

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SEPIL on behalf of the Corrib Gas Partners (Shell E&P, StatoilHydro and Marathon) is developing the Corrib Gas Field off the coast of Mayo. The field will be produced via a subsea production facility with onshore processing. The overall development includes: the offshore wells, offshore subsea facilities and offshore pipeline as far as the Mayo coast, the onshore section of the pipeline and a gas terminal (currently under construction) at Béal an Átha Buí (Bellanaboy), Co. Mayo. This Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) relates to the onshore section of the gas pipeline.

In January 2007 SEPIL appointed RPS to implement a recommendation by the independent mediator, Mr Peter Cassells (appointed by the then Minister for Communications, Marine & Natural Resources), that SEPIL modify the route of a previously approved onshore gas pipeline ‘in the vicinity of Rossport to address community concerns regarding proximity to housing’. Since February 2007, wide ranging public consultation has taken place in parallel with the route selection process. Eight possible pipeline route corridors were published in June 2007 and after further assessment these were shortlisted to three route corridors in September 2007 using a combination of community, environmental and technical criteria. Throughout 2007 extensive technical and environmental assessments were undertaken to assess different aspects of each route option in parallel with community consultation. The ongoing assessment informed a decision to also investigate variations on the three shortlisted route corridors (A, B and C), and subsequently A1 and C1 were publicly announced in December 2007. The public consultation on these five corridor options A, B, C, A1 and C1 closed in January 2008. RPS subsequently identified route C1 as the proposed route for the Corrib Onshore Pipeline in April 2008 and the assessment process has continued since then.

This EIS describes the route development process in detail and describes the basis for selecting the proposed route as the one preferred for the Corrib Onshore Pipeline. The proposed route is approximately 9.2km long from the landfall at Gleann an Ghad (Glengad) to the Bellanaboy Bridge Gas Terminal. A Landfall Valve Installation will be located approximately 50m from where the pipeline comes ashore at Gleann an Ghad (Glengad). This installation is designed to limit the pressure in the onshore pipeline to 144 bar or less. The assurance of such a limit to gas pressure in the onshore pipeline is as recommended by the Independent Safety Review by Advantica dated January 2006 and endorsed by the Technical Advisory Group reporting to the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

The gas pipeline together with services and outfall pipeline will be laid underground at a minimum cover of 1.2m in accordance with appropriate codes. Approximately 3.5km of the route coincides with the original approved route. The pipeline starts at the previously approved landfall at Gleann an Ghad (Glengad), and crosses an area of improved grassland in the Glenamoy Bog Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC). It then crosses under Sruwaddacon Bay before heading in a south/south-easterly direction along the northern bank of the bay through an area of grassland. At this point the route turns north across the local road at Ros Dumhach (Rossport) into the Ros Dumhach (Rossport) Commonage. The route then continues through a short section of blanket bog, which also lies within the Glenamoy Bog Complex (SAC). The route runs at the fringes of the bog to minimise the impact on the SAC. The route then turns south again before crossing under Sruwaddacon Bay for a second time. It then turns in an easterly direction through peatlands before rejoining the previously approved route through forestry to enter the Bellanaboy Bridge Gas Terminal site.

The minimum separation distance between currently occupied houses and the proposed pipeline is 140m, which is twice the minimum separation distance of 70m on the previously approved route.

The route now proposed has been chosen having regard to what is the optimum balance between the different criteria developed in consultation with the local community and other stakeholders. The principal challenges in arriving at the preferred route have been to address the concerns of people in the local community on proximity to local housing and to ensure that the potential for impact to the environment (especially in designated conservation sites) is minimised.

The construction methodologies have been described and resulting environmental impacts assessed. Measures to prevent, limit, reduce and minimise environmental impact on the human and natural environments and cultural heritage have been described. Alternative construction methods have also been considered. Pavement condition surveys have been carried out of the proposed construction

haul route, which indicate areas where preventative and ongoing maintenance works are likely to be required during the construction phase. Such measures have been discussed with Mayo County Council as part of the pre application consultation process. The construction of the Corrib Onshore Pipeline requires the removal of approximately 75,000m³ of surplus peat, which will be disposed of at a peat deposition site in An Srath Mór (Srahmore), located approximately 10km from the proposed route (see Appendix A4). A separate description of the peat deposition operations at An Srath Mór (Srahmore) is provided in Volume 3 of this EIS.

The Corrib development will contribute significantly to ensuring Ireland's security of supply, meeting up to 60% of Ireland's gas requirements during the initial years of production and reducing Ireland's dependence on imported energy. It has supported the recent extension of the natural gas network in Co. Mayo and the North-West generally, which will bring regional and national economic benefit in terms of a clean and reliable energy source for both residential and industrial use. The project as a whole will have a net positive impact on the national, regional and local economy and on local employment during construction and during the lifetime of the operations.

Having conducted this environmental impact study, the results of which are described in detail within this EIS, RPS has concluded that the proposed Corrib Onshore Gas Pipeline will not have a significant impact on the environment including the human and natural environments and cultural heritage.