

MONA OFFSHORE WIND PROJECT

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Guidance for Wales

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Image of an offshore wind farm

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Glossary

Term	Meaning
Applicant	Mona Offshore Wind Limited.
Bodelwyddan National Grid Substation	This is the Point of Interconnection (POI) selected by the National Grid for the Mona Offshore Wind Project.
Development Consent Order (DCO)	An order made under the Planning Act 2008 granting development consent for one or more Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP).
Environmental Statement	The document presenting the results of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for the Mona Offshore Wind Project.
Evidence Plan Process	The Evidence Plan process is a mechanism to agree upfront what information the Applicant needs to supply to the Planning Inspectorate as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) applications for the Mona Offshore Wind Project.
Expert Working Group (EWG)	Expert working groups set up with relevant stakeholders as part of the Evidence Plan process.
Inter-array cables	Cables which connect the wind turbines to each other and to the offshore substation platforms. Inter-array cables will carry the electrical current produced by the wind turbines to the offshore substation platforms.
Interconnector cables	Cables that may be required to interconnect the Offshore Substation Platforms in order to provide redundancy in the case of cable failure elsewhere.
Intertidal access areas	The area from Mean High Water Springs (MHWS) to Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS) which will be used for access to the beach and construction related activities.
Intertidal area	The area between MHWS and MLWS.
Landfall	The area in which the offshore export cables make contact with land and the transitional area where the offshore cabling connects to the onshore cabling.
Local Authority	A body empowered by law to exercise various statutory functions for a particular area of the United Kingdom. This includes County Councils, District Councils and County Borough Councils.
Local Highway Authority	A body responsible for the public highways in a particular area of England and Wales, as defined in the Highways Act 1980.
Marine licence	The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 requires a marine licence to be obtained for licensable marine activities. Section 149A of the Planning Act 2008 allows an applicant for a DCO to apply for a 'deemed' marine licence as part of the DCO process. In addition, licensable activities within 12nm of the Welsh coast require a separate marine licence from Natural Resource Wales (NRW).
Maximum Design Scenario (MDS)	The scenario within the design envelope with the potential to result in the greatest impact on a particular topic receptor, and therefore the one that should be assessed for that topic receptor.
Mona 400kV Grid Connection Cable Corridor	The corridor from the Mona onshore substation to the National Grid substation at Bodelwyddan.
Mona Array Area	The area within which the wind turbines, foundations, inter-array cables, interconnector cables, offshore export cables and offshore

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Term	Meaning
	substation platforms (OSPs) forming part of the Mona Offshore Wind Project will be located.
Mona Array Scoping Boundary	The Preferred Bidding Area that the Applicant was awarded by The Crown Estate as part of Offshore Wind Leasing Round 4.
Mona Offshore Cable Corridor	The corridor located between the Mona Array Area and the landfall up to MHWS, in which the offshore export cables will be located.
Mona Offshore Cable Corridor and Access Areas	The corridor located between the Mona Array Area and the landfall up to MHWS, in which the offshore export cables will be located and in which the intertidal access areas are located.
Mona Offshore Transmission Infrastructure Scoping Search Area	The area that was presented in the Mona Scoping Report as the area encompassing and located between the Mona Potential Array Area and the landfall up to MHWS, in which the offshore export cables will be located.
Mona Offshore Wind Project	The Mona Offshore Wind Project is comprised of both the generation assets, offshore and onshore transmission assets, and associated activities.
Mona Offshore Wind Project Boundary	The area containing all aspects of the Mona Offshore Wind Project, both offshore and onshore.
Mona Offshore Wind Project PEIR	The Mona Offshore Wind Project Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) that was submitted to The Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State) and NRW for the Mona Offshore Wind Project.
Mona Offshore Wind Project Scoping Report	The Mona Scoping Report that was submitted to The Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State) and NRW for the Mona Offshore Wind Project.
Mona Onshore Cable Corridor	The corridor between MHWS at the landfall and the Mona onshore substation, in which the onshore export cables will be located.
Mona Onshore Development Area	The area in which the landfall, onshore cable corridor, onshore substation, mitigation areas, temporary construction facilities (such as access roads and construction compounds), and the connection to National Grid substation will be located
Mona Onshore Transmission Infrastructure Scoping Search Area	The area that was presented in the Mona Scoping Report as the area located between MHWS at the landfall and the onshore National Grid substation, in which the onshore export cables, onshore substation and other associated onshore transmission infrastructure will be located.
Mona PEIR Offshore Cable Corridor	The corridor presented at PEIR that was consulted on during statutory consultation and has subsequently been refined for the application for Development Consent. It is located between the Mona Array Area and the landfall up to MHWS, in which the offshore export cables and the offshore booster substation will be located.
Mona PEIR Offshore Wind Project Boundary	The area presented at PEIR containing all aspects of the Mona Offshore Wind Project, both offshore and onshore. This area was the boundary consulted on during statutory consultation and subsequently refined for the application for Development Consent.
Mona Potential Array Area	The area that was presented in the Mona Scoping Report and in the PEIR as the area within which the wind turbines, foundations, meteorological mast, inter-array cables, interconnector cables, offshore export cables and OSPs forming part of the Mona Offshore Wind Project were likely to be located. This area was the boundary consulted

