

EN
E-015351/2015
Answer given by Mr Vella
on behalf of the Commission
(19.2.2016)

The Commission asked for further information from the Irish authorities on the Unconventional Gas Exploration and Extraction (UGEE) Joint Research Programme, managed by the Environment Protection Agency (EPA).

Based on information provided to the Commission, the contract was awarded after an open procedure and an evaluation of the various tenders received. The selected contractor CDM Smith Ireland Ltd. leads a consortium of commercial consultancies, academics, a geological research institution and a legal firm and had to return a declaration of conflict of interest. As to the involvement of Queen's University Belfast, according to information received, Queen's University decided that the identified researchers were not able to fulfil their agreed responsibilities, which resulted in a change in the allocation of tasks within the consortium.

EPA does not foresee a public consultation on interim reports but indicated that "the research findings will be reviewed by external experts, presented at public seminars and the final reports made publicly available"¹ on the EPA website.

The Commission is unable to comment on the EPA report itself, since it has not yet been published. In the absence of any indications of an infringement of EU law, this question primarily is a matter for the national authorities concerned.

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http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/research/ugeejointresearchprogramme/FINAL_Response_Document_to_PublicConsultation.pdf