

SEPTEMBER 2007

# Corrib Onshore Gas Pipeline Community Update

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[www.corribgaspipeline.ie](http://www.corribgaspipeline.ie)

## Summary of the Route Selection Process

Over the past seven months, RPS has been engaged in the process of identifying an alternative route for the onshore section of the Corrib gas pipeline. This follows on from a recommendation made by the mediator, Mr Peter Cassells, and accepted by SEPII to modify the onshore pipeline route.

During these months, RPS has consulted with landowners, the local community and statutory bodies in relation to the route selection process of finding an alternative pipeline route.

A number of public open days, workshops and other engagements have been held to discuss the route selection criteria that will be used in the selection process, and to consult on the eight indicative corridors that were identified in the first phase of route selection.

As a result of this community consultation and further technical and environmental assessments, RPS has identified three corridors as emerging preferred corridors.

This brochure describes the three emerging preferred corridors as well as the next steps in the route selection process.



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## Why is the Currently Approved Route Being Moved?

A number of people have asked RPS why the onshore gas pipeline is being moved when the original Rossport route has received statutory approval and is safe?

An environmental impact assessment in 2001, identified the currently approved Rossport route based on environmental and technical constraints. On this basis, SEPIL submitted an application for consent under Section 40 of the Gas Act, to the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources. Consent was subsequently granted in April 2002.

## Independent Recommendations:

### 1. Advantica – Independent Safety Review

In late 2005, the Government appointed Advantica to carry out an Independent Safety Review to investigate community concerns into the onshore section of the pipeline.

This report found that:

*“Limiting the pressure in the onshore section to pressures no greater than 144 bar is believed to be both practical and an effective measure to reduce risk (and will only be required in the early years of the life of the pipeline because the pressure in the gas wells will decline naturally as gas is extracted).”*

This report concluded that

*“Provided that it can be demonstrated that the pressure in the onshore pipeline will be limited effectively, and that the recommendations made elsewhere in this report are followed, we believe that there will be a substantial safety margin in the pipeline design, and the pipeline design and proposed route should be accepted as meeting or exceeding international standards in terms of the acceptability of risk and international best practice for high pressure pipelines”.*

## Independent Recommendations:

### 2. Cassells – Mediation Report

Mr Peter Cassells was appointed by the Minister to undertake a mediation process in late 2005. His report and recommendations were published in July 2006, following months of consultations with the local community as well as SEPIL.

His report stated:

*“While implementation of the Advantica recommendations will make the pipeline safer, some local people are concerned about the proximity of the pipeline to certain houses. For the proposed route, the proximity of the pipeline to the nearest normally occupied house is approximately 70 metres”.*

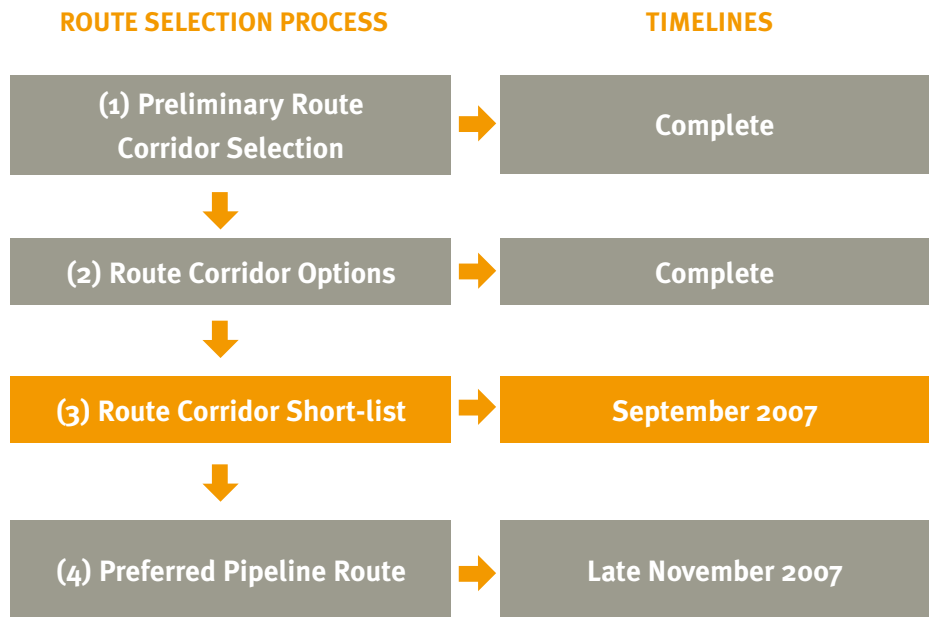
Source	Recommendations:	What is Being Done to Implement these Recommendations?
Advantica	“We recommend that the pressure in the onshore pipeline should be limited to no greater than 144 bar”	SEPIL will <b>limit the pressure to 144 bar</b> . This will be done by using a pressure limitation valve facility at or near the landfall.*
Cassells	“I am recommending, therefore, that Shell modify the route of the pipeline in the vicinity of Rossport to address community concerns regarding proximity to housing”	The pipeline route modification process will among other environmental and technical constraints, seek to increase the distance between the pipeline and the nearest occupied dwelling.

