

6 COMMUNITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMICS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Human beings comprise one of the most important elements of the ‘environment’, and any potential impact upon human beings by a development proposal must therefore be comprehensively addressed. The principal concern in this respect is that people experience no significant unacceptable diminution in their ‘quality of life’ as a consequence of the construction and operation of a proposed development. The components of ‘quality of life’ addressed in this community and socio-economic impact assessment include both demographic and employment patterns, and wider community issues, including tourism, cultural identity, and language. Other community-related issues such as land use, material assets, and cultural heritage are addressed in other Chapters of this EIS.

6.1.1 What is Community?

It is essential at the outset of this assessment to set out what is understood by the term ‘community’. Certainly community includes the residential and working population of the receiving environment, and this is addressed in terms of demographic analysis – studying patterns of population change, age profile, socio-economic profile, employment patterns, etc. Community also includes the physical land area of a development; this is addressed in terms of land use, property (see Chapter 11) and cultural heritage (see Chapter 16). Community also includes the visiting community who come to the area to observe or otherwise enjoy the physical land and landscape of the area.

The primary basis for the proposed development – a revised alignment of the onshore pipeline element of the overall Corrib Gas Field Development – derives from a key recommendation made in Peter Cassells’ Report to “*modify the route of the pipeline in the vicinity of Rossport to address community concerns regarding proximity to housing*” (see Preamble). Whilst this recommendation clearly places human beings at the forefront of the project, the Cassells Report does not define what is understood by its author to comprise ‘community’. It is considered that the Report has used the term ‘community’ generally to refer to persons in the local vicinity of the proposed pipeline, who expressed concerns with, or opposition to, the project. The difficulty with such use of a general term like ‘community’ as a collective substitute for a number of individuals is that, by its very generality, all residents of a local area appear to share a uniform concern with, or opposition to, the project. In contrast, following extensive consultation in respect of the proposed modified pipeline, it is considered by RPS that such blanket collective opposition to the project does not actually occur in the local and wider vicinities of the Study Area. There is in fact significant support for the project, with people having regard in particular to the significant economic and employment benefits arising from such a large infrastructural project. This is not in any way to lessen the degree of concern or opposition that an individual or group may have to the project – such concern also arises from persons who support the project in principle.

The publication, ‘*The Environmental Movement In Ireland*’, by Liam Leonard (2007), seeks to provide some clarity, in sociological terms, as to what defines a rural community. The author, from the Social Sciences Research Centre (SSRC) of NUI Galway, addresses the rise of local environmental activism, including the experience of the Corrib Gas project, and defines the rural community as representing “*an articulation of defence of space, lifestyle and environment by a social group who are concerned about the degradation of all that they hold dear*” (p69). He notes that this perceived risk to a local population or environment can form the basis of resistance to industrial or infrastructural projects, even though such projects may be intended to modernise an area, or otherwise have the potential consequence of stemming the tide of emigration, economic stagnation and historical depopulation, through spreading of an industrialised wealth base across the country.

In this context, ‘community’ is not restricted to the people who live in, or work in a particular locality. It also includes persons who share ties to the people and landscape of that area. It also includes shared values, and a sense of place and belonging, whether or not an individual actually resides or works in that particular locality. In respect of the Corrib Gas Field Development therefore, the community cannot be simply seen as the local population within the immediate vicinity of the project. It must also include the residential, working and visiting populations of the wider vicinity, region, and State, who

share in the sense of place, or who otherwise feel a connection to the area, or to the proposed development, whether in support or opposition to the project.

This community and socio-economic assessment of the impact of the proposed onshore pipeline development cannot occur in isolation from the considerable and extensively documented history of conflict that has occurred between proponents of the Corrib Gas Field Development, and objectors to that project. Consistent with Leonard's definition above, such persons are not restricted to residing in the local vicinity of the project, but rather are spread through the wider locality, region, county and State. It is the case that stated concerns in respect of the overall Corrib Gas Field Development have been made by persons not necessarily resident in the local vicinity of the project, but who may share similar values as local persons who have raised concerns with, or opposition to, the project. Equally, it is the case that local support for the project is replicated throughout the region, and State as a whole.

This assessment has been prepared in the context of all the above that serves to make up the local and wider communities of the overall Corrib Gas Field Development in general, and the specific proposed onshore pipeline that comprises the subject of this EIS.

Whilst acknowledging the wider regional, national and international communities both in support of, and opposition to, the overall project, it is considered appropriate generally to restrict this assessment to the impact of the proposed pipeline development, and in cumulative terms, the overall Corrib Gas Field Development on the local and wider resident, working and visiting populations of the Study Area, as identified below.

6.1.2 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

The characteristics of the proposed development, for the purposes of this assessment of community and socio-economic issues, cannot isolate the proposed construction and operation of the onshore gas pipeline from the other elements of the Corrib Gas Field Development, including the current construction and planned future operation of the permitted Bellanaboy Bridge Gas Terminal, as well as construction of the offshore element of the gas pipeline (see Chapter 4).

The existing settlements in closest proximity to the proposed Corrib gas pipeline and associated development are Gleann an Ghad / Poll an tSómais (Glengad / Pollatomish), Béal an Átha Bui (Bellanaboy) and Na hEachú (Aghoos). In addition, dwellings are scattered along the coast roads that occur on both sides of Sruwaddacon Bay and on other sites within the vicinity of the pipeline, including Ros Dumhach (Rosspart). Construction of the proposed pipeline development will result in the removal from use of one habitable house on the coast road (L1202) in the townland of Na hEachú (Aghoos), in close proximity to the area of the proposed Na hEachú (Aghoos) tunnelling compound, for as long as the pipeline is operational. This property is in the ownership of SEPIL. Otherwise, the minimum separation of the proposed pipeline from existing dwellings will be approximately 240m.

The proposed onshore pipeline runs through the Electoral Divisions (EDs) of Cnoc na Lobhar (Knocknalower) and Gleann Na Muaidhe (Glenamoy) as defined by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). In addition, Cnoic na Daimh (Knockadaff), Muing na Bó (Muingnabo) and Barr Rúscáí (Barroosky) Electoral Divisions (EDs) have also been included in this demographic analysis, with all these identified EDs taken to comprise an overall Study Area of the subject development. It is considered important to include these additional EDs as part of this demographic assessment, having regard to the pattern of dispersed settlement across the vicinity of the pipeline development, and the wider Iorras (Erris) area, which together comprise the local and wider vicinities of the proposed pipeline project.

The proposed onshore gas pipeline, and the overall Corrib Gas Field Development, is envisaged to have an operational life of some fifteen to twenty years. Total employment associated with the overall project will include installation of the offshore subsea facilities, the laying of the offshore and onshore elements of the overall gas pipeline, construction of associated structures and facilities, construction and operation of the Gas Terminal, and ongoing maintenance of the various elements of the project.

6.2 METHODOLOGY

The current EPA Advice Notes on Current Practice in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements (September 2003) sets out a useful framework methodology, which has been followed in preparing this assessment. Issues under the general heading of Human Beings are stated to include:

- Economic Activity – will the development stimulate additional development and/or reduce economic activity, and if either, what type, how much and where?
- Social Consideration – will the development change patterns and types of activity and land use?
- Land Use – will there be severance, loss of rights of way or amenities, conflicts, or other changes likely to ultimately alter the character and use of the surroundings?
- Health and Safety – will there be risks of death, disease, discomfort or nuisance?

The issue of land use is addressed separately in this EIS. The issue of health and safety is a crucial element in the overall pipeline design, and is primarily addressed in Chapter 4, and in associated Appendices of this EIS. This chapter therefore primarily addresses the community issues of the proposed development in terms of its social and economic aspects.

In order to ensure a robust assessment of Community and Socio-economic issues, this chapter separately addresses both matters of demography and employment, and other community issues. In terms of demography and employment, the primary official record and analysis of demographic trends is the CSO Census of Population. The Census records demographic information at State, County, and local levels. In this regard, the smallest geographical unit distinguished by the 2006 Census is the Electoral Division (previously termed District Electoral Division or Ward). The most recent Census was taken on the 23rd April 2006. Analysis of demographic trends has occurred in reference to the most recent Census statistics, which are then compared with similar data recorded in the Census publications of 1996 and 2002. This gives a ten-year profile of population and population change, including population numbers, age profile, household numbers, employment, and social class for the State, County, and defined Study Area. In addition, this analysis of official CSO statistics is compared with the population analysis contained in the Cill Chomáin Development Plan 2006-2010¹, the development plan prepared for Cill Chomáin (Kilcommon) Parish on behalf of Comhar Dún Chaocháin Teo. The demographic analysis of this Development Plan is based upon the official statistics of the 2002 Census of Population (the 2006 Census had not been published at the time of writing this Plan), but also offers a qualitative explanation for the trends in population and employment that lie behind those statistics.

In terms of understanding of community issues, the Cill Chomáin Development Plan is a useful reference for understanding the receiving community environment of the overall planned Corrib Gas Field Development. The Plan, whilst not a Statutory document, has been prepared by a community development co-operative with the stated mission *“to work in a proactive way to promote the linguistic/cultural, infrastructural, economic, educational and social development of the parish of Cill Chomáin and to develop in an integrated and sustainable manner the material and human resources of the area”* (p1). The Plan records that the organisation co-ordinates development at local level, provides information and assistance to voluntary groups in relation to developing and managing projects, sourcing funding, etc. and has worked in partnership with a number of state and semi-state agencies in its efforts to further develop the parish.

¹ Cill Chomáin Development Plan 2006-2010, Comhar Dún Chaocháin Teo, 2006

In addition to this desktop work, in June, September and November 2007, February, April and September 2008, April and May 2009, and April 2010, RPS undertook driving surveys of the local and wider vicinity of the proposed pipeline development, across the Iorras (Erris) area and Cill Chomáin (Kilcommon) Parish, and including Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet), being the largest settlement in this wider area. The purpose of these surveys was to note the general form and function of the local settlements of this area, and their potential as community nodes. It should be noted that these surveys are not intended to comprise an in-depth analysis of these settlements, their populations and facilities, but rather are intended to inform a qualitative consideration of the local and wider vicinity of the proposed development, including the scale and function of settlements, the general distribution of resident and employment populations, and the various communities within this Gaeltacht area.

