



Transboundary screening undertaken by the Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) on behalf of the Secretary of State (SoS) for the purposes of Regulation 32 of The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the 2017 EIA Regulations)	
Project name:	Mona Offshore Wind Project
Address/Location:	An offshore wind farm array located in the east Irish Sea, 28.2km from the Anglesey coastline; offshore transmission infrastructure extending to landfall on the north coast of Wales; and an onshore transmission infrastructure extending from landfall to the onshore National Grid substation at Bodelwyddan.
Planning Inspectorate Ref:	EN010137
Date(s) screening undertaken:	First screening – 07 November 2022 following the Applicant’s request for a scoping opinion. Re-screened on 30 April 2024 following acceptance of the development consent order (DCO) application.

FIRST TRANSBOUNDARY SCREENING	
Document(s) used for transboundary Screening:	Mona Offshore Wind Project Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report (May 2022) ('the Scoping Report')
Screening Criteria:	The Inspectorate’s Comments:
Characteristics of the Development	<p>The Proposed Development is for a 1.5GW offshore wind farm and associated transmission infrastructure. The key offshore components would be the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • up to 107 wind turbines; • up to four offshore substations platforms; • one offshore booster substation (if a High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) transmission system is employed); • inter-array cables; • inter-connector cables (between offshore substation platforms); and • up to four offshore export cables to the landfall (maximum total length of 360km). <p>The types of foundations for the offshore structures are yet to be determined but potential options include monopile, pin-pile jacket or suction bucket jacket foundations. Scour protection would be required at the foundations.</p>

	<p>The offshore export cables would be installed by methods such as ploughing, trenching or jetting. They would be buried wherever possible and protected with cable protection where burial is not achievable.</p> <p>The cables would be installed through the intertidal zone at the landfall using either trenchless methods or open cut trenching.</p> <p>Onshore infrastructure would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • up to 12 onshore export cables buried in up to four separate trenches between the landfall and onshore substation; • onshore substation; and • up to 12 grid connection export cable buried in up to four separate trenches between the onshore substation and the National Grid substation. <p>Installation of the offshore and onshore elements of the Proposed Development would take up to four years. The Proposed Development is expected to have an operational lifetime of up to 35 years.</p>
<p>Location of Development (including existing use) and Geographical area</p>	<p>Offshore</p> <p>The offshore components would be located in the east Irish Sea. The wind farm array would be located 28.2km from the Anglesey coastline. The Potential Array Area is 449.97km². The offshore transmission infrastructure would extend in a south-easterly direction to landfall on the north coast of Wales (between Colwyn Bay and Rhyl, exact location to be determined).</p> <p>The Scoping Report identifies a number of existing uses within, and adjacent to, the offshore elements of the Proposed Development, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • existing and planned offshore windfarms; • commercial ferry routes; • commercial fishing; • recreational activities (sailing, motor cruising and recreational fishing); and • infrastructure including cables, pipelines, oil and gas platforms, subsea structures and wells, and extraction and aggregate areas. <p>Onshore</p> <p>The onshore transmission assets would be located within the local authority areas of Denbighshire County Council and Conwy County Borough Council.</p> <p>Onshore transmission infrastructure would extend from the landfall (precise location to be determined) to the existing onshore National Grid substation at Bodelwyddan.</p> <p>A large proportion of the onshore scoping area is located within a rural and agricultural setting. However there are several existing settlements, including the towns (or villages)</p>