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Term	Meaning
	on during statutory consultation and subsequently refined for the application for Development Consent.
Mona Proposed Onshore Development Area	The area presented at PEIR in which the landfall, onshore cable corridor, onshore substation, mitigation areas, temporary construction facilities (such as access roads and construction compounds), and the connection to National Grid infrastructure will be located. This area was the boundary consulted on during statutory consultation and subsequently refined for the application for Development Consent.
Mona Scoping Report	The Mona Scoping Report that was submitted to The Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State) and NRW for the Mona Offshore Wind Project.
National Policy Statement (NPS)	The current national policy statements published by the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero in 2024.
Non-statutory consultee	Organisations that an applicant may choose to consult in relation to a project who are not designated in law but are likely to have an interest in the project.
Offshore Substation Platform (OSP)	The offshore substation platforms located within the Mona Array Area will transform the electricity generated by the wind turbines to a higher voltage allowing the power to be efficiently transmitted to shore.
Offshore Wind Leasing Round 4	The Crown Estate auction process which allocated developers preferred bidder status on areas of the seabed within Welsh and English waters and ends when the Agreements for Lease (AfLs) are signed.
Pre-construction site investigation surveys	Pre-construction geophysical and/or geotechnical surveys undertaken offshore and, or onshore to inform, amongst other things, the final design of the Mona Offshore Wind Project.
Point of Interconnection	The point of connection at which a project is connected to the grid. For the Mona Offshore Wind Project, this is the Bodelwyddan National Grid Substation.
Relevant Local Planning Authority	The Relevant Local Planning Authority is the Local Authority in respect of an area within which a project is situated, as set out in Section 173 of the Planning Act 2008. Relevant Local Planning Authorities may have responsibility for discharging requirements and some functions pursuant to the DCO, once made.
the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	The decision maker with regards to the application for development consent for the Mona Offshore Wind Project.
Statutory consultee	Organisations that are required to be consulted by an applicant pursuant to the Planning Act 2008 in relation to an application for development consent. Not all consultees will be statutory consultees (see non-statutory consultee definition).
Wind turbines	The wind turbine generators, including the tower, nacelle and rotor.
The Planning Inspectorate	The agency responsible for operating the planning process for NSIPs.

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Acronyms

Acronym	Description
AfL	Agreement for Lease
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
DCO	Development Consent Order
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EnBW	Energie Baden-Württemberg AG
HVAC	High Voltage Alternating Current
IEMA	Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment
ISAA	Information to support the Appropriate Assessment
MDS	Maximum Design Scenario
MHWS	Mean High Water Springs
MLWS	Mean Low Water Springs
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
NTS	Non-Technical Summary
OSP	Offshore Substation Platform
PDE	Project Design Envelope
PEI	Preliminary Environmental Information
PEIR	Preliminary Environmental Information Report
POI	Point of Interconnection
SoCC	Statement of Community Consultation
TCE	The Crown Estate
TJB	Transition Joint Bay

Units

Unit	Description
GW	Gigawatt
km	Kilometres
km ²	Kilometres squared
kV	Kilovolt
MW	Megawatt
nm	Nautical miles

1 RESPONSE TO EXAMINING AUTHORITY'S HEARING ACTION POINT 18 FROM ISSUE SPECIFIC HEARING 3

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1.1 This document has been prepared in response to Action Point 18 arising from the Issue Specific Hearing 3 "Environmental Matters" which was held on 16 October 2024 in respect of the Mona Offshore Wind Project.