The methodology for the assessment also includes significant reference to ongoing statutory and non-statutory consultation and public engagement (see Chapter 2). Public consultation has identified issues and concerns from individuals and groups throughout the local and wider vicinities of the proposed pipeline route. Of particular note, the key issues of the proposed onshore pipeline project, and the wider Corrib Gas Field development, were addressed in significant detail in May and June 2009 at a public Oral Hearing held by An Bord Pleanála in respect of the application for Approval of the proposed pipeline development submitted in February 2009. This Statutory forum facilitated extensive input in respect of the pipeline development by the Applicant, Prescribed and non-Prescribed Bodies, and the general public.

Perhaps the greatest ongoing source of information in relation to the communities of the local and wider vicinity of the Corrib gas pipeline development, of Cill Chomáin (Kilcommon), and the wider Iorras (Erris) region, derives from the work of the SEPIL's Community Liaison Officers (CLOs), with a presence in the area since 2001. At present, there are five full-time CLOs working in the area of the proposed development, and through which messages related to the project and its progress – both positive and negative - are communicated. In excess of 150 households are covered by the CLO team. The CLO team also deals with any specific complaints in respect of the project that are made through the Corrib Natural Gas office in Belmullet.

It is acknowledged that, notwithstanding the extensive public consultation and engagement process that has occurred, in particular since February 2007, and the various opportunities for local input and dialogue arising, there has been little positive engagement with persons who are actively opposed to the overall Corrib Gas Field Development. Such inability to consult regularly with these people, many of whom reside in the local vicinity of the proposed route, could potentially have resulted in an information deficit in terms of understanding the significance of the landscape and hinterland, and indeed the causes of such opposition to the project. However, it is fortunate that, in addition to the limited extent of consultation that has occurred with these persons, two books have been published which record the sentiments and concerns held by these local opponents of the project, and which articulate this in a detail that was not forthcoming during the public consultation process.

The first book – *'Our Story – the Rossport 5'* (Small World Media, 2007), edited by Dr. Mark Garavan, details the circumstances of the overall Corrib Gas Field Development from the perspective of the 'Rossaport 5'. The second book – *'The Price of Our Souls – Gas, Shell and Ireland'* (AFRI, 2008), written by Michael McCaughan, gives an insight into elements of the ongoing project and opposition strategy, including the 'Rossaport 5', the Rossport Solidarity Camp, and the nature of activism in general. In addition, as referred to above, *"The Environmental Movement in Ireland"* by Liam Leonard (2007) provides a more academic articulation of the issues surrounding contemporary environmental activism, including specific reference to the experience of the Corrib Gas Project. These books provide an extremely useful resource for undertaking this community impact assessment of the proposed pipeline development as, taken from the viewpoint of local opponents and activists, it provides a clear and unambiguous detail of the grounds of opposition to the project, providing an articulation to those who have chosen, for the main part, to distance themselves from the significant public consultation process carried out by RPS in respect of the modified onshore pipeline route.

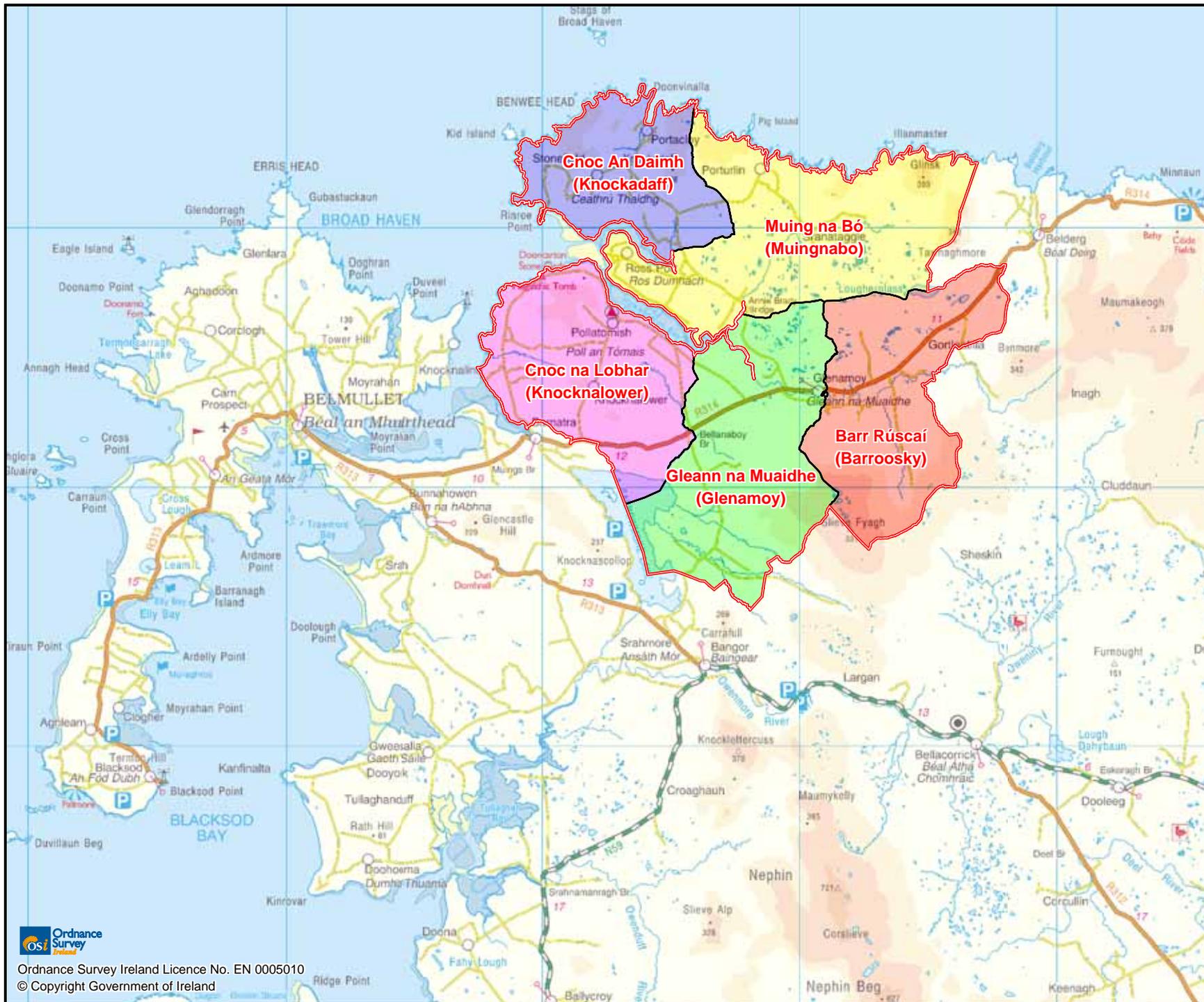
6.3 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

6.3.1 General

The Study Area, as described above, is consistent with the demographic analysis of the Cill Chomáin Development Plan 2006-2010 in identifying the area of Cill Chomáin (Kilcommon) Parish. Table 6.1 below lists the EDs included in the Study Area. The location of these EDs are illustrated in Figure 6.1.

Table 6.1: List of Electoral Divisions and Townlands comprising the defined Study Area

ED No.	ED Name 2002	ED name 1996	Townland
061	Cnoc na Lobhar	Knocknalower	Baile na nAchadh; Barr na Coille; Béal an Atha Buí; Cnoc an Chairn; Cnoc na Lobhar; Gleann an Ghad / Gleann na nGad (Dún Ceartáin); Gort Breac; Gort Milleadha; Greanphoill; Inbhear; Fálach; Moing Eiriún; Poll an tSómais (Cill Chomáin)
056	Gleann Na Muaidhe	Glenamoy	Baile Géimhe Theas; Baile Géimhle Thuaidh; Gleann Chuilinn Íochtarrach; Gleann Toirc Beag; Gleann Toirc Mór; Muing longáin.
054	Barr Rúscaí	Barr Rúscaí	Barr Altaí, Barr Rúscaí, Creagán Mór, Bun Altaí, Gort Liatuille, An Léana Riabhach, Poll Buí, Sraith na Pláighe
062	Muing na Bó	Muingnabo	Abhainn na nIorach; Glinsc; Leacht Murrach; Muing na Bó; Port Durlainne; Ros Dumhach; Sraith an tSeagail.
060	Cnoc An Daimh	Knockadaff	Cill Ghallagáin; Ceathrú na gCloch; Ceathrú Thaidhg; Corrán Buí; Cnoc an Ghairtéil; Port an Chlóidh



LEGEND:

- Overall Study Area
- Mayo EDs

Study Area EDs

- Barr Rúscáí Barroosky
- Gleann na Muaidhe Glenmoy
- Cnoc An Daimh Knockadaff
- Cnoc na Lobhar Knocknalower
- Muing na Bó Muingnabo

Electoral Divisions (EDs)

Figure 6.1

File Ref: COR25MDR0470M2109A03
Date: May 2010

CORRIB ONSHORE PIPELINE

CORRIB
natural gas

RPS

6.3.2 Population Change

The 2006 Census records that the population of the State grew from 3,917,203 persons to 4,239,828 persons between 2002 and 2006, representing an increase of 8.2% in four years. The average annual rate of population increase in this period was 2%, which is the highest on record, and compares with 1.3% for the previous inter-Censal period 1996 - 2002. The 2006 population is the highest recorded population in Ireland since 1861, with 16.9% growth over the ten-year period.

