A Brief History of the Corrib Project

1996  Corrib Gas Field was discovered.

2001  Consents and approvals to develop the field, as well as planning permission, sought by the Corrib Developers.

Planning permission granted and subsequently appealed. A revised application was submitted and later approved.

2002  Consent for the Corrib Plan of Development and consent to construct the associated gas pipeline together with a Foreshore licence were granted.

2004  Planning Permission for the onshore terminal was granted, subject to a number of conditions.

Construction work commenced but was later suspended.

2005  Mr. Peter Cassells was appointed to act as mediator with the community in the region and SEPIL.

2006  Independent safety review by Advantica published. This report found that the pipeline design and proposed route should be accepted as meeting or exceeding international standards in terms of acceptability of risk.

2007  In implementation of Mr. Cassells’ recommendation to route the pipeline away from houses in Rossport, and following a public consultation, a proposed new route selected. Further planning permission was sought.

2008  A new application for the revised pipeline route, supported by an EIS submitted to both the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in accordance with the Gas Acts and to An Bórd Pleanála in accordance with the new Strategic Infrastructure legislation enacted in 2007.

As the new application proposed no variation to the offshore element of the pipeline and in order to meet the projected date for delivery of first gas, an application was made to the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources to construct this element of the pipeline under the existing 2002 consent during the summer of 2008. Consent to commence these works was given following consideration of the updated Environmental Management Plan required to be submitted by the developer prior to commencement of works.

This programme of works was completed and the offshore element of the Corrib gas pipeline is in place.

On 5 December the North West Mayo Forum, which is separate from the planning and statutory consent processes, was established by the Minister for
Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and the Minister for Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs with the following objectives.

(i) To offer a positive opportunity for furthering the socio-economic development of the North West Mayo Region, through a coordinated engagement involving a number of Government Departments and State bodies, with members of the local community and their public representatives.

(ii) To provide an opportunity for dialogue between all parties with an interest in the project and to help promote understanding of how the Corrib Project is regulated by providing the local community and their public representatives with an opportunity for a coordinated engagement with the Government Departments and other State bodies that have a regulatory role in relation to the project.

The Forum has met on 6 occasions since its establishment.

2009

Due to agreed alterations to the width of the wayleave between the developer and An Bord Pleanála in January 2009, the 2008 application was withdrawn with a new application submitted to the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources on the 9 February 2009. SEPIL’s decision to modify the route of the pipeline between landfall and the terminal resulted in further applications to both An Bord Pleanála for a development consent and to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for a new Foreshore Licence.

On 2 November 2009, An Bord Pleanála issued a letter on the Corrib Gas application for an onshore pipeline. While the letter was not a final decision on the application, the Board’s position was, as per Section 182 of the Planning and Development Act (as amended by Section 4(5) of the Strategic Infrastructure Act) i.e. it was provisionally of the view that it would be appropriate to approve the development were certain alterations (specified in the notification) to be made. It included:

- a refusal of the proposed pipeline route on grounds of public health and safety
- an indication that certain other aspects of the application are acceptable to the Board
- an invitation to significantly modify the route of the proposed pipeline

The Board invited SEPIL to re-route over 5.5km of the 9km route. This alternative route would:

- go through Swuwaddacon Bay which is a Special Protected Area (SPA) under the Birds Directive
require the submission of a new Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), including a new ecological report to allow both the Board and the Minister to make an appropriate assessment of the proposal under the Habitats Directive.

2010 The developer decided to comply with the Board’s recommendation and on 31 May, 2010 submitted parallel applications to both the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and to An Bord Pleanála along the revised route under Swuwaddacon Bay. These applications are were separately evaluated, by An Bord Pleanála re-convening its Oral Hearing on 24 August, 2010 in Belmullet Co. Mayo and by the Minister process pursuant to sections 13 and 40 of the Petroleum and Gas Acts respectively.

DCENR was assisted in its assessment by safety and environmental consultants. A public consultation period was initially undertaken between 30 June and 30 July 2010. Following receipt of additional information from the developer a second period of public consultation was held between 9 November and 10 December 2010.

2011 Having considered the expert views of Enviorn and Entec, together with legal advice and the results of the public consultation process, on 25 February 2011, subject to 47 conditions, the then Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Mr. Pat Carey, granted consent to Shell E&P Ireland Limited, acting on behalf of the Corrib Gas Partners:-

to construct a gas pipeline from the Corrib gas field subsea facilities to the Corrib gas terminal at Bellanaboy, Co. Mayo; and

carried his approval for an addendum to the approved Plan of Development for the Corrib gas field development.

2015 Having completed construction of the Corrib Pipeline in September 2015, SEPIL applied for Consent to Operate the upstream Corrib Gas Pipeline, which includes both offshore and onshore elements, under Section 40 of the Gas Act, 1976 (as Amended).