7.1 Overall Assessment Methodology

The gas transmission pipeline is a 435 km long underground pipeline. Santos proposes to obtain by way of pipeline land tenure a registered easement or right-of-way (ROW) with a width of 30 m. The ROW is the area required to install and maintain the pipeline in a safe and efficient manner.

Route selection commenced by identifying alternative routes between the CSG fields and Gladstone. The preferred route was selected on a basis of GIS modelling of physical and environmental constraints, assessment of aerial photography, and helicopter reconnaissance. Once a preferred route was identified, a study corridor approximately 5 km wide was selected. It was proposed that subject to the identification of relevant constraints that the pipeline would be located somewhere within the corridor.

The process of undertaking a traditional impact assessment for the gas transmission pipeline corridor was not practicable due to its large area; therefore an alternative assessment methodology was required. Santos met with relevant Government agencies to agree on the most practicable and efficient means of undertaking the pipeline's impact assessment. This resulted in the following assessment methodology:

- As part of a Phase 1 assessment, undertake an intensive desktop assessment of the entire gas transmission pipeline corridor. This desktop assessment included mechanisms such as literature reviews, database searches, interpretation of relevant mapping layers, and liaison with local community groups;
- Following the desktop assessment, areas that were potentially sensitive were identified. A ROW alignment was then selected to avoid as many of the potentially sensitive areas as possible while remaining within the corridor;
- Sensitive areas that could not be avoided (e.g. those extending across the entire corridor) or those within 500 m of the ROW were then subjected to field ground-truthing; and
- The sensitive areas to be surveyed were reviewed to determine similarities between the locations. For example, if the pipeline potentially affected more than one area of the same endangered regional ecosystem (ERE) not all areas of that ERE were surveyed because the management controls to be implemented at each area would be similar.

Section 7 then identifies the potential environmental impacts arising from the proposal and a description of proposed mitigation measures to minimise the impact of the gas transmission pipeline development activities. Where additional targeted studies may be required following finalising of the ROW alignment (e.g. more focussed contaminated land investigations), these have been identified in the mitigation measures and will be included as part of any required Phase 2 protocol site specific investigations in the pipeline Environmental Management Plan (EMP).

In addition, the final location of the ROW will be discussed with the directly impacted landholders and other relevant stakeholders. The outcome of these discussions is expected to be documented by:

- An agreement with each of the relevant landholders for the grant of a registered easement which provides for the payment of compensation to the landholder and access rights for Santos; or
- Where an easement cannot be registered (such as roads), an agreement with each of the landholders (such as a local authority) setting out the agreement for the construction and operation of the pipeline on that land.

These agreements are expected to address issues relating to the placement of the pipeline adjacent to existing land uses. Management controls will be developed (in accordance with the above mentioned Phase 2 protocol) to specifically manage the impacts at those locations.