\* landfall is where the pipeline comes ashore

## Where is RPS in the Route Selection Process?

On the 12th of June, RPS hosted a public information evening in the Broadhaven Bay Hotel in Belmullet, where they presented eight indicative route corridors.

Since the information evening, RPS has continued to consult with the community, landowners and statutory bodies, as well as carrying out technical and environmental assessments of the eight identified corridors. As a result of this consultation and the above studies, three corridors (Corridors A, B and C) have been short-listed for further investigation. Refer to map overleaf for more detail.







# The Short-Listing Process

During the short-listing phase of the route selection process RPS has, where access has been possible:

- Consulted with landowners and the local community to seek input on the eight indicative corridors.
- Conducted on-site surveys with specialist input in areas such as terrestrial and marine ecology.
- Conducted walk-over surveys to explore specific areas of interest.
- Engaged a number of RPS and external experts in areas of environment, planning and engineering to input into the short-listing process.

The information gathered has been assessed against the route selection criteria (outlined below), which were developed following detailed consultation with, and input from, the local community. These criteria are also in line with best practice for infrastructural and pipeline projects.

## Community Criteria

- Maximise safety
- Minimise impacts on people
- Proximity to dwellings/ public centres
- Planning / land use

## Environmental Criteria

- Minimise impacts on wildlife / habitats
- Avoid impacts on archaeology / cultural heritage
- Minimise visual impacts

## Technical Criteria / Project Requirements

- Pipeline construction and operation
- Minimise environmental disturbance
- Optimise pipeline design and operation
- Minimise pipeline length
- Location and access to landfall
- Project requirements (including costs and schedule)



## The Emerging Preferred Route Corridors

Corridors A, B and C have emerged as the preferred corridors based on the information gathered to date. These corridors will now be subject to further technical surveys by a number of experts such as archaeologists, ecologists, pipeline engineers, marine specialists etc.

While the remaining corridors have not been entirely ruled out, the main reasons why A, B and C emerge as the preferred corridors are:

- These corridors are relatively short and have a direct approach to the terminal site at Bellanaboy.
- They utilise the approved landfall at Glengad, and sections of the previously approved route which was found to be environmentally acceptable during the statutory approvals process in 2002.
- The corridors are compatible with the existing offshore pipeline design.
- All of the corridors will increase the distance between the pipeline and the nearest dwelling.

It should be noted however, that further studies of the short-listed corridors may reveal new information that could lead to local deviations.

Some of the constraints identified with the other corridors, include for example:

- Proximity to housing clusters around Inver (Corridors D and E).
- The presence of Annex I Priority habitat under the Habitats Directive (Corridors H, D and F).
- The presence of recorded archaeological finds and areas of high archaeological potential (Corridors D and E).
- Technically difficult landfall locations – such as narrow North facing Bays on steep terrains with difficult access (Corridors F and G).
- Reduced gas recovery from Corrib gas field due to increased pipeline length and overall reduced pressures (Corridors F and G).

## Short-List of Corridors



### Corridor A

#### Community

- As this corridor diverts north from the previously approved route, this corridor achieves separation distances from dwellings which are greater than 70 metres, and it avoids population clusters over much of its length.
- This corridor mainly traverses areas of improved agricultural land, plantation forestry and peatland.
- This corridor traverses an area of commonage to the east of Rossport.