In a similar trend, the population of County Mayo experienced an increase of 5.4% between 2002 and 2006, building on that population increase of 8% in the previous inter-Censal period. This amounts to an 11.1% increase in the county over the ten-year period. In contrast, the Study Area recorded a fall in population of -1.5% over the period 2002 – 2006. However, this is a significant improvement on the population decline experienced during the previous inter-Censal period of -9.5%. Overall for the ten-year period 1996-2006, the population decline experienced in the Study Area of -10.8% is in stark contrast to the comparative significant population growth experienced at State and County level.

Comparative population growth rates for the State, County and Study Area between 1996 and 2006 are detailed in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Population at State, County and Local Level, 1996-2006*

Area	Total Population			% Change		
	1996	2002	2006	96-02	02-06	96-06
State	3,626,087	3,917,203	4,239,848	+8.0%	+8.2%	16.9%
County Mayo	111,524	117,446	123,839	+8.0%	+5.4%	11.1%
Study Area	2,129	1,927	1,899	-9.5%	-1.5%	-10.8%

*Source: Census of Population 1996, 2002 and 2006 (Central Statistics Office).

The reasons stated in the Cill Chomáin Development Plan 2006-2010 for this recorded decline in population in the Study Area are *“a decline in the birth rate, emigration, lack of local employment opportunities, out-migration of young adults to attend third level institutions, many of whom do not return because of a shortage of job opportunities to match their qualifications”*.

The population density of the Study Area of one person per 13 hectares is in sharp contrast to the national average of one person per 1.6 hectares. The respective figure for County Mayo, of one person per 4.5 hectares, reflects the primarily scattered rural population that occurs within the county. In this context, the Cill Chomáin Development Plan gives a practical example of the consequence of such low population density – that of educational provision - recording that *“The low population density and the difficulty in attracting sufficient numbers for specific courses limits the range and number of adult educational opportunities which can be offered”*.

6.3.3 Age Profile

The age profile for the State, County Mayo, and the Study Area over the period 2002 - 2006 is set out in Table 6.3. The results indicate that the percentage of population within the dependent age cohort (0-14 and 65+) in all these areas is in decline. However, it also indicates that this dependent age cohort figure is greater in County Mayo (34.9% in 2006) than that experienced in the State as a whole. Moreover, this dependency is even more pronounced in the Study Area, at 36.6% for the same period.

The working age population of the Study Area increased by 2.9% from 2002 to 2006 – a percentage growth greater than that for the State or County. However, although the working age population in the Study Area has increased over this inter-Censal period, compared with the previous 6-year inter-Censal period 1996-2002, it is, nevertheless, still below the State and County working age profile. Therefore, proportionally, the working age population of the Study Area supports a greater number of younger and older people than County Mayo, and the State as a whole.

Moreover, Table 6.3 confirms that the population age cohort 25-44 is significantly lower in the Study Area than the average for the County or State as a whole. This cohort marginally decreased in the Study Area over the inter-Censal period 2002 – 2006, whereas it marginally increased nationally and in Mayo County.

Table 6.3: Age Profile at State, County and Local Level: 2002 – 2006*

Age Cohort	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Dependent 0-14 & 65+	Working Age Population 15-64
State 2002	21.1%	16.4%	30.1%	21.2%	11.1%	32.2%	67.7%
State 2006	20.4%	14.9%	31.8%	21.9%	11%	31.4%	68.6%
County Mayo 2002	21.5%	14.2%	26.4%	23.2%	14.7%	36.2%	63.8%
County Mayo 2006	20.5%	13.3%	26.9%	24.9%	14.4%	34.9%	65.1%
Study Area 2002	22.1%	14%	23.1%	23.4%	17.4%	39.5%	60.5%
Study Area 2006	20.1%	14.4%	22.2%	26.8%	16.4%	36.6%	63.4%

*Source: Census of Population 2002 & 2006 (Central Statistics Office).

Of note, the Cill Chomáin Development Plan 2006-2010 refers to this higher than national average dependency ratio in the Study Area, and concludes that “*These and other factors such as the reduction of attendance numbers in schools raise concerns about the future sustainability of this community*”.

6.3.4 Household Size

The average household size for the Study Area in 2006 was three persons. This is only marginally higher than that recorded for County Mayo (2.75 persons) and the State (2.81 persons).

Table 6.4: Average Number of Persons Per Household 2006*

Area	2006
State	2.81
County Mayo	2.75
Study Area	3.0

*Source: Census of Population 2006 (Central Statistics Office).

6.3.5 Persons at Work

The total number of people at work in the State increased by 26% between 1996 and 2002. Employment levels in County Mayo also increased significantly, recording an increase of 22% over this period. Both the State and County continued to experience growth in the number of people at work for the subsequent inter-Censal period 2002-2006, albeit at a more reduced level of 18% and 17% respectively. Overall, the percentage of the population of the State and Mayo County recorded as at work by the CSO for the ten-year period 1996-2006 increased by 48% and 43% respectively.

In contrast, the number of persons at work within the Study Area experienced a significant decline (-13%) between 1996 and 2002. However, the number of people at work increased from 395 people to 545 people in the Study Area over the period 2002-2006, representing an increase of 38%, and an overall increase of 20% for the ten-year period 1996-2006. This level of employment growth is still well below the national and county experience, over a period that has, up until recently, been viewed by many economic commentators as one of significant economic and employment growth.

Table 6.5: Employment Levels 1996, 2002 & 2006*

	Population in Employment			% Change		
	1996	2002	2006	1996 - 2002	2002 - 2006	1996 - 2006
State	1,307,236	1,641,587	1,930,042	+26%	+18%	+48%
Mayo County	36,583	44,764	52,277	+22%	+17%	+43%
Study Area	454	395	545	-13%	+38%	+20%

*Source: *Census of Population 1996, 2002 & 2006* (Central Statistics Office).

6.3.6 Principal Occupations

Table 6.6 outlines the principal occupations in the State, County Mayo and the Study Area. The percentage of people involved in primary activities in the Study Area (farming, fishery, and forestry) decreased from 25% in 2002 to 18% in 2006. The Census data confirm that, whilst these remain important economic activities within the Study Area, the number of people involved in such activities has been steadily declining over the inter-Censal period 2002-2006. The Cill Chomáin Development Plan 2006-2010 concurs with this trend, and qualifies it in Chapter 5 – Area Profile – as follows:

“The majority of the population is dependent on primary sector activities such as small-scale low-viability farming and fishing. Farming here is severely disadvantaged due to the poor soil quality (reclaimed bog), the small and fragmented holdings (the average farm size is below thirty acres), the lack of diversity and an ageing farming population. The fishing industry is undergoing radical changes in the context of the European Union Common Fishery Policy’s rules and regulations and this has major implications for local inshore fishermen. Other primary sector activities such as forestry, which provided much employment in the 1980s generate few benefits directly into the local economy today”.



Plate 6.1: Typical agricultural activity in the locality

In addition to this, the Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT Analysis) of the Development Plan also identifies that livelihoods of farmers and fishermen are under threat in view of increasing EU rules and regulations. It also identifies difficulties in attracting younger people into farming and fishing due to these problems currently experienced by farmers and fishermen. There is also the identified threat that educated young people are migrating from the area

to larger urban centres in search of suitable employment opportunities. These recorded qualitative factors seem to support the trends of the official Census statistics.

The Manufacturing Sector and Services Sector in the Study Area experienced 5% and 3% increases respectively in the period 2002 to 2006. It is noteworthy in this specific respect, however, that the Cill Chomáin Development Plan also expresses concern for the future sustainability of this sector, stating as follows: *“There are relatively few opportunities for new employment in the manufacturing/production industry. Geographic isolation, the small population base, inadequate support services (e.g. poor broadband coverage) and the high transport costs of transporting both raw materials into the area and the final product to market are cited as some of the reasons for the lack of development in this area”*.

The building and construction sector now employs the greatest percentage of people in the Study Area. It is a fact that the construction of the Bellanaboy Bridge Gas Terminal remains the largest construction project in this area, and in County Mayo. Having regard to the population trends detailed above, it is reasonable to suggest that a proportion of the persons in the Study Area previously recorded as engaged in primary activities, are now employed in building and construction in the area.

The Cill Chomáin Development Plan makes virtually no mention of the Corrib Gas Field Development, either in terms of the Area Profile or in its Action Plan, notwithstanding the stated threats of population and employment decline in the area. The only reference in the Plan to the overall Corrib Development is a statement in the Area Profile that *“The Corrib Gas Project is currently being developed but it remains to be seen what benefits will accrue to the parish should it proceed. A staffing complement of 27 is proposed. However, its potential negative impact on tourism, fishing and water supply is the dominant economic effect of the project”*. This assessment does not therefore fully reflect local employment opportunities also occurring during the construction phase, and the overall potential positive economic impact of the project.

Table 6.6: Principal Occupations (%) 2002-2006*

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
State 2002	5	13	8	18	6	13	17	10	11
State 2006	4	12	9	18	6	14	16	11	11
Mayo County 2002	11	14	11	13	5	12	15	10	9
Mayo County 2006	9	14	12	13	5	12	15	12	9
Study Area 2002	25	13	20	7	3	8	7	9	8
Study Area 2006	16	17	19	8	3	8	9	14	6

*Source: Census of Population 2006 (Central Statistics Office).

- A. Farming, fishing & forestry managers.
- B. Manufacturing workers.
- C. Building & Construction workers.
- D. Clerical, office administrative & government workers.
- E. Communication & Transport workers.
- F. Sales workers.
- G. Professional workers.
- H. Services workers.
- I. Other workers.

6.3.7 Unemployment

Table 6.7 sets out details of unemployment from the 1996, 2002 & 2006 Census of Population. The 2006 Census records a continuing decline in unemployment levels. The State's unemployment level dropped from 14.8% to 8.8% between 1996 and 2002, with a further marginal drop to 8.5% by 2006. A decrease in unemployment was also experienced in County Mayo, where the rate fell from 16.3% in 1996 to 10.7% in 2002, to 9.1% by 2006.