	<p>of Abergele, Rhyl, Llanddulas, Rhyd-y-Foel, Bodelwyddan and Rhuddlan. Existing infrastructure includes several major roads, such as the A55, A547, A525, A548 and A5151. There is also a railway line broadly routing east to west along the coastline and numerous Public Rights of Way, including the Wales Coast Path and the North Wales Coast Path. There are also several main rivers within the area including the River Dulas, River Gele, River Elwy and River Clwyd.</p> <p>Distance to EEA States</p> <p>Table 1.1 of Annex A of the Scoping Report states that the nearest EEA State is Ireland, which is located 80.2km from the array area and 71.6km from the offshore transmission infrastructure scoping search area.</p>
<p>Environmental Importance</p>	<p>Offshore</p> <p><i>Offshore ornithology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common seabirds known to be present in or around the project area, include (but are not limited to) petrel, Manx shearwater, northern gannet, skuas, gulls, terns and auks. • The Scoping Report identifies the potential for connectivity between the offshore area and European sites with ornithological qualifying features. It confirms that the relevant sites will be identified in the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report (yet to be produced). <p><i>Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Y Fenai a Bae Conwy/Menai Strait and Conwy Bay Special Conservation Area (SAC) is located within the offshore transmission scoping area and is designated for marine habitats including sandbanks, mudflats and reefs. • Aber Dyfrdwy/ Dee Estuary SAC and Ramsar is located 6.6km away from the offshore transmission scoping area and is designated for marine habitats including mudflats, Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and Atlantic salt meadows. <p><i>Fish and shellfish ecology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of fish species are present in or around the offshore scoping area including European plaice, dab, solenette, Dover sole, whiting, lesser spotted dogfish, cod, European seabass, dragonet, grey gurnard and red gurnard. Seven elasmobranch species have been recorded. • Shellfish present include king and queen scallop. • Basking shark are known to migrate through the Irish Sea. • Migratory fish which may be present in the study area include sea trout, European eel, river lamprey, Atlantic salmon, sea lamprey, twaite shad and allis shad. These species are also qualifying features of several designated sites including the Aber Dyfrdwy/Dee Estuary SAC, the Y Fenai a Bae Conwy and the Afon Dyfrdwy a Llyn/River Dee and Bala Lake SAC.

- Multiple spawning and nursery grounds are present within and around the scoping search area, with those for herring – a commercially and ecologically important pelagic fish prey species - overlapping the east of the offshore transmission scoping area.

Marine mammals

- Harbour porpoise, Risso’s dolphin, bottlenose dolphin, harbour seal and grey seal have all been identified in or around the scoping search area. Minke whale, white beaked dolphin and short beaked dolphin may also be present in low numbers.
- The Scoping Report identifies the potential for connectivity between the offshore area and the following European sites with marine mammal qualifying features:
 - North Anglesey Marine/Gogledd Môn Forol SAC;
 - Pen Llyn a’r Sarnau/LIŷn Peninsula and the Sarnau SAC;
 - West Wales Marine/Gorllewin Cymru Forol SAC;
 - North Channel SAC;
 - Strangford Lough SAC;
 - Cardigan Bay/Bay Ceredigion SAC;
 - Murlough SAC;
 - Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC;
 - Lambay Island SAC;
 - Salney River SAC; and
 - Pembrokeshire Marine/Sir Benfro Forol SAC.

Commercial fisheries

- Commercial fishing activity, with vessels from the UK, Isle of Man, Republic of Ireland and Belgium, is present within and around the scoping search area.

Shipping and navigation

- A commercial vessel route transits from Liverpool to the northern Irish Sea and intersects the scoping search area.
- Commercial ferry routes pass through, or adjacent to, the project area (namely Liverpool to Belfast, Heysham to Dublin, Liverpool to Dublin, Liverpool to Douglas and Heysham to Warrenpoint).
- Passenger vessels, including cruise ships, also utilise the area.

Marine archaeology

- The project area comprises flood plains, glacial tunnel valleys and the Holocene Coastline palaeolandscapes.
- There are two designated maritime archaeological sites within the project area – the Resurgam Historic Wreck and Motor torpedo boat MTB 539 military wreck.
- There are numerous non-designated maritime assets including known wreck sites.