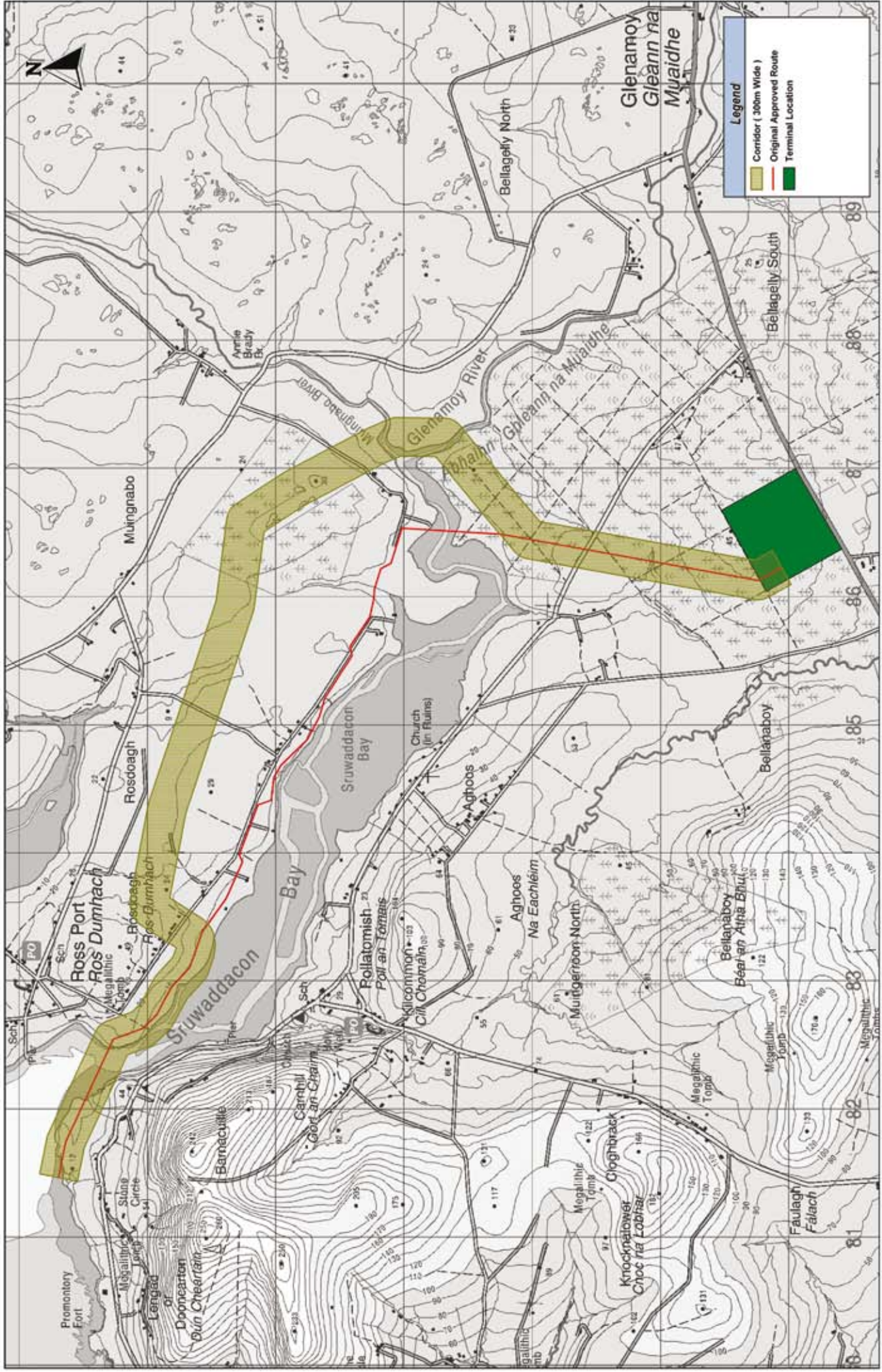
#### Environment

- The offshore approach and landfall construction will have minimum impact on the Broadhaven Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC.
- The short crossing of Sruwaddacon Bay and two river crossings (Glenamoy and Muingnabo) are all within the Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC.
- Appropriate construction techniques will ensure that the environmental impact is minimised.
- This corridor traverses intact blanket bog (approximately 1km) within the Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC. The Glenamoy Bog Complex also comprises a wide range of habitats including hard and soft coastal habitats. Lowland atlantic blanket bog dominates the site and intact blanket bog is a priority Annex I habitat under the EU Habitats Directive. The SAC has recently been extended to include the Glenamoy and Muingnabo Rivers and many of their tributary streams. The estuarine intertidal approaches to Sruwaddacon Bay are important feeding grounds for over wintering Light Bellied Brent Goose, an internationally protected species.
- This corridor is located in close proximity to protected views and protected scenic routes.
- There are no recorded archaeological sites within this corridor.

#### Technical

- This corridor is approximately 10.5km long.
- This corridor will use the landfall location at Glengad that was part of the previously approved route and which is compatible with the off-shore pipeline design.
- The potential location for the pressure limiting landfall valve at Glengad has good access for monitoring and maintenance.





# Corrib Onshore Pipeline - Corridor A

Scale 1 : 50,000

## Short-List of Corridors



### Corridor B

#### Community

- As there are no dwellings within the 300 metre corridor, this corridor achieves separation distances from dwellings which are greater than 70 metres. This corridor also avoids the population clusters of Aghoos.