Again, in significant contrast to the experience of the County and the State, the rate of unemployment in the Study Area remained relatively unchanged for the inter-Censal period 1996-2002, with a rate of 37.3% in 1996 and 35% by 2002. The Study Area, however, did record a significant drop in unemployment in 2006, reducing to a rate of 23%. Nevertheless, the rate of unemployment in the Study Area (including first time job seekers) was consistently much higher than that of the County and State over the period 1996-2006.

Table 6.7: Unemployment Rates 1996, 2002 and 2006 (%)*

	Unemployment Rate			Total Unemployed		
	1996	2002	2006	1996	2002	2006
State	14.8%	8.8%	8.5%	226,728	159,346	179,456
County Mayo	16.3%	10.7%	9.1%	7,141	5,350	5,240
Study Area	37.3%	35%	23%	243	202	163

*Source: Census of Population 1996, 2002 & 2006

Having regard to the Census data presented in Tables 6.6 and 6.7 above, it is reasonable to suggest that loss of employment in primary sector activities in the Study Area has not been significantly offset by diversification into other employment activities, notwithstanding the increase in employment in building and construction, and services.

6.3.8 Social Class

The Census of Population determines social class by the nature of employment, and is therefore useful as a guide to the principal types of occupation in which the population is employed or in which the population is capable of being employed. According to Appendix 2 of Volume 8 of the 2006 Census of Population, the entire population is classified into a hierarchy of social class groups from Class 1 (professional and farmers with large landholdings) to Class 6 (unskilled persons) - Class 7 represents unknown occupations - which are defined on the basis of occupation and level of skill required. The detailed classification used for determining the social class group of all persons at work, unemployed or retired is given in Appendix 7 of Volume 8 of the 2006 Census of Population.

1. **Professional workers:** Including farm owners and managers (200 or more acres).
2. **Managerial and technical:** Including farm owners and managers (100-199 acres).
3. **Non-manual:** Including farm owners and managers (50-99 acres).
4. **Skilled manual:** Including farm owners and managers (30-49 acres).
5. **Semi-skilled:** Including farm owners and managers (0-29 acres and area not stated).
6. **Unskilled.**
7. **All others gainfully occupied and unknown.**

In general, therefore, Social Classes 1 to 3 includes professional workers, farmers on larger landholdings, as well as other non-manual occupations. Social Classes 4 to 7 includes skilled, semi-

skilled and unskilled manual labour, service employment sectors, and farmers on smaller landholdings. Social Class composition data from the 1996, 2002 and 2006 Census of Population has been summarised for the subject areas in Table 6.8 below.

Table 6.8 Social Class Composition 1996, 2002 & 2006 (%)

Social Class	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1 to 3	4 to 7
State 1996	5	21	19	20	13	9	13	45	55
State 2002	6	26	16	17	11	6	18	48	52
State 2006	7	26	17	17	11	4	18	50	50
Mayo County 1996	3	17	16	22	17	10	15	36	64
Mayo County 2002	4	22	16	20	13	7	18	42	58
Mayo County 2006	5	25	16	20	13	5	16	46	54
Study Area 1996	1	7	5	15	39	15	18	12	88
Study Area 2002	1	12	8	14	23	17	25	21	79
Study Area 2006	1	15	13	20	22	10	19	29	71

*Source: Census of Population 1996, 2002 & 2006 (Central Statistics Office).

The proportion of the population of the State in Social Classes 1 to 3 increased from 45% in 1996 to 50% in 2006. An increasing trend is also evident for County Mayo where the proportion of the population in these Classes has increased from 36% in 1996 to 46% in 2006. The proportion of the population in Social Classes 1 to 3 in the Study Area more than doubled between 1996-2006, increasing from 12% in 1996 to 29% in 2006. However, the proportion of the population of the Study Area in these classes was significantly lower than that comparative figure for the County and State.

An analysis of the CSO figures for Social Classes 4 to 6, approximating to skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manual labour, shows that between 1996 and 2006, the proportion of the State's population in these classes decreased from 55% to 50%. The proportion of the population in County Mayo within Social Classes 4 to 6 fell from 64% in 1996 to 54% in 2006. However, 71% of the population of the Study Area were in these Classes 4 to 6 in 2006, a decrease from the corresponding figure in 2002 of 79%, which itself was a decrease from the 1996 figure of 88%.

The Cill Chomáin Development Plan 2006-2010 presents a similar statistical demographic profile to that set out above, in reference to 2002 Census data. It acknowledges that the area experiences severe disadvantage, and summarises the issues in Section 4.5 as follows:

“The parish is entirely rural with an economy dependent for the most part on primary sector activities such as small-scale farming and seasonal fishing. The settlement pattern is largely dispersed and confined mainly to coastal areas. Kilcommon is one of the areas of County Mayo worst affected by the persistent trend in emigration with a declining population and high unemployment. Neglect by successive governments over the years has meant the area is way behind other parts of the county and country in terms of socio-economic development. The parish's disadvantaged status is further recognised by its designation as a CLÁR² area”.

Consistent with this, the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Western Region 2004 outlines that, in general, the economy of the west is rural in nature and has suffered from a high dependency level due to the large number of small farm holdings. The Guidelines identify an urgent need to promote and encourage farm diversification and also to examine alternative means of earning incomes. There is

² CLÁR is an investment programme for disadvantage rural areas, introduced in October 2001

therefore a need to revitalise the area by creating new and alternative employment opportunities. This position is also reflected in the current Draft Regional Planning Guidelines, 2010-2022.

The Regional Planning Guidelines also outline that there is a significant shift in employment activity towards large urban areas, with a resulting decrease in rural populations in the peripheral locations of the Region. This has obvious adverse knock-on effects for the development of a prosperous working community of more isolated rural areas, such as the Study Area.

6.3.9 The National Deprivation Index

The National Deprivation Index 2007³ provides an index for national health and health services research based on 2006 Census data. The original Index, prepared in 1997, was based on the 1991 Census. In 2004, the Index was updated to reflect the then newly-released 2002 Census results. Of note, the Cill Chomáin Development Plan 2006 – 2010 also refers to the methodology and findings of a previous Index based on 1996 Census figures (Section 4.5).

The Index is capable of use as a measure of relative material deprivation. Deprivation is defined in the Index as a state of “*observable and demonstrable disadvantage relative to the local community to which an individual belongs*”. This Index makes the distinction between conditions (physical and social circumstances) rather than resources and income, which allows deprivation to be distinguished from poverty. Thus, people can experience deprivation without living in poverty, and vice versa.

The Index uses a 10-point decile, with 10 as ‘most deprived’ and 1 as ‘most affluent’ or ‘least deprived’. The 2007 index is based on four variables derived from the Census, namely:

- Unemployment (primarily reflecting lack of access to earned income and the facilities of employment),
- Low Social Class (based on the concept of groups whose members possess capacities for the generation of income through their occupations, as opposed to status/prestige associated with particular occupations),
- No Car (suggested as a surrogate for current disposable income and potential access to resources); and
- Local Authority Rented Accommodation (non-owner occupation is suggested as a surrogate for income in the long term).

Of note, previous Indexes included a fifth variable - Overcrowding (reflecting living circumstances and housing conditions); this indicator has been dropped in the 2007 Index, in view of the comparative lack of variation in overcrowding across EDs nationally, as reported in recent censuses.

County Mayo is recorded in the 2007 Index as having eleven of the most deprived Electoral Divisions (ED's) in the country. Map 1 of the Index confirms that these EDs are located within the western and north-western portion of the county, including the Iorras (Erris) area - the local and wider vicinities of the Corrib Gas Field Development. In total, 10,733 persons in the County – or 9% of its population - are recorded as in EDs within decile 10, out of a County population (2006) of 123,738 persons.

The 2007 Index displays comparative results based on both the 2006 Census and previous 2002 Census, and finds that the pattern of deprivation is unchanged over this inter-Censal period across the Iorras (Erris) area – this is confirmed in Map 8 of the 2007 Index. Moreover, Map 3 of the previous 2004 National Deprivation Index confirms that there has been “*Little or no Change*” in deprivation level in this area between 1991 and 2002. These conclusions are consistent with the findings of the Cill

³ ‘The National Deprivation Index for Health and Health Services Research’ Small Area Health Research unit (SAHRU), Department of Public Health & Primary Care, Trinity College Dublin, December 2007.

Chomáin Development Plan 2006-2010, which records the fact that, based on the 1996 Census of Population, the parish of Cill Chomáin (Kilcommon) has suffered severe disadvantage. This confirms a long-term and unchanging pattern of relative material deprivation within the local and wider vicinity of the Study Area.

It is important to note the caveat of the Index that the designation of material deprivation is based on Census figures at ED level, and cannot therefore indicate the relative deprivation of individuals or settlements. In addition, it is reiterated that the Index is not a proxy measure for poverty. However, it does present a broad picture of social and economic circumstances in an area, and suggests an ongoing, long-term, and unchanging pattern of extreme relative material deprivation in the Study Area.

6.3.10 Settlement Survey of the Subject Site and Vicinity

Section 6.1 has defined what is understood by “*Community*” in respect of the proposed pipeline development. The term is not entirely interchangeable with “*Locality*” or “*Settlement*”. It is thus also essential to understand the locational context of the proposed development. As detailed in Chapter 4, the proposed pipeline makes landfall at Gleann an Ghad (Glengad), in the vicinity of the settlements of Gleann an Ghad (Glengad) and Poll an tSómais (Pollatomish); it then traverses Sruwaddacon Bay in a south-easterly direction, before emerging to the surface on the southern side of the Bay, east of the settlement of Na hEachú (Aghoos), and runs from there to the existing gas terminal at Bellanaboy Bridge. This area is defined as the local vicinity of the proposed pipeline.

However, the remainder of the rural community environment of Cill Chomáin (Kilcommon) Parish – the wider vicinity of the proposed pipeline - must also be addressed in this assessment, as it equally forms part of, and experiences the same long-term demographic and structural deficiencies that occurs to the local vicinity of the Corrib Gas Field Development. The potential impact of the project will not be restricted to its local environs, but will have implications for the overall Iorras (Erris) area, and beyond.