	<p><i>Other sea users</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The transmission scoping search area overlaps with Awel y Môr, Gwynt y Môr, Rhyl Flats, North Hoyle and Burbo Bank Extension offshore windfarms. • A number of cables, pipelines, oil and gas platforms, subsea structures and wells, and extraction and aggregate areas are present within the scoping search area. • An appraisal licence to explore the use of offshore fields in Liverpool Bay as a permanent store for carbon dioxide (CO₂) off the north coast of Wales; however the exact location and potential overlap with the project area is not known at this point. <p>Onshore</p> <p>There are a number of local, national and internationally designated statutory nature conservation sites within the scoping search area, including Liverpool Bay SPA.</p>
<p>Potential impacts and Carrier</p>	<p>Offshore</p> <p><i>Offshore ornithology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collision with turbines (direct mortality); barrier effects between foraging and breeding sites, or migration effects; temporary and permanent habitat loss/disturbance. • Disturbance to prey (fish) species from important bird feeding areas, or changes to prey availability due to changes to physical processes and habitat as a result of the presence of operational infrastructure. <p><i>Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary and long term habitat loss and colonisation or removal of hard substrates. <p><i>Fish and shellfish ecology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct impacts due to underwater noise from piling operations. • Loss of fish and shellfish habitat or disturbance to habitat due to increased suspended sediment concentrations (SSCs) and associated sediment deposition from the installation and decommissioning of foundations and cables. • Loss of or disturbance to fish spawning and nursery habitats in the Irish Sea. <p><i>Marine mammals</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underwater noise particularly from piling and pre-construction clearance of unexploded ordnance (UXO). • Indirect impacts from changes in prey availability as a result of e.g. habitat loss, underwater noise, increased suspended sediment concentrations (SSCs) and associated sediment deposition and other impacts scoped in for fish and shellfish receptors.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The operation and maintenance phase is considered less likely to result in significant effects. <p><i>Commercial fisheries</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds and potential displacement of fishing activity into other areas. • Indirect effects from impacts to commercially important fish and shellfish resources. <p><i>Shipping and navigation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deviations to commercial routes; increased vessel to vessel collision; allision risk with project structures; increased risk of anchor and gear snagging; reduction of under keel clearance; reduction of emergency response capability; and interference with marine navigation, communications and position fixing equipment. <p><i>Marine archaeology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct damage to archaeological receptors. • Indirect impacts from sediment disturbance and deposition and alterations of sediment transport regimes. <p><i>Other sea users</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displacement of recreational sailing and motor cruising activities between the UK and Ireland and potential impacts to existing cables between the UK, Ireland (ESAT2, Havingsten 1.1 and Rockabill cables) and the United States (Hibernia Atlantic Seg. A cable). <p>Onshore</p> <p>No potential transboundary impacts have been identified in the Scoping Report.</p>
Extent	<p>Offshore</p> <p><i>Offshore ornithology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is potential for transboundary impacts upon ornithological receptors due to the wide foraging and migratory ranges of typical bird species in the Irish Sea. • European sites with birds as a qualifying feature that are within foraging range of the Proposed Development have not been identified at this stage but will be assessed by the Applicant within the HRA Report. The spatial extent of impacts will likely vary depending on the species. <p><i>Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent of any predicted impacts is likely to be limited to the footprint of the Proposed Development. • Transboundary impacts on this receptor group are not anticipated in the Scoping Report and are not considered further in this document.

Fish and shellfish ecology

- The extent of impacts occurring, particularly as a result of underwater noise from piling, has not yet been determined and will be assessed further by the Applicant.
- However, the Scoping Report acknowledges that Annex II migratory fish species that are listed as features of European sites in other states, or species that are of commercial importance for fishing fleets of EEA States, could be affected directly or indirectly.

Marine mammals

- The extent of impacts, particularly from underwater noise from piling and UXO clearance, has not yet been determined and will be assessed further by the Applicant.
- However, the Scoping Report acknowledges the potential for transboundary impacts upon marine mammals due to the mobile nature of marine mammal species and the proximity of the Proposed Development to the border of Ireland.

Commercial fisheries

- The extent of impacts has not yet been determined.
- However, the Scoping Report acknowledges there is the potential for transboundary impacts upon commercial fisheries due to the highly mobile nature of both commercial fish species and fishing fleets.

Shipping and navigation

- There is potential for transboundary impacts upon shipping routes which transit to/from EEA states, including Ireland.

Marine archaeology

- The extent of any predicted impacts is likely to be limited to the footprint of the Proposed Development.
- The Scoping Report concludes there is no pathway for transboundary impacts on this receptor group and they are not considered further in this document.

Other sea users

- The extent of any potential impacts on recreational activities or existing cables is likely to be localised and short term, and the latter be subject to standard cable crossing agreements.
- The Scoping Report does not anticipate transboundary impacts on this receptor group and therefore they are not considered further in this document.

Onshore

The Scoping Report concludes that impacts onshore would be confined to a localised area within and around the footprint of the onshore project elements. At this point, given the information available, the Inspectorate considers that significant transboundary effects from onshore activities

