



AQUIND Limited

PEIR CHAPTER 1

Introduction

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHAT IS AQUIND INTERCONNECTOR?

- 1.1.1.1 AQUIND Limited (the 'Applicant') is proposing to construct and operate an electricity interconnector between France and UK ('the Project'). This Project includes a new marine and onshore High Voltage Direct Current ('HVDC') power cable transmission link between Normandie in France and the south coast of England, converter stations in both England and France, and will also include fibre optic data transmission cables.
- 1.1.1.2 With a net capacity of 2000 megawatts ('MW'), the Project will significantly increase the cross-border capacity between the UK and France, increasing competition and improving security of the electricity supply in each of the respective countries. To enhance the security of supply and the availability of its power transfer capability, the Proposed Development is being designed as two independent pairs of cables, each with the net capacity of 1000 MW and a total import capacity of up to 2000 MW¹.
- 1.1.1.3 The French and UK elements of the Project will be consented within their respective jurisdictions. Consents and licencing for the UK elements will cover that part of the Project located in England and the UK marine area. The UK Onshore elements of the Project and elements of the Project within the UK Marine area comprise together the 'Proposed Development'.
- 1.1.1.4 Further introductory information regarding the Proposed Development is provided in Section 1.5 of this Chapter of this Report, and a full description of the Proposed Development, including the options that are to be consulted upon by the Applicant at this time, are detailed in Chapter 3 of this Report.

1.2 WHAT IS THIS REPORT?

- 1.2.1.1 This Preliminary Environmental Information Report ('PEIR') is one of the documents produced in connection with the consultation on the proposals for the Proposed Development. This PEIR presents the current understanding of the potential likely significant effects of the Proposed Development at the time of the consultation.

¹ The Project will comprise two independent symmetrical monopole HVDC links ('poles'). Each pole will have the export (leaving a national transmission system) capacity of 1037.5 MW and the import (incoming into a national transmission system) capacity of around 1000 MW, net of transmission and conversion losses, with the total import capacity of up to 2000 MW. Throughout this Report, the Project's capacity is referred to as 2000 MW.

- 1.2.1.2 The purpose of this PEIR is to provide information to enable members of the public (including local communities), local authorities, statutory bodies and people whose land or interests would potentially be affected to understand the likely environmental effects of the Proposed Development so that they may provide meaningful feedback. All comments made by consultees during this consultation will be taken into account by the Applicant and addressed as necessary prior to the proposals for the Proposed Development being finalised.
- 1.2.1.3 This PEIR presents the technical information regarding the potential likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development and it should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Document, which is also produced in connection with the consultation, and which provides a non-technical explanation of the proposals.
- 1.2.1.4 This PEIR and the Consultation Document provide information regarding the options for the Proposed Development that are being consulted upon, as well as pertinent information regarding the key aspects and impacts of the Proposed Development. The Consultation Document also explains how you can provide feedback on the Proposed Development and how this will be taken into account in the finalising of the proposals.

1.3 WHY IS AQUIND INTERCONNECTOR BEING CONSENTED AS A NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT?

- 1.3.1.1 On 19 June 2018, the Applicant sought a direction from the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (the 'SoS') under section 35 of the Planning Act 2008 (the 'PA 2008') (HM Government, 2008) that the Proposed Development be treated as development for which development consent under the PA 2008 is required.
- 1.3.1.2 On 30 July 2018, the SoS issued a Direction confirming that the Proposed Development by itself is nationally significant for the reasons set out in the Direction, and directing that the Proposed Development, together with any development associated with it, is to be treated as development for which development consent is required. A copy of the Direction is provided at Appendix 1.1 to this PEIR.

1.4 WHY IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT BEING UNDERTAKEN FOR AQUIND INTERCONNECTOR?

- 1.4.1.1 The requirement for an environmental impact assessment to be undertaken for nationally significant infrastructure projects ('NSIPs') is provided for in the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the 'EIA Regulations') (HM Government, 2017).

1.4.1.2 The EIA Regulations set out the types of development for which an environmental impact assessment ('EIA') is required to be undertaken, which are detailed in Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations.