In addition, as detailed below, it is reasonable to consider that the pipeline will ultimately have significant and positive implications for other settlements and communities at some remove from the wider environs of the development, for example the larger towns of County Mayo, which are intended to benefit from the provision of natural gas. However, for the purposes of this assessment, no further reference is made to these more distant settlements, and the communities thereof.

The findings of the driving survey are set out below. For consistency, the findings of the survey have been referenced to the Area Profile contained in the Cill Chomáin Development Plan 2006-2010.

THE LOCAL VICINITY OF THE PROPOSED ONSHORE GAS PIPELINE

Gleann an Ghad/Poll an tSómais (Glengad/Pollatomish)

The environs of these settlements benefits visually from their setting within a scenic landscape, formed by uplands on the southern side of the local road, and the expanse of Broadhaven Bay, including the mouth of Sruwaddacon Bay, on its northern side, and beyond to uplands on the northern side of these water bodies. The coast road (L1202) functions as a local tourism driving route; a Bed & Breakfast establishment fronts onto this road, in the vicinity of the mouth of Sruwaddacon Bay. The linear settlements contains public houses - one of which offers accommodation and includes a tea room -, two graveyards – one of recent construction - a holiday hostel, church, post office and primary school. Both scattered and more clustered dwellings occur, primarily along the local road, within an otherwise generally agricultural landscape.

Na hEachú (Aghoos)

A linear settlement of dwellings along a local road which runs generally parallel to the coast road between Poll an tSómais (Pollatomish) and Gleann Na Muaidhe (Glenamoy). Scattered dwellings occur within what is primarily a rural agricultural landscape. The settlement includes a church, a post box and scattered dwellings lining the coast road. East of this settlement, and along the shore road from Poll an tSómais (Pollatomish), is a forest and bogland landscape. Two industrial premises occur along the eastern end of the coast road.

Ros Dumhach (Rossport)

Located on the northern side of Sruwaddacon Bay, a cluster of dwellings occurs at the crossroads of the local roads to Ros Dumhach (Rossport) and to Port an Chlóidh (Portacloy); a similar cluster occurs where the local road to Ros Dumhach (Rossport) Village junctions with the local road that links to the Ros Dumhach (Rossport) coast road. The settlement has a clustered core, including a post office (with a small shop), a transport firm, a shop, a pub, a primary and secondary school, a GAA sports pitch and a pier at its western end. Dwellings primarily line the northern side of the coast road extending out of the village; a very limited number of dwellings occur on the southern side of the coast road, which primarily comprises improved agricultural land.

Local information notes that previously a ferry operated across Sruwaddacon Bay, linking Ros Dumhach (Rossport) to Poll an tSómais (Pollatomish). As a consequence, although the distance by road between these two settlements is relatively large, there are many close community, kinship and family ties that link these settlements.

Béal an Átha Buí (Bellanaboy)

A small cluster of dwellings located in the vicinity of the Gas Terminal site, in the general location of the junction of the R314 Gleann Na Muaidhe (Glenamoy) - Barr na Trá (Barnatra) road, with the local road to Na hEachú (Aghoos).

THE WIDER VICINITY OF THE PROPOSED ONSHORE GAS PIPELINE

Barr na Trá (Barnatra)

A linear settlement at the southwestern end of the Study Area, spread along the local road network at the intersection of the R314 (Gleann Na Muaidhe (Glenamoy)) and local (An tInbhear (Inver)), An Cheathrú Mhór (Carrowmore)) roads, containing a primary school, public house, funeral home, bring centre and petrol station with shop and post office. Scattered dwellings occur in this rural coastal landscape.

An tInbhear (Inver)

A linear settlement on both sides of the local road which extends northwestwards from Barr na Trá (Barnatra) to Poll an tSómais (Pollatomish). The settlement contains a church, community centre, primary school, public house, and scattered dwellings within the village environs, along the local access road network. The result is a relatively populated settlement landscape. Other parts of the settlement environs contain agricultural activity. A roadside sign north of the settlement refers to a knitwear premises, café and holiday cottages.

Gleann na Muaidhe (Glenamoy)

A ribbon of dwellings extends along the R314 to the southwest of the settlement, and across the rural bogland and agricultural landscape. More clustered dwellings occur in closer proximity to the settlement. The linear settlement contains a public house, post office with shop and petrol station, a building and garden supplies premises, primary school, church, community hall, GAA club, Garda station, health centre, and a coach depot. New dwellings are being, or have recently been constructed in the village, while clusters of residences occur along the R314 between Gleann Na Muaidhe (Glenamoy) and Barr na Trá (Barnatra).

An Corrán Buí (Curraunboy)

A small cluster settlement, containing dwellings, a church and community hall, public house, a café, petrol pumps and the operating terminus of a community bus, within an otherwise sparse agricultural landscape.

Port an Chlóidh (Portacloy)

Port an Chlóidh (Portacloy) comprises a cluster of dwellings, set around the sheltered inlet. A B&B is located in this settlement. A graveyard is located on the eastern side of the R314, south of Port an Chlóidh (Portacloy).

Ceathrú Thaidhg (Carrowteigh)

The largest settlement of the north Iorras (Erris) area, of a generally clustered format, containing dwellings, local shop, post office, schools, church, a pub (Stonefield) and a community hall. There are scattered clusters of dwellings on the local road to Port an Chlóidh (Portacloy) and Ceathrú Thaidhg (Carrowteigh) from the R314. The local road extends westwards from the settlement to the townland of Cill Ghallagáin (Kilgalligan), beyond which to the south is Bioshell Teo, pharmaceutical manufacturers and Rinroe Pier, used as a port for inshore fishing.

Port Durlainne (Porturlin)

A small coastal settlement with a cluster of houses set around a pier, and dwellings extending westwards towards the R314. There is significant evidence (e.g. lobster cages and nets) of the active use of the port and pier for inshore fishing. A fish processing facility is located adjacent to the pier.

Beannchar (Bangor Erris)

Though actually located outside the defined Study Area, this settlement occupies an important crossroads setting between the R314 and the Study Area to the north, the R313 regional road to Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet) to the west, and the N59 which links to Ballina and Castlebar to the east, and Mulranny, Oileán Acla (Achill Island), and Westport to the south. The relatively compact settlement includes grocery shops, pubs, cafés, post office, a petrol station and garage and other commercial outlets, including barbers, butchers, hardware, B&B, bookmakers, tool hire and clustered residential development. The town contains a sub office of the Western Health Board. To the west of the settlement is the large Bord na Móna peat deposition site at An Srath Mór (Srahmore).

Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet)

The primary settlement of the Iorras (Erris) area, with a current population of some 2,000 persons. The town contains higher order retail, community, educational, medical and other facilities. This includes a community hospital (though with no casualty service), four supermarkets, banks and Credit Union, other retail outlets (clothes, shoes, hardware etc.), medical related facilities (dentist, doctor, pharmacies), educational facilities (primary and secondary schools), professional services (estate agent, accountancy office, opticians), church, garage, dry cleaners, Garda station, public houses, restaurants, a number of B&Bs and two hotels (one including a leisure centre with swimming pool). The area includes a popular golf course, which brings golf tourism to this area. It also contains a library, Court House and sub-offices of government and semi-state agencies. The settlement functions as the main service centre for the area – the nearest major centres being Ballina and Castlebar. There is a public bus service to Ballina and Castlebar from Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet).

6.3.11 Language

The rich linguistic heritage of the area is an important community identity, with the receiving environment of the pipeline designated as part of a Gaeltacht Area. The 2006 Census indicates that within the Study Area, a much higher percentage of people have responded that they speak Irish on a daily (18%) and weekly (16%) basis outside the education system than in the State as a whole (3% and 6%), and in County Mayo (4% and 7%).

The ‘*Comprehensive Linguistic Study of the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht*’ (2007)⁴ identifies three broad categories of Gaeltacht districts; Category A districts refer to electoral divisions where more than 67% of the total population (3 years+) are daily speakers of Irish; Category B districts refer to electoral divisions where between 44%–66% of the total population (3 years+) are daily speakers of Irish; Category C districts refer to electoral divisions where less than 44% of the total population (3 years+) are daily speakers of Irish. The majority of the Study Area is categorised as a Category C Gaeltacht district, with only Cnoc an Daimh classified as a Category A Gaeltacht district. The Study further records that the ‘*school-going age cohorts report the highest level of usage of Irish in these districts, indicating weak communal use of the language*’. Importantly, the Study states that within Category C Gaeltacht districts ‘*there are small Irish-speaking enclaves which do not readily conform with the sociolinguistic traits common to the rest of Category C*’. Therefore the suggested sociolinguistic profile of the Study Area as indicated in the Study is that Irish is used in varying degrees in social networks and in community and educational institutions.

In this context, it is a notable element of the Mission Statement of the Cill Chomáin Development Plan 2006-2010 “*to (a) preserve and promote the Irish language and culture*”. However, the Plan also acknowledges that “*Irish as a spoken language is coming under increasing pressure however and a concerted effort must be made by the community and the relevant state agencies to ensure its continued survival*”.



Plates 6.2 and 6.3: Road signage indicating the Gaeltacht region.

6.3.12 The Visiting Community

County Mayo as a whole is rich in cultural resources, both natural and man-made, including language, history, literature, archaeology and vernacular building traditions. Visitors are attracted to the region for its considered tranquillity, relatively unspoilt landscape, walking trails, scenic coastline and angling resources, and traditional community structure including language schools, festivals and music resources. Tourism has increasingly become an engine for growth in the County. In parallel, the expansion and marketing of tourism resources in the County has been facilitated by improvements in access infrastructure to, from and within the area and wider region, particularly by road and air.

