

Meeting note

Project name	Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind
File reference	EN010130
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	30 June 2022
Meeting with	Corio Generation TotalEnergies
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Update meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

Update to the proposed development

The Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind (ODOW) project was awarded Preferred Bidder status for a 1.5GW site located in the southern North Sea, approximately 54km from shore, as part of the Crown Estate's Round 4 leasing. The project is a joint venture between Corio Generation (part of the Macquarie's Green Investment Group) and TotalEnergies. In terms of the project's parameters, the project size is approximated to be 500 km² with water depths between 5m and 40m and a maximum number of wind turbine generators of 100.

The Applicant shared a cartographic map of the various projects located along the Lincolnshire coast. As part of the leasing process the Applicant is required to decrease the array area from 500km² to 300 km². The Applicant is currently considering its options around the timing for this refinement and will update the Inspectorate in due course.

The Applicant shared its project vision, emphasising its commitment to a long term positive environmental impact through responsible design optimisation as well as honest and transparent engagement with local communities and stakeholders. The Inspectorate highlighted that previous projects in the area had a local communications officer as a point of contact for local communities. The Applicant confirmed that it has appointed the same company that has been previously used for community engagement in offshore windfarm projects to lead on communication strategies.

The Applicant shared a map of the proposed onshore and offshore Scoping Boundary. Two hatched areas were highlighted showing two grid connection locations that have been identified in the OTNR from National Grid (NG). The first connection point option is a new substation being proposed by NG called Lincolnshire node, 15 km northwest of Skegness. This substation and the associated overhead line project (Lincolnshire Green) does not yet exist and would require a separate DCO application from National Grid before ODOW can connect to that point.

The second connection point option is referred to as Weston Marsh, 5km northeast of Spalding. Again, this substation does not yet exist, but this location is defined by the junction of 2 existing overhead lines. This connection could provide the ODOW project with an earlier connection, around 2028/2029, as opposed to a 2031+ connection date for the Lincolnshire Node option. The Applicant reassured that one of these connections will be its final grid connection presented in the DCO application, but both options will be included as part of its scoping opinion request. The Applicant has also identified that one landfall will accommodate both connections options, and this will be consulted upon throughout the pre-application stage.

The Inspectorate queried if a decision on substation location would be made prior to the submission of the application; the Applicant confirmed that this would be the case.

Environmental surveys and studies

The Applicant gave an overview of the ongoing offshore geophysical and geotechnical surveys being progressed to support the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The 2021 geophysical campaign was completed in January 2022 with the whole array site being covered. The Offshore Ornithology and Marine Mammals Surveys commenced in March 2021. The monthly frequency of surveys is being increased to two per month between March 2022 and September 2022. The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that it was currently undertaking surveys on a broad cable corridor search area, including geophysical and benthic studies with the geotechnical surveys to commence in Q3 2022. A floating lidar was deployed in April 2022, offering information on wind speeds and sea currents. The marine traffic survey will commence in August 2022 and also additional ornithology surveys within the site.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The Applicant confirmed that a notification under Regulation 8(1)(b) and Regulation 10 of the EIA Regulations was issued on 17 of June 2022 to the Inspectorate, which only comes into action once the Scoping Report is submitted to the Inspectorate containing the information required in support of these notifications. The Applicant updated the Inspectorate that the request for a scoping opinion, comprising the Scoping Report, would be issued during the week commencing 25 July 2022. There are two ongoing parallel processes which the Applicant will be giving due consideration to in its Scoping Report. These are The Crown Estate Leasing Round 4 Plan Level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and the Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR).

The Inspectorate requested that the GIS shapefile be provided at least 10 working days prior to the scoping opinion request and advised the Applicant review Section 7 of [Advice Note 7 \(AN7\)](#) with regards to the format of the GIS shapefile required. The Inspectorate also directed the Applicant to Sections 5 and 6 of AN7, which contain both practical information on the preferred size and format of Scoping Reports, together with helpful advice with regards to its content. It was agreed that different filesharing platforms would be trailed in advance to ensure it works prior to submission of the Scoping Report.

Programme update

The Applicant shared a timeline of its project timeline:

- End of July 2022: Submit Scoping Report
- September 2022: Grid connection location to be confirmed
- Q4 2022: Non-statutory consultation
- Q1 2023: Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) and statutory consultation to commence
- Q4 2023: DCO application to be submitted

Statutory and non-statutory consultation

The Applicant shared a summary of its consultation's approach. The pre-application consultation would consist of two phases: one would include the non-statutory project information and the other would entail the PEIR consultation stage (statutory consultation). The methods used for these rounds of consultation would be summarised in the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), which includes local information events and online exhibitions, the project website, stakeholder briefings, project newsletter and statutory notices.

The Applicant provided the Inspectorate with a list of stakeholders that would be invited to both stages of consultation including:

- Local Authorities
- Parish and Town Councils
- Owners and occupiers of the land affected by the DCO application
- Resident and community organisations
- members of the public
- Hard to reach groups
- Commercial stakeholders (including asset owners and the commercial fisheries industry)
- Statutory and non-statutory environmental bodies

Stakeholder engagement

The Applicant confirmed that the [Outer Dowsing website](#) was launched where people can find the project information brochure and a dedicated email address for the project.

The Applicant reminded the Inspectorate of Evidence Plan (EP) process that has been established for the Proposed Development. This includes a number of Expert Topic Groups (ETGs) that have been ongoing since the end of 2021 with further meetings scheduled in July 2022.. The established ETG currently comprise offshore aspects including: marine ecology and coastal processes; offshore ornithology; marine mammals; derogation and compensation; and seascape and landscape, archaeology and cultural heritage. The Applicant advised that onshore ETGs are scheduled for July 2022, now that there is more certainty around the location of onshore grid connection. The Applicant confirmed that the next EP Steering Group meeting has been programmed for mid-July. The Applicant intends to discuss their approach to scoping with relevant stakeholders at this meeting. The Applicant confirmed that it is working closely with organisations such as Natural England, the Marine Management Organisation and the Environment Agency to determine how best to approach resourcing at the pre-application stage.

AOB

The Applicant and the Inspectorate will be trailing different file transfer website to ensure it works prior to submission. [Advice notes six](#) points out the requirements to submit an application, including the size of document that is allowed to be submitted.