1.4.1.3 The Proposed Development is not a type of development listed within either of Schedules 1 or 2 of the EIA Regulations. However, due to potential for significant environmental impacts to arise in connection with the construction and operation of the Proposed Development, the Applicant has opted to voluntarily undertake an EIA in support of the DCO Application.

1.4.2 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF AN EIA?

1.4.2.1 The purpose of an EIA is to ensure that the likely significant environmental effects associated with development are understood and properly taken into account when decision makers consider the application for that development. The EIA will identify the likely significant effects on the environment (negative and positive) arising in connection with the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.

1.4.2.2 The environmental topics which are being assessed in connection with the Proposed Development are outlined in Table 1.2 below:

1.5 AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

1.5.1.1

In broad terms, the Project will comprise the following components; HVDC marine cables, HVDC underground cables, High Voltage Alternating Current ('HVAC') underground cables, HVDC converter stations in the UK and France and fibre optic data transmission cables and associated infrastructure as illustrated in Plate 1.1 and summarised in Table 1.1. A detailed description of the Proposed Development is reported in Chapter 3 of this PEIR.

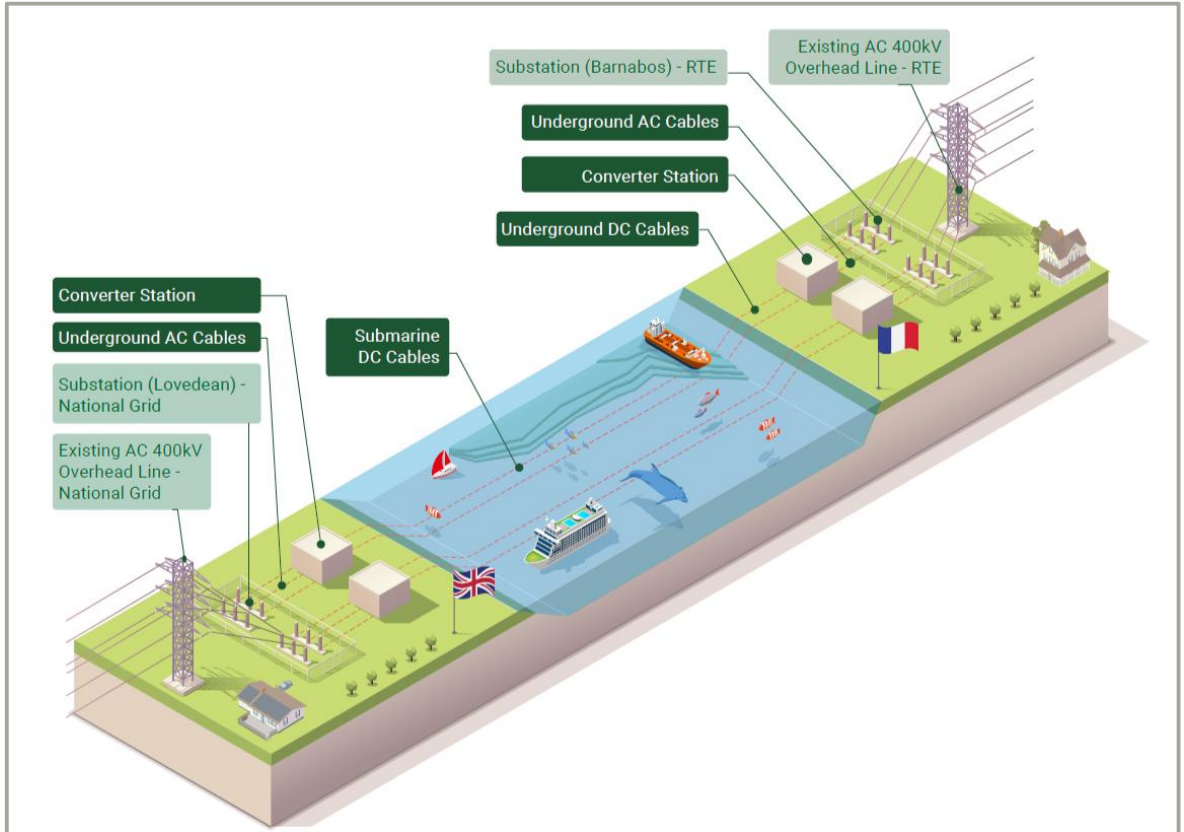


Plate 1.1 - AQUIND Interconnector project components

Table 1.1 – Summary of the Project

| | UK | France (excluded from the DCO) |
|----------------|--|--|
| Onshore | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HVAC cable route from National Grid substation at Lovedean to the AQUIND Converter Station (<0.4 km). • AQUIND Converter Station and access road. • HVDC cable route (including fibre optic data transmission cables) from the AQUIND Converter Station to the UK Landfall (approximately 20 km). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HVDC cable route (including fibre optic data transmission cables) from the France Landfall at Pourville to the AQUIND Converter Station (approximately 37 km). |

| | | |
|---------------|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure associated with fibre optic cables at the Converter Station and close to Landfall. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HVAC cable route from the AQUIND Converter Station to the RTE grid connection at Barnabos (approximately 2 km). Infrastructure associated with fibre optic cables at the Converter Station and close to Landfall. |