⁴ Comprehensive Linguistic Study of the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht', NUI Galway (2007). This report was prepared for the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

There is still considerable potential to develop the tourism resource of County Mayo further, particularly in the more remote and sparsely populated areas. The County Development Plan⁵ states that the “*promotion and development of tourism in the County must be underpinned by protection of the natural environment, including appropriate and sensitive development, the provision of infrastructure developments in general and tourist related infrastructure and facilities in particular*” (pg. 21). In this context the Cill Chomáin Development Plan 2006-2010 states that “*There is wide scope for the development of cultural tourism given the area’s rich heritage – walking, angling, bird watching, whale and dolphin watching, diving – the Céide Fields Interpretative centre has the potential to serve as a gateway to the parish, road signage within the parish has been greatly improved, tourist information panels have been designed, community-based festivals, sculpture trail project*”.

Within the Study Area, tourist attractions are primarily focused on daytime attractions generally derived from the local landscape, topography and natural resources. Such attractions include golfing, fishing and angling, horse riding, hill walking, and other specific and scenic tourism resources including the North West Sculpture Trail (Tír Sáile) and the scenic coastline and local beaches. Key elements of the Action Plan of the Cill Chomáin Development Plan concern developing and marketing of these primarily outdoor seasonal daytime activities. It may be the case that any enhancement of this local daytime activity tourism product will continue to be served by existing accommodation in the larger settlements of the wider vicinity of the Study Area, notwithstanding the recorded Action of the Development Plan to aim to increase the provision of registered accommodation in the area.

A number of festivals are held annually in the local and wider Study Area. Iorras (Erris) hosts the biggest Arts festival in Mayo - Féile Iorrais - which is a festival that celebrates the folk traditions of Ireland and the world. A special emphasis is placed on the performing arts, i.e. music, song and dance, through the medium of Irish. Again, it is a fact that most night-time tourism activities tend to occur within the larger settlements of the wider vicinity of the Study Area, and in particular Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet) (refer in this regard to www.feileiorras.org). In this regard, Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet), outside the Study Area, is the nearest location of any significant quantum of visitor accommodation and night-time based tourism facilities.

6.3.13 Community Infrastructure

It is a fact that the Study Area is very peripheral, even within County Mayo, and this presents significant development problems. For example, there is no frequent public transport provision serving the Study Area, or linking the Study Area to the rest of the county or country. This peripherality and remoteness is compounded by the relatively poor regional and local road infrastructure serving the area. The Cill Chomáin Development Plan notes that the poor condition of these roads is due to the fact that they were never intended for the volume and type of traffic now using them. It concludes that “*the physical infrastructure remains sub-standard and the road network is still very much in need of substantial investment*”. Traffic issues are addressed in Chapter 7 and Appendices E and F in the EIS; however, it is essential to appreciate that the existing deficiency in road and public transportation infrastructure in the local and wider vicinity of the site, continues to have significant and negative consequences for the wider community of the Iorras (Erris) area.

The Development Plan also notes other significant deficiencies in community, social and economic infrastructure in the Study Area: the main fishing piers at Rinroe, and Port Durlainne (Porturlin) are in need of major improvement; there is no indoor sports facility in the area; there is significant deficiency in the provision of broadband, which acts as a major constraint to new employment in the area. In response, stated Actions of the Development Plan include lobbying relevant bodies to improve roads within the parish; improvement of bog roads, including in the vicinity of Rossport; lobbying relevant bodies to improve the pier at Rinroe, to upgrade the pier at Port Durlainne (Porturlin), including provision of a marina, and upgrading of the slipway at Ros Dumhach (Rossport); lobbying the relevant

⁵ Mayo County Development Plan 2008-2014, Mayo County Council, 2008

agencies to provide broadband to the area; examining the feasibility of developing a multi-purpose cultural centre; aiming to develop community playgrounds for children at Ceathrú Thaidhg (Carrowteigh), Gleann Na Muaidhe (Glenamoy) and An tInbhear (Inver)/Poll an tSómais (Pollatomish); and investigating the feasibility of developing a multi-purpose indoor sports hall in the area.

6.4 POTENTIAL IMPACTS

For clarity, the potential Community and Socio-Economic Impacts of the proposed development are described separately in terms of demography, employment and community.

6.4.1 Construction Phase

6.4.1.1 Demography

In terms of demography, the construction phase of the proposed development is not expected to have any impact in terms of population change of the Study Area. It is expected that the portion of the workforce not from the immediate area will travel from existing places of residence to the construction site rather than move to the immediate environs of the site during the construction period.

6.4.1.2 Employment

In terms of employment, the construction phase of the proposed onshore pipeline development will take approximately two years on site. Approximately 120 - 140 no. persons will be employed on site at peak construction of the onshore pipeline element of the Corrib development. This primarily construction-related employment will be available to suitably qualified members of the local workforce. Overall, at the peak of construction activity on the overall Corrib Field development project, in summer 2009, when the offshore pipeline was being laid and activity on the construction of the terminal was at its height, some 1,500 people were employed on the project. Because of phasing of work, the peak work force in the Gas Terminal has now declined and will be reduced further before the pipeline workforce mobilises.

The project will also indirectly benefit or consolidate employment in local support industries including building suppliers, caterers, general retail, and accommodation. The potential impact during construction is therefore considered to be significant and positive in terms of employment, particularly having regard to the current recorded structural weakness of employment opportunities in this area.

6.4.1.2.1 Accommodation for Construction Workforce

SEPIIL maintains a confidential database of accommodation details of its workforce. In 2009, of the workforce associated with Terminal and landfall construction aspects of the Corrib Gas project, approximately 30% were permanent residents within the local vicinity; another 30% were permanent residents within the wider County Mayo area, who still typically commute daily between their place of residence and place of employment; and 40% of the workforce permanently resided outside the County Mayo area, and resided in temporary rental or serviced accommodation during the course of the working week, generally returning to their permanent residences at weekends.

As recorded in the workforce database, these latter workers resided temporarily in either rented dwellings, or in serviced accommodation such as B&B's, guesthouses, or hotels. The rented dwellings are virtually entirely located within and in the immediate vicinity of the larger settlements of the wider area, in particular Beál an Mhuirthead (Belmullet) and Bangor, where workers are close to community and amenity facilities such as shops, public houses and restaurants. The extent of serviced accommodation is limited within the immediate vicinity of the pipeline route. Having regard to this experience, the primary locations anticipated to be used by workers for B&Bs, hotels and other such accommodation will also comprise the larger settlements of the area, in particular Beál an Mhuirthead (Belmullet), Bangor and their environs.

6.4.1.3 Community

In terms of other community impacts, a development of the overall nature and scale proposed in this location would have the following temporary local impacts on the local resident, visiting and working community, during construction:

- Increased vehicular traffic (this is addressed in detail in Chapter 7);
- Increased noise (see also Chapter 9), dirt and dust generation (see also Chapter 8);
- Increased severance across existing landholdings (see Chapter 11);
- Visual impact of the works (this is addressed in detail in Chapter 10); and
- Increased disturbance, including temporary restricted local access.

The residential population with greatest potential for such impact is situated in the local vicinity of the Study Area including in particular Na hEachú (Aghoos), Gleann an Ghad (Glengad), Poll an tSómais (Pollatomish), Na hEachú (Aghoos) and Bellanaboy Bridge. While inconveniences and nuisance may be caused to these and other existing communities in the area due to construction, particularly in terms of noise and dust, traffic movements with necessary road diversions etc., as well as by the inevitable visibility of construction works, these impacts are such as could be expected with any significant construction project, and will be short-term and temporary. In this regard such nuisance impacts may be locally significant for the temporary period of construction if not adequately mitigated. The construction methodology, including a construction management strategy, is set out at Chapter 5.

There may be some minor severance of lands, as for health and safety reasons the area of the proposed development, including ancillary development and associated working areas and site compounds, are fenced off. However, such severance, if it occurs, will be restricted to the tunnelling compounds at Gleann an Ghad (Glengad) and Na hEachú (Aghoos), and within the forested lands between Na hEachú (Aghoos) and the terminal site at Bellanaboy Bridge.

In terms of potential impact on the visiting community during the construction stage of the proposed development, it is considered that the major existing and planned visitor attractions are sufficiently removed from the route of the pipeline such as to remain largely unaffected by its construction. It will undoubtedly be possible for visitors to the area who drive or walk within the vicinity of the above ground development at Gleann an Ghad (Glengad) and Na hEachú (Aghoos) to observe local construction activity within this coastal landscape during the construction period, and this may have a local adverse visual impact – such impact is addressed in Chapter 10. That is not to say that such observation of construction activity in itself necessarily causes an adverse impact on the visiting community, but rather may be a focus of local and visitor curiosity.

Overall in this regard, it is considered that the development will have a slight to moderate and short-term localised negative impact upon the residential and visiting communities of the local and wider vicinity of the proposed route during the construction phase, but a significant though short-term potential positive impact upon the working community. Any potential impact of the development, whether positive or negative, during construction will by its very nature be short-term and temporary.

6.4.1.3.1 Local Amenity

There are no active recreational (for example bathing) beaches within Sruwaddacon Bay in the area of the proposed onshore pipeline works. Walking at low tide may require being temporarily restricted during the tunnelling operation in the Bay but only in a scenario where surface intervention is required, which is unlikely and will only occur as an emergency measure. Similarly, leisure, fishing and shellfish foraging are unlikely to be restricted by the proposed works.

There are no exclusion zones defined for the proposed development. There will be, however, areas of privately owned lands at Gleann an Ghad (Glengad) and Na hEachú (Aghoos) where public access

will be restricted during the construction period in the interests of public health and safety. These will be minor and temporary in nature.

As it is proposed to tunnel underneath Sruwaddacon Bay, it is anticipated that there will be no impact to shellfish foraging. In the unlikely event of an intervention pit being required, areas of shellfish foraging will be avoided if possible. If it is necessary to use an area of shellfish foraging, the potential impact in terms of community and socio-economics will be short-term, temporary and localised.

