuring siltation ponds were sized adequately to provide sufficient capacity to contain water from intensive rain events proved to be a challenge for the main contractor.
- A number of active badger *Meles meles* sets were recorded along the route of the pipeline and subsequently checked on a monthly basis. Due to their proximity a license to disturb was obtained from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). As a condition of this license ongoing monitoring of badger activity during the construction was conducted. Badger prints and possible digging were recorded and these observations were passed to the Principal Contractor and monitored through the use of trail cameras to identify the level of activity at these features.
- During pre-construction signs of otter *Lutra lutra* and structures which otter may potentially use for resting were recorded on the three main watercourses bisecting the pipeline route. A survey of the all watercourses where otter activity was recorded previously were undertaken again in 2018. Checks were undertaken immediately prior to the temporary bridges were removed and monitoring was done during the duration of construction.



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- A nest of Red Kite *Milvus milvus* was detected 70 m from construction at Argrennan House. An exclusion zone of 300 m was implemented and applied to all construction activities and personnel during two consecutive breeding seasons in 2017 and 2018. All construction works adjacent to the exclusion zone were to be kept to a minimum.
- Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* nests were identified adjacent to a construction compound within the working width. Both areas were cordoned off and protected from construction activities until such time that the birds departed the areas. It was instructed to the main contractor's Environmental Team that these areas are monitored and construction operatives working in these areas are informed of the potential for nests to be present.
- All ponds recorded within 250m of the pipeline route were surveyed for their likelihood to support Great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*. All the ponds meeting the criteria for further surveys were subject to a presence survey in the form of eDNA surveys. Population surveys were undertaken contemporaneously with presence surveys.

No significant environment or social issues were noted.

Summary opinion of Environmental and Social aspects at completion:

EIB is of the opinion based on reports from the promoter during Construction that the Project has been implemented in line with EIB Environmental and Social Standards, applicable at the time of appraisal.