- This corridor mainly traverses areas of improved agricultural land and areas of plantation forestry.

#### Environment

- The offshore approach and landfall construction will have minimum impact on the Broadhaven Bay SAC and the Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC.
- This corridor includes two crossings of Sruwaddacon Bay within the Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC for approximately 0.5km and 1km, respectively.
- Appropriate construction technologies will ensure that the environmental impact is minimised.
- This corridor is located in close proximity to protected views and protected scenic routes.
- There are no recorded archaeological sites within this corridor.
- Sruwaddacon Bay's estuarine habitats are important feeding grounds for over-wintering wildfowl species, in particular Brent Geese (which is protected under the EU Birds Directive) and wader populations. The estuarine intertidal approaches to Sruwaddacon Bay are important feeding grounds for over wintering Light Bellied Brent Goose, an internationally protected species
- The Bay also forms an integral part of the Glenamoy River salmonid fishery and is important for salmon and sea trout. This is important ecologically but is also important from a local fisheries and tourism perspective.

#### Technical

- This corridor is approximately 8.3km and is mostly on land. The longer of the two crossings of Sruwaddacon Bay would be approximately 1km long.
- This corridor will use the landfall location at Glengad that was part of the previously approved route and which is compatible with the off-shore pipeline design.
- The potential location for the pressure limiting landfall valve at Glengad has good access for monitoring and maintenance.





## Short-List of Corridors



### Corridor C

#### Community

- The corridor runs through Sruwaddacon Bay SAC for a large part and therefore avoids population and housing clusters.