It is not envisaged that the construction of the proposed onshore gas pipeline, or indeed the overall Corrib Gas Field Development, will have any negative impact upon the extent of use of the Irish language within this Gaeltacht area. Due to the development of an Irish Language Policy for the operational phase of the project, however, there is potential for a positive impact on the language – its spoken and written usage – to take place in the next 15 to 20 years.

6.4.2 Operational Phase

6.4.2.1 Demography

No residential accommodation is proposed as part of the onshore pipeline development, or indeed the wider Corrib Gas Field Development. An existing uninhabited house, in the ownership of the Applicant, on the L1202 coast road in the townland of Na hEachú (Aghoos) will require to remain unoccupied for the duration of the operation of the Corrib Gas Field development. No alteration in population numbers in the local area is therefore envisaged to occur. However, it is anticipated that a significant proportion of the permanent workforce of the Terminal will continue to reside in the local and wider vicinities of the Study Area, and will thus serve to consolidate population levels in this area. This would result in a slight positive impact on demography in this area.

6.4.2.2 Employment

In terms of employment, the operation and management of the ongoing Corrib Gas Field Development, over its envisaged lifetime, will establish a new permanent employment base in the Study Area (Bellanaboy Bridge Gas Terminal). As set out in more detail in Section 6.6.2, it has been estimated by Goodbody Economic Consultants⁶ that, during the operational phase, some 55 people will be employed directly and 76 people indirectly on the overall project, in a variety of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled activities. Thus, the project has the potential to remain as a significant and long-term employer in this area. This is a significant and positive impact of the proposed development, particularly having regard to the socio-economic profile of the Study Area recorded above, based on Census statistics.

The positive impact of the overall Corrib Gas Field development in terms of employment is also confirmed by reference to the Area Profile of the Cill Chomáin Development Plan 2006-2010, which identifies a structural weakness of the area as the *“Limited number of quality employment opportunities to match educational attainment”*, and the current *“Overdependence on primary sector activity and fear to develop new ideas”*. The development will continue to offer an employment alternative to the declining importance of primary sector activities in this area, recorded both in official Census employment data, and in more qualitative terms in the 2006 Cill Chomáin Development Plan. Thus, the proposed development is consistent with the stated Opportunity in the 2006 Plan to *“Examine the feasibility of developing new initiatives as an alternative to traditional farming, fishing and industry”*. Equally, it will assist in combating the stated threat of *“Educated young people migrating to large urban centres in search of appropriate employment opportunities”*.

⁶ *Economic Assessment of the Gas Project*, Goodbody Economic Consultants, November 2007.

6.4.2.3 Community

The proposed onshore pipeline development, as part of the overall Corrib Gas Field Development, is likely to have the following impacts during its operation:

- Create new jobs and demand for local services, benefiting the working community of the area;
- Positive impact, in terms of the provision of a new energy source to the wider residential and working communities of County Mayo, the West Region and the State as a whole;
- Associated short-, medium- and longer-term community gain, by means of a structured community investment programme; and
- Limited but unavoidable sterilisation of lands along the permanent wayleave of the pipeline. This is addressed in Chapter 11 in respect of land use and development potential.

As detailed above, the overall Corrib Gas Field Development will remain as a significant employer and income generator for the local area, and the wider region. This has the potential to benefit the local and wider communities of the Study Area, which is a significant and positive impact.

The gas pipeline will be buried, including in a tunnel under Sruwaddacon Bay, and will, therefore, have no visual impact during the operational phase of the development on the landscape or surrounding environs. The proposed landfall valve installation at Gleann an Ghad (Glengad) will be designed and located so as effectively not to be visible within the wider coastal landscape (see Chapter 10). As such, it will not intrude upon the surrounding landscape, and thus the level of impact for the local residential and visiting community following construction of the pipeline project is anticipated to be negligible.

There has been an associated positive impact for local traffic movements, resulting from the upgrading works undertaken on the L1202 and other local and regional roads, associated with the construction of other elements of the overall Corrib Gas Field development (see Chapters 4 and 7).

The operation of the proposed development, and the overall Corrib Gas Field Development, will have a potentially positive impact upon the use of the Irish language in this Gaeltacht area. As an Irish Language Policy is being developed by SEPIL for use on the terminal at Béal an Átha Búí (Bellanaboy) during the operation of the Corrib development, there will be potential for increased use of the language, verbally and through the use of written materials and signage on the terminal, both in the workplace and by staff. SEPIL will actively seek to promote active or passive use of the Irish language both within the workplace and elsewhere throughout the area.

It is acknowledged that the overall Corrib Gas Field Development has impacted upon the local and wider residential and working communities of the local and wider vicinities in terms of creating a conflict between individuals in favour of the development and those not in favour of the development. During both the construction and operational phase of the development, these communities may have ongoing queries and/or concerns relating to the project or aspects thereof. The failure to address such queries and concerns on an ongoing basis could lead to an unnecessary and avoidable adverse impact. It is notable in this regard that a number of recommendations of the Cassells Report relate to community issues, specifically recommending greater local and public consultation on the project and greater local involvement in ongoing monitoring of the project, with a pro-active and transparent system for dealing with local concerns.

The Cassells Report also recommended the associated provision of appropriate local economic benefits, including local development investment and compensation. The assurance of a significant long-term investment programme for the area, prepared and delivered in partnership with the local residential and working communities, can potentially ensure the realisation of the elements of the Action Plan of the Cill Chomáin Development Plan 2006-2010.

6.4.3 “Do-Nothing” Scenario

Under this scenario, there would be no alteration to the resident and visiting communities in the vicinity of the Study Area.

Specifically in reference to the proposed onshore pipeline development, no significant or likely adverse impact with regard to employment will arise. However, in the absence of this specific development, it is unlikely that continuing significant employment in construction of the Gas Terminal, and subsequently in its ongoing operation, would occur. As a consequence, there would be no increase in employment in the Study Area, nor indeed the economic reward arising from such employment. There will also be no benefit for support employment, such as building supplies and other retail activities. Finally, the social benefits arising from such employment, in terms of work experience, both in the construction and operational phases, will not occur.

Overall, and notwithstanding the provisions of the Action Plan in the Cill Chomáin Development Plan 2006-2010, it is likely that established long-term and widespread structural patterns of employment and unemployment will remain in this area. In this context, and in the absence of any other significant employer and income generator in the area, it is considered likely that the community of the Iorras (Erris) area will continue to experience the highest levels of material deprivation, as recorded in the National Deprivation Index 2007.

6.5 MITIGATION MEASURES

6.5.1 Construction Phase

The proposed development will not result in any significant adverse potential impact on population and demography during the course of construction. Neither is such construction envisaged to have any adverse impact upon matters of local cultural identity and continuing usage of the Irish language in this Gaeltacht area. As such, no remedial or reductive measures are required.

Directly, the proposed development, and the overall Corrib Gas Field Development, will result in the creation of a number of jobs in the construction engineering and support sectors; these jobs will be available for appropriate persons within the local area. It is considered that the skills and experience obtained during construction of the project will benefit workers as they subsequently seek or undertake other work, following completion of construction on the project. Indirectly, it will also benefit associated sectors and local businesses such as building supply and materials. This is considered a positive impact of the proposed development. No remedial or reductive measures are therefore required.

The principal remedial measures required to minimise the potential impacts of disturbance on the local resident, working and visiting communities during the construction phase relate to the application of appropriate methods of construction and appropriate hours of operation. With respect to the possible adverse impacts associated with dirt and dust generation arising from the construction works generally, a number of measures are proposed as outlined in Chapter 8. These will be contained in an overall and detailed Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the construction phase (See Chapter 5 and Chapter 11). This EMP will also include appropriate and adequate road signage, and a structured system for public information, communication, consultation and feedback (as outlined in Chapter 2).

In this latter regard, the continuing availability of SEPIL's CLO team in the community, listening and responding to queries that individuals or groups may have, will facilitate the ongoing communication of issues with the technical team, which will allow for work practices to be altered if necessary.

6.5.2 Operational Phase

No adverse impacts relating directly to community and socio-economic issues are predicted during the operation of the overall Corrib Gas Field Development, of which the proposed pipeline forms an intrinsic element. Therefore no remedial or reductive measures are considered necessary.

There will be a structured compensation strategy, to compensate for loss of land and property, either temporarily or permanently, and for other impact as agreed to be appropriate (see Chapter 11). The details of the compensation strategy do not form a part of this assessment.

The dissemination of adequate accurate information, combined with ongoing community consultation, is crucial during both the construction and operational phases of the development, and will assist in minimising current potential conflict and/or misunderstanding of the overall scope and extent of the Corrib Gas Field Development over the long-term. The importance and significance of addressing public concerns or queries that may arise in respect of the proposed development and indeed, the overall Corrib Gas Field Development cannot be overestimated. Such potential adverse impact in this regard will be mitigated via ongoing pro-active and transparent community consultation.

6.5.3 The Community Social Investment Programme

The Corrib Gas Partners have established a short-, medium- and longer-term Community Social Investment Programme for the entire Cill Chomáin (Kilcommon) Parish, and the wider Iorras (Erris) area – the local and wider vicinity of the project. Until 2009, the Programme was made up of a Local Grants Programme and a Third-Level Scholarship Programme, open to students attending the four local secondary schools – Coláiste Chomáin, Ros Dumhach (Rossport); Our Lady's Secondary School, Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet); St Brendan's College, Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet), and St Patrick's College, Lacken Cross. In January 2009 SEPIL launched the long-term Corrib Natural Gas Erris Development Fund, with a front-loaded fund of €5m for the first three years. These three strands – the Local Grants Programme Third-Level Scholarship Programme and Erris Development Fund - now comprise SEPIL's Community Investment Programme. While the Programme is open to all community, voluntary and sporting organisations within the Erris area, projects brought forward by groups within the parish of Cill Chomáin are prioritised in the case of the Local Grants Programme and Erris Development Fund. These strands are addressed in more detail below.