	<p>associated with the Proposed Development are unlikely for the majority of receptor groups.</p> <p>The Scoping Report states that it is not feasible that migratory birds directly associated with European sites in EEA States would be disturbed or suffer from loss of foraging or resting opportunities from the onshore works. The Inspectorate considers that there is insufficient evidence to reach this conclusion at this stage. However, potential transboundary impacts from the onshore works are not considered further in this document given the lack of information available at this stage.</p>
Magnitude	<p>The magnitude of impacts (taking into consideration the spatial extent, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact) have not been evaluated at this stage and will be subject to further assessment.</p>
Probability	<p>Offshore</p> <p><i>Offshore ornithology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is likely that there will be impacts to ornithological receptors during the operation and maintenance phase, particularly as a result of disturbance and displacement and collision risk. <p><i>Fish and shellfish ecology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The probability of impacts occurring during construction is high, particularly as a result of underwater noise from piling. <p><i>Marine mammals</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The probability of impacts to marine mammals occurring during construction is high, particularly as a result of underwater noise from piling and UXO clearance. <p><i>Commercial fisheries and Shipping and navigation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The probability of impacts occurring during the operation and maintenance phase is likely to be high, particularly as a result of the presence of the offshore infrastructure associated with the Proposed Development.
Duration	<p>Offshore</p> <p><i>Offshore ornithology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts during operation and maintenance phase are likely to be long term. <p><i>Fish and shellfish ecology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of impacts during construction are considered likely to be short term and temporary. • Effects associated with habitat loss are longer term effects.

	<p><i>Marine mammals</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of impacts are associated with the construction phase and are considered likely to be short term and temporary. <p><i>Commercial fisheries and Shipping and navigation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts have the potential to be long term.
Frequency	<p>The frequency of potential transboundary effects has not been fully evaluated at this stage. However, the Scoping Report states that impacts on offshore ornithology during operation and maintenance phase are likely to be continuous.</p>
Reversibility	<p>The reversibility of potential transboundary effects has not been fully evaluated at this stage. However, the Scoping Report states the following:</p> <p>Offshore</p> <p><i>Offshore ornithology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is likely that disturbance and displacement and collision risk will be reversible following the decommissioning of the Proposed Development. <p><i>Fish and shellfish ecology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects associated with long term habitat loss may be reversible depending on the decommissioning strategy. <p><i>Commercial fisheries and Shipping and navigation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is likely that following completion of construction some fishing activity may be able to resume, depending upon the final design of the infrastructure, and that any impacts would be reversible after decommissioning. It is anticipated that all structures above the seabed would be completely removed during decommissioning therefore impacts to shipping and navigation would be reversible.
Cumulative impacts	<p>Offshore</p> <p>The Scoping Report states that other proposed major developments in the area will be taken into account within the cumulative effects assessment, in accordance with Planning Inspectorate Advice note Seventeen: Cumulative Effects Assessment Relevant to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.</p> <p>Onshore</p> <p>Onshore plans or projects that may be considered in the cumulative effects assessment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> other energy generation infrastructure; building/housing developments; installation or upgrade of roads; installation or upgrade of cables and pipelines; coastal protection works; and

- National Grid enabling works.

The Applicant's cumulative impact assessment has not yet been undertaken so the Applicant has not identified any likely significant transboundary cumulative effects at this stage.

Transboundary screening undertaken by the Inspectorate on behalf of the SoS

Under Regulation 32 of The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the 2017 EIA Regulations) and on the basis of the current information available from the Applicant, the Inspectorate is of the view that the Proposed Development **is likely** to have a significant effect on the environment in an EEA State.

In reaching this view the Inspectorate has applied the precautionary approach (as explained in its Advice Note Twelve: Transboundary Impacts), and taken into account the information currently supplied by the Applicant.

Action:

Transboundary issues notification under Regulation 32 of the 2017 EIA Regulations is required.

States to be notified:

- Republic of Ireland – due to potential impacts on marine mammals, commercial fisheries, shipping and navigation and other sea users (cable operators and recreational users).
- Belgium – due to potential impacts on commercial fisheries.

Date: 07 November 2022

Note: The SoS' duty under Regulation 32 of the 2017 EIA Regulations continues throughout the application process.

SECOND TRANSBOUNDARY SCREENING

Document(s) used for transboundary Screening:

- DCO Application Documents:
- Doc E1.1 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Stage 2 Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment (ISAA) Part 1 – Introduction and Background (February 2024)
 - Doc E1.2 HRA Stage 2 ISAA Part 2 – Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) Assessments (February 2024)
 - Doc E1.3 HRA Stage 2 ISAA Part 3 – Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites Assessments (February 2024)
 - Doc E1.4 HRA Stage 1 Screening Report (February 2024)
 - Doc E1.5 HRA Integrity Matrices (February 2024)
 - Environmental Statement (ES) (February 2024)
 - Doc F1.4 ES Volume 1, Chapter 4 Site Selection and Consideration of Alternatives
 - Doc F2.7 ES Volume 2, Chapter 7 Shipping and navigation
 - Doc F5.5.2 Transboundary Impacts Screening Report

Date screening undertaken:

Re-screened on 30 April 2024 following acceptance of the DCO application.