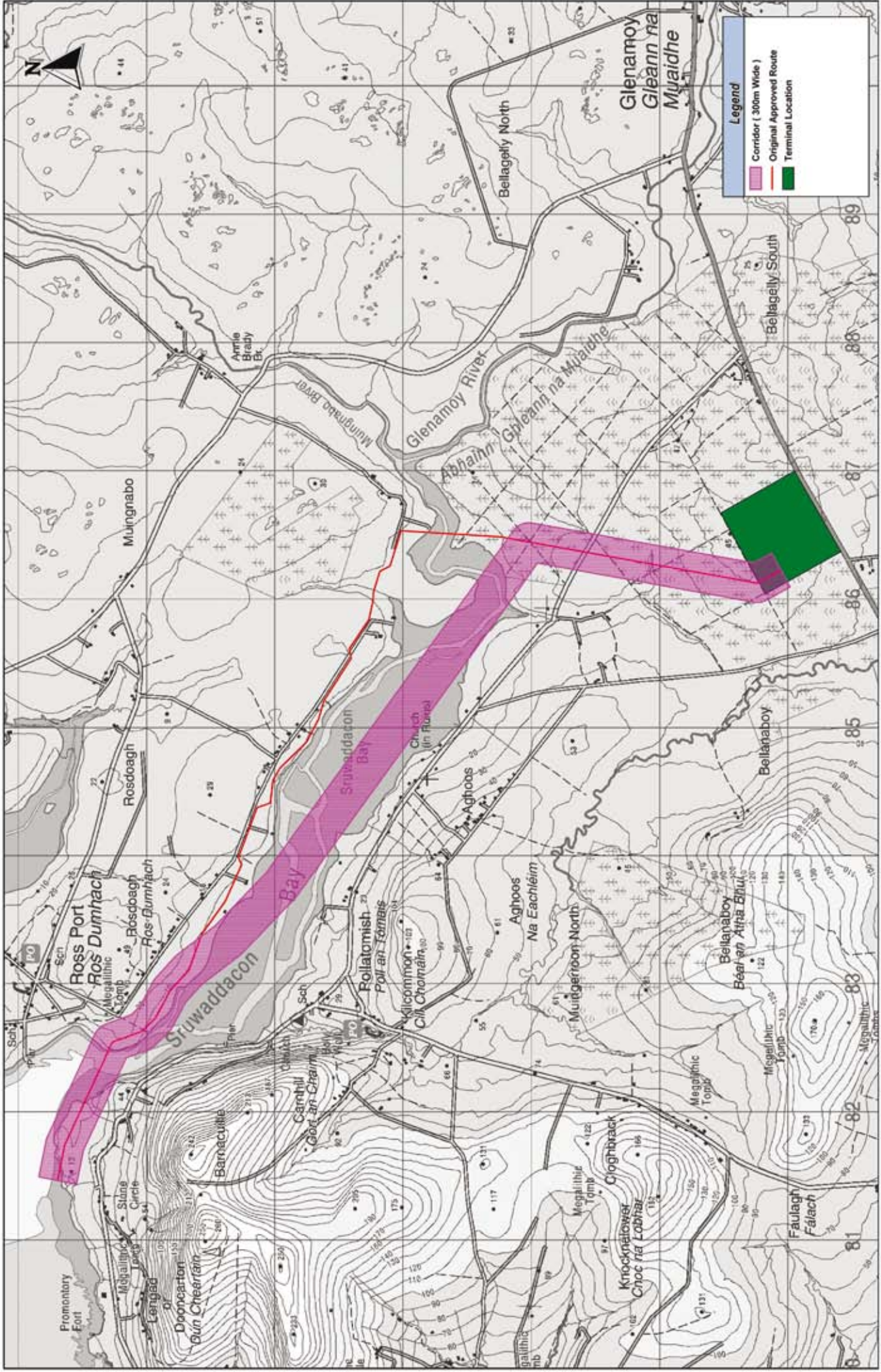
#### Environment

- The offshore approach and landfall construction will have minimum impact on the Broadhaven Bay SAC and Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC.
- The corridor traverses a long stretch (4.5km) of Sruwaddacon Bay SAC.
- Appropriate construction technologies will ensure that the environmental impact is minimised.
- The corridor is located in close proximity to protected views and protected scenic routes.
- There are no recorded archaeological sites within this corridor.
- Sruwaddacon Bay's estuarine habitats are important feeding grounds for over-wintering wildfowl species, in particular Brent Geese (which is protected under the EU Birds Directive) and wader populations. In particular, the estuarine intertidal approaches to Sruwaddacon Bay are important feeding grounds for over wintering Light Bellied Brent Goose, an internationally protected species.
- The Bay also forms an integral part of the Glenamoy River salmonid fishery and is important for salmon and sea trout. This is important ecologically but is also important from a local fisheries and tourism perspective.

#### Technical

- This is one of the shortest corridor options at approximately 8.2km.
- A number of construction technologies used elsewhere in the world are currently under consideration to construct the pipeline in the Bay.
- This corridor will use the landfall location at Glengad that was part of the previously approved route and which is compatible with the off-shore pipeline design.
- The potential location for the pressure limiting landfall valve at Glengad has good access for monitoring and maintenance.