| Marine | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marine HVDC cable route (including fibre optic data transmission cables) between UK Landfall at Eastney and the UK Exclusive Economic Zone ('EEZ') (approximately 109 km). The as-surveyed Marine Cable Corridor runs from below Mean High Water Spring in the UK to the UK boundary of the EEZ and is the corridor within which the marine cables will be located. The Inshore Cable Corridor is identified as that part of the corridor that runs from Mean High Water Springs to the full extent of the 12 nm UK territorial limit. The Offshore Cable Corridor is identified as that part of the corridor that runs from the 12 nm UK territorial limit to the UK/France EEZ boundary line. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marine HVDC cable route (including fibre optic data transmission cables) between the France Landfall at Pourville and the French Exclusive Economic Zone (approximately 73 km). |

1.5.1.2 The use of the term 'Proposed Development' will differ throughout this Report depending on whether it is being used in reference to the onshore or marine components of the Proposed Development. The information in Table 1.1 differentiates the project components relevant to the Onshore 'Proposed Development' and the marine 'Proposed Development'.

1.6 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS PEIR?

1.6.1.1 The PA 2008 and the EIA Regulations require the Applicant for a proposed Development Consent Order ('DCO') to make preliminary environmental information available during the consultation to be carried out in connection with it. Typically, this information takes the form of a PEIR.

- 1.6.1.2 The Department for Communities and Local Government ('DCLG') Guidance, titled 'Planning Act 2008: Guidance on the pre-application process' expects applicants to provide "*sufficient preliminary environmental information to enable consultees to develop an informed view of the project*" (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015).
- 1.6.1.3 Further, the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note 7: Environmental Impact Assessment: Preliminary Environmental Information, Screening and Scoping provides that a PEIR should "*enable consultees (both specialist and non-specialist) to understand the likely environmental effects of the Proposed Development and helps to inform their consultation responses on the Proposed Development during the pre-application stage*" (Planning Inspectorate, 2017).
- 1.6.1.4 While the timing of the provision of PEIR is not prescribed, in practice this will normally be at the same time as the formal pre-application public consultation (required under the PA 2008). Similarly, the format of preliminary environmental information is not prescribed.
- 1.6.1.5 PINS Advice Note 7 recommends that applicants clearly explain that the information is 'preliminary', that the applicant is actively seeking comments on this information, that the applicant gives meaningful consideration in both the EIA and the Proposed Development design to any comments received through consultation.
- 1.6.1.6 Therefore, it is important to confirm that the information presented within this PEIR presents the emerging information on the assessment of significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development and where there is uncertainty about the degree of the impact that is anticipated, the assumptions made are clearly identified. Confirmed impacts will be reported within the Environmental Statement to submitted in support of the application for the DCO.