Transboundary re-screening undertaken by the Inspectorate on behalf of the SoS

Following submission of the DCO application, the Inspectorate has reconsidered the transboundary screening decision made on 7 November 2022.

The Inspectorate has identified the following matters that differ from those considered at the time of the previous transboundary screening decision:

- changes in the description of the Proposed Development;
- provision of HRA information; and
- provision of the Transboundary Impacts Screening Report and transboundary assessments within relevant chapters of the ES.

Change in the description of the Proposed Development

Sections 4.10 and 4.11 of ES Chapter 4 Site Selection and Consideration of Alternatives details how the Proposed Development has been refined since the Scoping Report was submitted. Key changes are summarised below:

Offshore:

- the array area has reduced from 449.97km² to approximately 300km²;
- the maximum number of Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs) has reduced from 107 to 96, with the maximum number of piled jacket foundations reduced from 107 to 64;
- the maximum WTG upper blade tip height above Lowest Astronomical Tide (LAT) has increased from 324m to 364m;
- the maximum WTG rotor diameter has increased from 280m to 320m;
- monopile foundations have been removed from the design envelope; and
- the maximum seabed footprint per jacket foundation (without scour protection) has reduced from 255m² to 85m².

Onshore:

- selection of a landfall site, access and temporary construction compound;

- refinement of the onshore cable route with the cable corridor reduced from 100m to 74m (widening to 100m in places);
- selection of the onshore substation location and a reduction in the surrounding land required for mitigation; and
- identification of operational accesses for the onshore substation.

Provision of information in the HRA Report

The HRA Screening Report identified a Likely Significant Effect (LSE) on marine mammals (harbour porpoise and grey seal) of four Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in the Republic of Ireland and 17 Sites of Community importance (SCIs) in France. The LSEs were from potential noise disturbance (from piling activities; clearance of unexploded ordnance; pre-construction site surveys; vessel activity; and in-combination effects). The Applicant concluded in the HRA SACs Assessment Report that there would be no adverse effect on any of the qualifying features of these European sites.

The HRA Screening Report also identified a Likely Significant Effect (LSE) on offshore ornithological features of four Special Protection Areas located in the Republic of Ireland. The LSEs were from potential disturbance, displacement, collision effects and in-combination effects. The Applicant concluded in the HRA SPA and Ramsar Assessment Report that there would be no adverse effect on any of the qualifying features of these European sites.

Provision of the Transboundary Impacts Screening report and transboundary assessments within relevant chapters of the ES

The Transboundary Impacts Screening Report confirmed that transboundary impacts in respect of the following matters were screened into the EIA process:

- fish and shellfish ecology;
- marine mammals;
- offshore ornithology;
- commercial fisheries;
- shipping and navigation;
- other sea users;
- onshore and intertidal ornithology; and
- climate change.

No significant transboundary effects were explicitly identified within the ES. This includes in respect of the potential significant transboundary effects on Belgium that were identified in the first transboundary screening.

However, in respect of shipping and navigation, ES Volume 2, Chapter 7 concludes that there would be significant effects from the project alone and cumulatively with other projects and plans. This includes in respect of impacts to commercial operations including strategic routes and lifeline ferries. The ES specifically notes ferries transiting between Ireland and England. It concludes that "no additional" potential transboundary impacts have been identified.

Secretary of State's Comments

Under Regulation 32 of The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the 2017 EIA Regulations) and on the basis of the current information available from the Applicant, the Inspectorate is now of the view that the Proposed Development **is not likely** to have a significant effect on the environment in Belgium. However, it considers that the Proposed Development **is likely** to have a significant effect on the environment in the Republic of Ireland due to potential impacts on shipping and navigation.

No new EEA States have been identified as being likely to have significant effects on their environment.

In reaching this view the Inspectorate has applied the precautionary approach (as explained in its Advice Note Twelve: Transboundary Impacts); and taken into account the information currently supplied by the Applicant.

Action

Both the Republic of Ireland and Belgium requested to be involved in the transboundary consultation procedure when previously notified.

Transboundary issues consultation under Regulation 32 of the 2017 EIA Regulations is required. States to be consulted:

- Republic of Ireland.
- Belgium.

Date: 30 April 2024

Note: The SoS' duty under Regulation 32 of the 2017 EIA Regulations continues throughout the application process.

Note:

The Inspectorate's screening of transboundary issues is based on the relevant considerations specified in the Annex to its Advice Note Twelve, available on our website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-note-twelve-transboundary-impacts-and-process/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-note-twelve-transboundary-impacts-and-process>