# Corrib Onshore Pipeline - Corridor C

Scale 1 : 50,000



## What's Next in the Process?

The next stage of the route selection process will involve the following steps:

- Continued consultation with landowners and the local community through our full time RPS staff in our Project Office in Seafield House, Belmullet.
- Further technical studies of corridors A, B and C, with potential variations of these corridors. These will be carried out by specialists such as ecologists, archaeologists, pipeline engineers etc.
- Ground investigations i.e. trial holes and boreholes (geotechnical investigations).
- Further assessment of technical and construction related issues.
- Consultation with statutory and other bodies (such as the National Parks and Wildlife Services, The North West Regional Fisheries Board etc.).
- It is expected that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the final route will be finalised in late November, and will then be submitted for statutory approval to An Bord Pleanála, and the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

## Further Consultation Opportunities

RPS welcome input from landowners and the community in relation to the short-list of corridors and on any aspect of the onshore gas pipeline.

Fill out the enclosed feed back form, or contact Lorraine Herity, in the RPS Project Office, Seafield House, Belmullet on (097) 20720 to make an appointment to discuss the project.

Over the coming months RPS will:

- Continue to consult with landowners.
- Keep the community up-dated on the route selection progress, through the issue of community update brochures, news bulletins and the use of the new Corrib Gas Pipeline website – [www.corribgaspipeline.ie](http://www.corribgaspipeline.ie)
- Provide a ‘focus week’ on a monthly basis, whereby members of the project team (planning, technical, environmental, consultation) will be available to discuss particulars of the project with the community. This will continue on a monthly basis until a final route is chosen.



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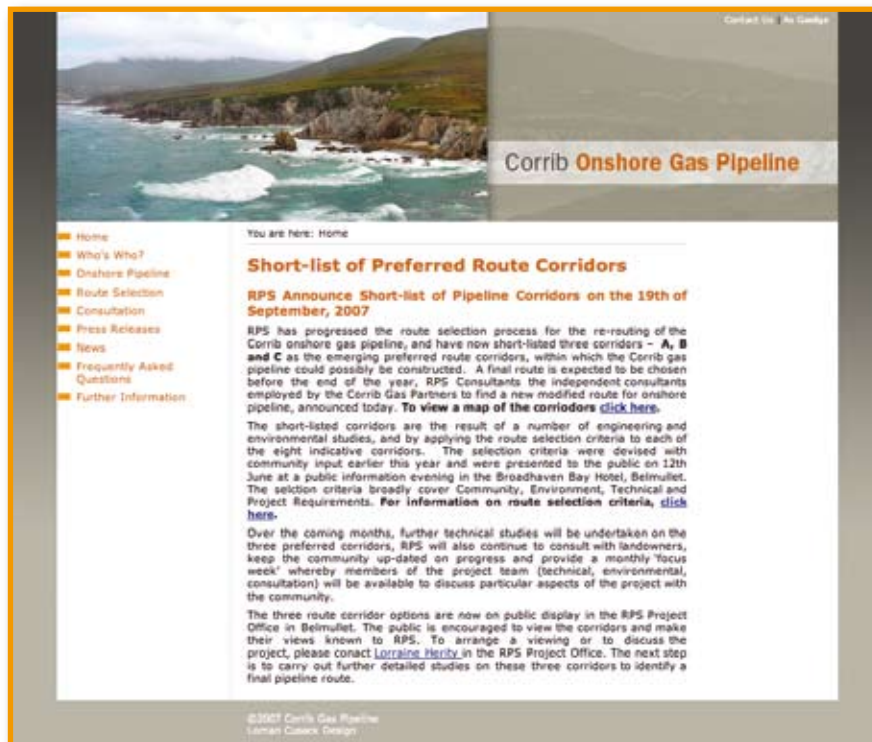
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# Launch of New Onshore Gas Pipeline Website

RPS and SEPIL have launched a new website for the onshore gas pipeline – [www.corribgaspipeline.ie](http://www.corribgaspipeline.ie)



This website has been designed to inform the community and landowners in relation to the re-routing process for the onshore pipeline. The site will contain information in relation to the route selection process, frequently asked questions (FAQ's), upcoming events, project timelines, opportunities for consultation and news etc.

We welcome any suggestions you may have to improve this service.

[www.corribgaspipeline.ie](http://www.corribgaspipeline.ie)