1.6.2 THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PEIR IN THE EIA REGULATIONS

1.6.2.1 Regulation 12 of the EIA Regulations provides that "preliminary environmental information" means information referred to in regulation 14(2) which has been prepared by the Applicant and is reasonably required for the consultation bodies to develop an informed view of the likely significant environmental effects of the development (and of any associated development).

1.6.2.2 The information referred to in Regulation 14(2) which this PEIR is required to provide in a preliminary form is as follows:

“(a) a description of the proposed development comprising information on the site, design, size and other relevant features of the development;

(b) a description of the likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment;

(c) a description of any features of the proposed development, or measures envisaged in order to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment;

(d) a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the applicant, which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the development on the environment;

(e) a non-technical summary of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (d); and

(f) any additional information specified in Schedule 4 relevant to the specific characteristics of the particular development or type of development and to the environmental features likely to be significantly affected.”

1.6.2.3 This PEIR is also informed by Legislation, Policy and Guidance as summarised in Appendix 1.2.

1.6.3 THE STRUCTURE OF THIS PEIR

1.6.3.1 This PEIR is formed of four volumes:

- Volume 1: Main Text;
- Volume 2: Figures;
- Volume 3: Appendices; and
- Volume 4: Non-technical Summary.

1.6.3.2 PEIR Volume 1 comprises the chapters outlined in Table 1.2:

Table 1.2 – PEIR Volume 1 Chapters

| Chapter Number | Chapter Title |
|-----------------------|---|
| Chapter 1 | Introduction |
| Chapter 2 | Consideration of Alternatives |
| Chapter 3 | Description of the Proposed Development |
| Chapter 4 | EIA Methodology |
| Chapter 5 | Consultation |
| Chapter 6 | Physical Processes |
| Chapter 7 | Marine Water and Sediment Quality |
| Chapter 8 | Intertidal and Benthic Ecology |
| Chapter 9 | Fish and shellfish |
| Chapter 10 | Marine mammals |
| Chapter 11 | Marine Ornithology |
| Chapter 12 | Commercial Fisheries |
| Chapter 13 | Shipping, Navigation and Other Marine Users |
| Chapter 14 | Marine Archaeology |
| Chapter 15 | Landscape and Visual |
| Chapter 16 | Onshore Ecology |
| Chapter 17 | Soils and Agricultural Land Use |
| Chapter 18 | Ground Conditions |
| Chapter 19 | Water Resources and Flood Risk |
| Chapter 20 | Heritage and Archaeology |
| Chapter 21 | Traffic and Transport |
| Chapter 22 | Air Quality |

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Chapter 23 | Noise and Vibration |
| Chapter 24 | Socio-economics |
| Chapter 25 | Human Health |
| Chapter 26 | Waste and Material Resources |
| Chapter 27 | Carbon and Climate Change |
| Chapter 28 | Cumulative Effects |
| Chapter 29 | Summary and Conclusions |

1.6.4 LIMITATIONS

- 1.6.4.1 The Proposed Development will continue to evolve up to the submission of the application for a DCO. The EIA process will continue throughout the intervening period to inform and modify the designs through an iterative process. Decisions regarding the project design will be taken based on the findings of the continuing EIA work. The responses of consultees will also be taken into account. For these reasons, the preliminary environmental information presented in this PEIR, is by its nature preliminary.
- 1.6.4.2 To address the preliminary nature of the information in relation to the project, and to seek to avoid unexpected impacts being identified in the future in so far as is possible, a precautionary approach has been taken to identifying effects, with a series of maximum parameters being established for the purposes of the assessment.
- 1.6.4.3 Despite the inherent limitations of the preliminary information presented in this PEIR, the information presented represents the current understanding of the expected environmental effects of the Proposed Development.

REFERENCES

Department for Communities and Local Government. (2015). Planning Act 2008: Guidance on the pre-application process.

HM Government. (2008). Planning Act.

HM Government. (2017). The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations.

Planning Inspectorate. (2017). Advice Note Seven: Environmental Impact Assessment: Preliminary Environmental Information, Screening and Scoping.