Corrib Natural Gas Erris Development Fund

A key recommendation of the Cassells' Report (2006) was that the Corrib Gas Partners set up a long-term development fund for Iorras (Erris). Specifically, it stated that the fund '*should be significant, should be front-loaded and should continue for the duration of this project*' and that it '*should seek to contribute to the long-term economic, social and environmental development of Rossport, Kilcommon Parish and the Erris area generally*'. In December 2007 an Advisory Board comprising representatives of local development agencies (Mayo County Council, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Leader, Mayo County Enterprise Board and the Council for the West) was appointed to help establish this Fund. The Corrib Gas Erris Development Fund was launched in January 2009, with two initial investments of €200,000 each to the Belmullet GAA Club and the RNLI.

The objectives of the fund, which will operate throughout the life of the overall Corrib project, are to contribute to the long-term economic, social and environmental development of the Iorras (Erris) area and to contribute to capacity building in the area by providing both financial and non-financial assistance which will benefit the local community. Phase 1 of the fund (2009 – 2012) has a budget of approximately €5 million. The fund provides funding to projects in the following categories:

- i. Enterprise & Knowledge (including education)
- ii. Marine & Environment (including tourism)
- iii. Sports & Culture

In advance of the commencement of this long-term fund, a number of one-off financial grants were made in the Study Area and its environs. These included a grant of €150,000 to Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet) GAA Club towards the redevelopment of its clubhouse and playing field facilities, and a grant of €130,000 to the Glenamoy Community Angling Association to redevelop the fisheries at Gleann Na Muaidhe (Glenamoy). Since the establishment of the fund, over 50 applications have been received and over €2.2m has been allocated to 14 different projects within the Iorras (Erris) community.

The Local Grants Programme

An additional Local Grants Programme has been operating since 2006 - on an ad hoc basis up to 2008. In that year, the Programme was reviewed, clear criteria were applied, and a number of community information events were held to increase awareness of the revised programme. Increased engagement took place within the community and as a result the number of applications significantly increased, including participation from Cill Chomáin (Kilcommon). This Programme, supported by the contractors developing the Bellanaboy Bridge Gas Terminal, invites applications from local groups and organisations seeking funding – up to a maximum of €10,000 – for specific projects. All applications for funding under this Programme are assessed against three criteria:

- **Sustainability** – a sustainable project is one that continues to benefit a community. In practice, this means that the project must be financially viable and solvent. Short-term projects must have sufficient funds or firm commitments for funding in order to complete the project/event within a realistic timeframe.
- **Local** – all applications should be local to, and be of benefit to, the Iorras (Erris) area. However priority is given to applications from communities that are in close proximity to the project site, ie Cill Chomáin (Kilcommon).
- **Inclusive** – projects should demonstrate benefits to a general community, and not just to a few individuals. Priority will be given to initiatives which bring groups and individuals together in delivering their project or event, and which can demonstrate effective strategies to attract participation from all sections of the community.

In 2008, a total of 127 no. community groups applied for funding under this Programme and 83 no. groups were subsequently awarded grants of between €1,000 and €10,000. In 2009, 124 applications were received, 94 organisations were recommended for funding, with a total allocation of €350,000. Of these funded organisations, 14 were from Cill Chomáin (Kilcommon).

The Scholarship Programme

In 2007, the Corrib Gas Partners launched a scholarship programme for students from the four participating secondary schools in the Iorras (Erris) area (detailed above) to facilitate their going on to third level studies. The programme offers ten scholarships, each worth €4,000 per annum, to students studying engineering, natural or physical sciences, mathematics, business, finance, IT or operational health and safety. An Independent Selection Board was appointed to assess all applications and to award the scholarships; the Board is made up of local people including the former editor of a local newspaper, a parish priest, and a former school principal. All board members have local experience of involvement in education, either through teaching or involvement on school boards of management.

This programme ran successfully from 2007 to 2009, with a review thereafter. Some €450,000 was invested by SEPIL and its partners in the project. In 2009, a review of the programme was undertaken by the selection board and a recommendation was made that the programme be continued for a further three years, due to its widely accepted success as a sustainable investment programme. It was further proposed that the programme be open to students pursuing courses in any discipline, as distinct from the previously more limited range of applicable disciplines. SEPIL accepted these recommendations and, in January 2010, a public commitment was made to continue the programme for a further three years, with the new qualifying criteria in place.

6.6 RESIDUAL IMPACT

6.6.1 Construction Phase

The proposed development is not predicted to have any likely and significant impact on the population and demographic profile of the area during the construction phase. There may be some increased demand for local residential accommodation services arising from the workforce involved in the construction of the development; however this will be short-term and will not alter the established population profile of the area.

Approximately 120 - 140 no. persons will be employed on site at peak times during the construction of the onshore pipeline element of the Corrib development. The construction phase is likely to benefit suitably qualified members of the local community. The construction of the overall Corrib development will also support employment in associated sectors such as building supply and materials, as well as local businesses. It will also provide valuable experience for construction workers to utilise on other construction projects. This is considered to comprise a significant and positive impact.

It is predicted that there will be a slight and temporary adverse impact on the residential communities in the local vicinity of the subject site arising from general disturbance and inconvenience during construction works. However, the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures and adherence to a construction programme and associated management of works procedures, including the provision of adequate public information, and ongoing community liaison, will ensure that this inconvenience is minimised.

The Social Investment Programme will function as a planned and targeted programme of community gain, directed specifically at the needs of the local residential community; this is a significant and positive community impact of the proposed development. Overall, however, this source of short, medium, and long-term community gain will provide a significant and positive impact for the local and wider vicinity of the proposed Corrib Gas Field Development.

6.6.2 Operational Phase

The proposed development is not predicted to have any likely and significant impacts on population and demography of the area during the operational phase. It is more likely the case that the ongoing operation of the overall Corrib Gas Field Development, of which the proposed onshore pipeline comprises one crucial element, will assist in consolidating population levels within the Study Area, particularly in the context of recorded declining population levels in this area.

The overall Corrib Gas Field Development will directly employ approximately 55 no. people during its operation at the Bellanaboy Bridge Gas Terminal, in a variety of occupations, both skilled and unskilled. Based on the classification of people by principal occupation and social class profile above, much of the population in the local vicinity of the subject site are likely to be qualified to benefit from the type of new employment which will be created. This is a significant positive impact for the local and wider community. In addition, it is estimated that additional employment for approximately 76 no. people will be created, or existing employment consolidated, in support services including construction providers, catering, transport and logistics, and retailing.

Of note in this latter regard, whilst the Corrib Gas Field Development will remain an important employer in its receiving environment, with resulting economic benefit for the area, this in no way conflicts with other provisions for Enterprise and Employment contained in the Action Plan of the Cill Chomáin Development Plan 2006-2010. In particular, Action No. 1 seeks to examine the feasibility of developing new employment initiatives as an alternative to traditional farming, fishing, and industry. Whilst the Corrib Gas Field Development is not explicitly stated in this regard, it is clear that it will comprise an important local employment source which will assume much of the local impact arising from the envisaged continuing local decline in primary sector employment activities.

The conclusions of this assessment are supported by the findings of the Economic Assessment of the Corrib Gas Project (2007) carried out by Goodbody Economic Consultants⁷ on behalf of the Corrib Gas Partners. Notwithstanding the fact that the local and wider vicinity of the proposed route comprises an area identified for decades as having the highest levels of material deprivation in the country, the Economic Assessment concludes that the construction and operation of the overall Corrib Gas Field Development will have significant benefits for both the local and national economy. The principal findings of the Economic Assessment are as follows:

- During the construction phase of the project, the local economy of County Mayo will directly benefit by approximately €181m by means of purchases from local suppliers and contractors, while the National economy will benefit by a contribution of €521m to Irish GDP.
- During construction an average of 815 no. jobs will be created in the Irish economy both by direct and indirect employment associated with construction of the overall project.
- The operation of the Corrib Natural Gas Field Development will support some 130 no. jobs. Approximately 55 no. people will be employed directly. A further 75 no. jobs will be created to supply the needs of the field and its workforce.
- The operation of the gas field will have a huge impact on GDP, by replacing imports of gas with Irish production. Without the Corrib field, Ireland will be importing 94% of its total energy needs by 2015. When Corrib is at peak production it could account for up to 17% of total energy needs, and imports of energy could drop to 76% of total needs.
- Over its lifetime, the Corrib Gas Field Development will contribute over €3bn to Ireland's GDP, supplying up to 60% of the country's natural gas needs at peak production. The gas field will have an operating life of 15-20 years.
- The Corrib Gas Field Development, as well as being a benefit for the residents of the region will make the West of Ireland a more attractive investment location. Successful completion of the project could lead to further investments in gas distribution and electricity generation in the region.

Overall, it is predicted that the proposed development will have a significant and positive impact on the local, regional and national economy. As well as being of benefit to the local communities of the Iorras (Erris) area, there arises the wider regional community impact of implementation of national policy promoting balanced regional development, facilitated by the provision of natural gas in County Mayo and the Western Region. This will act as a catalyst for economic development and investment.

The implementation of the Community Social Investment Programme developed in respect of the overall Corrib Gas Field Development represents a significant and positive community impact, and a significant community gain for an area identified as suffering the highest levels of material deprivation in County Mayo, and in the State as a whole. The Community Investment Programme will continue to operate for the operational phase of the development.

6.4.4 “Worst Case” Scenario

The failure of the proposed development to proceed to operation will not in itself lead directly to any profound or irreversible consequences in terms of population and employment change. However, and notwithstanding the provisions of the Action Plan in the Cill Chomáin Development Plan 2006-2010, it is reasonable to suggest that population and employment levels in the area will continue to decline, as

⁷ Economic Assessment of the Corrib Gas Project, Goodbody Economic Consultants, November 2007.

declining traditional employment activities are not replaced with any significant and alternative employment source which can also offer indirect economic and employment benefits.

Furthermore, if the project is not completed, it is considered that it would be extremely difficult to attract other energy investors into natural gas exploration in Ireland. As such, such failure to proceed is considered in itself to comprise a worst-case scenario.