

# **Conflict between Economic and Environmental Interests | Sample Answer**

**Discuss how conflict may develop between economic interests and environmental interests as a result of exploitation of resources, give two examples.**

**(2018 Q7.c)**

## **Example 1 – Corrib Gas Field**

The exploitation of natural gas at the Corrib gas terminal in Co. Mayo is a good example of how a conflict may develop between economic and environmental interests.

The Corrib gas field is located 70km off the coast of Mayo and represents very significant economic advantages for Ireland. There is an estimated two billion euro reserve of gas in the Corrib field which would supply Ireland with gas for twenty years.

This will allow for a reduction in dependency on imports of other fuels e.g. from Russia. It will also have a positive impact on our balance of payments by reducing demand on imports.

The project will also provide employment for the surrounding region and offer a huge boost to the local economy with 700 staff needed in the build and after that 100 permanent jobs on site.

This would greatly benefit the local economy of Mayo and specifically the town of Belmullet. The Irish government will also receive tax payments from Shell on all profits generated from operations at Corrib.

However, environmental interests' conflict with the economic interests in the area, Locals are concerned about the proximity of the proposed pipeline to local houses and the risks that are associated with such a pipeline.

In Nigeria similar pipelines constructed by Shell have leaked causing a serious impact on local biodiversity and also a loss of life.

They believe that construction of the refinery in Mayo will cause air and water pollution and that this would pose a serious health and safety risk for locals in the area.

These differences have led to serious conflict in the region over the last number of years and this has resulted in huge delays to the project. The Shell to Sea group was set up to campaign against the project.

Five campaigners named the 'Rossport Five' went to prison for 94 days for causing problems at the site.

In 2011 the EPA granted permission for the development of the onshore pipeline. However, relations representing both sides of the argument remain tense.

## **Example 2 – Brazilian Rainforest**

Another example of this can be seen in the Amazon rain forest in Brazil. This is in relation to the commercial logging found there.

Timber from the tropical rainforest in Brazil is an important natural resource with global demand for hardwoods such as mahogany and teak increasing. Prime wood like this can fetch up to 16,000e.

Brazil experiences high levels of corruption especially with government with their President Jair Bolsonaro rigging elections and then receiving payment to grant licences to commercial logging companies to exploit the environment.

However, environmental interests' conflict with economic interests in this area. According to environmentalists, this clearance of the tropical forest is unsustainable and is having serious environmental projects.

The tropical rainforests are vital for reducing the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The vast rainforests of the world work as carbon sinks as trees take in carbon dioxide and produce oxygen.

Drastically reducing the number of trees through deforestation increases CO<sub>2</sub> and therefore contributes to an increase in the world temperatures and subsequently global warming.