1.1.1.2 Action Point 18 is set out in the Issue Specific Hearing Note 3 (EV5-006) and requires the Applicant to:

"Submit extracts from the NRW Guidance to Landscape Sensitivity in Wales' (para 5.5) referred to in ISH3 regarding the definitions of high and very high value landscapes."

1.2 Response

1.2.1.1 Extracts of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment guidance for Wales, GN 017 (NRW, 2023) below provide the definition of high and very high sensitivity for landscape parameters. The Applicant notes that national landscape have either a high or very high sensitivity, depending in part upon its LANDMAP evaluation, and also, for very high sensitive parameters, whether the area *"also presents a famous or iconic cultural or visual image or sense of place [...], which is reflected clearly in multiple expressions of landscape value"*.

1.2.1.2 The Applicant's definitions for high and very high sensitivity are included in Table 1.8 of Volume 6, Annex 8.4: Seascape, landscape and visual resources impact assessment methodology for seascape and landscape receptors, and Table 1.2 of Seascape assessment – errata clarification note (REP3-074) for visual receptors. These definitions corroborate with the definitions in Landscape Sensitivity Assessment guidance for Wales, GN 017 (NRW, 2023), in which national landscapes have either a high or very high sensitivity.

1.2.1.3 The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment guidance for Wales, GN 017 (NRW, 2023), section 5.5 states (emphasis added by Applicant):

5.5 Levels of sensitivity for landscape parameters

Landscape sensitivity refers to "the ability of a landscape to accommodate change arising from specified types of development or land management. It combines judgements of the susceptibility of that landscape to change, and the values attached to that landscape". (Jointly agreed NatureScot and Natural Resources Wales definition, based on several related references).

As well as writing a narrative, landscape sensitivity assessments normally include a judgement of the relative level of landscape sensitivity for each assessment unit to each change scenario used. This enables different areas to be compared. In spatial planning exercises this is helpful to use as a layer of a constraints mapping exercise, when otherwise landscape sensitivity might only be considered as a matter of written detail after spatial choices have been made.

Each landscape sensitivity level should be defined on a qualitative scale. Numerical scoring systems should be avoided as it could tempt adding up or equating entirely different criteria.

Levels are typically expressed using a five-point scale, although a 3-point scale may suffice for broad-brush assessments. For example, 'Very High > High > Medium > Low > Very Low'.

- *Terms that mix levels such as 'high-medium' may be less easily understood.*

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- *A 3-point scale might not usually provide enough nuance whereas a 7-point scale might feel overly complex.*
- *The word ‘moderate’ should be avoided as that is associated with judgements of significance in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments.*

Judgements of the level of sensitivity are guided by a reference table that sets out generic descriptions of each sensitivity level. The example scale given only a hypothetical example and should not be copied blindly.

Very high landscape sensitivity:

- *Susceptibility influences - The assessment unit landscape and its key characteristics are unable to accommodate the change scenario without also fundamentally changing the overall landscape character or key characteristics, without adverse effects. Its resilience to such change is very low.*
- *Landscape value influences - The assessment unit is within or occupies a prominent part of the visible setting of a **nationally important landscape designation**, possibly with areas of nature conservation or cultural heritage designations too. The area may also present a famous or iconic cultural or visual image or sense of place derived from its landscape or key characteristics, which is reflected clearly in multiple expressions of landscape value. There are one or more outstanding evaluations in LANDMAP and others are likely to be mostly high.*

High landscape sensitivity

- *Susceptibility influences - The assessment unit landscape and its key characteristics may be able to accommodate the change scenario in limited situations, but more typically there would be fundamental change to overall landscape character or key characteristics, with adverse effects. Resilience to change is low / medium.*
- *Landscape value influences - The assessment unit is within, or part of the visible setting of, a **nationally important landscape designation**, possibly also with areas of important nature conservation or cultural heritage. The area presents a strong cultural or visual image or sense of place derived from its landscape or key characteristics. There are one or more outstanding or high evaluations in LANDMAP.*

2 REFERENCES

Natural Resources Wales (2023) Landscape Sensitivity Assessment guidance for Wales: GN 017