

XLINKS' MOROCCO-UK POWER PROJECT

Environmental Statement

Volume 1, Appendix 5.2: Transboundary Screening

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XLINKS' MOROCCO – UK POWER PROJECT

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Glossary

Term	Meaning
Applicant	Xlinks 1 Limited.
Climate change	A change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular a change apparent from the mid to late 20th century onwards and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels.
Converter station	Part of an electrical transmission and distribution system. Converter stations convert electricity from Direct Current to Alternating Current, or vice versa.
Environmental Impact Assessment	The process of identifying and assessing the significant effects likely to arise from a project. This requires consideration of the likely changes to the environment, where these arise as a consequence of a project, through comparison with the existing and projected future baseline conditions.
Environmental Statement	The document presenting the results of the Environmental Impact Assessment process.
HVAC Cables	The High Voltage Alternating Current cables which would bring electricity from the converter stations to the new Alverdiscott Substation Connection Development.
HVDC Cables	The High Voltage Direct Current cables which would bring electricity to the UK converter stations from the Moroccan converter stations.
Landfall	The proposed area in which the offshore cables make landfall in the United Kingdom (come on shore) and the transitional area between the offshore cabling and the onshore cabling. This term applies to the entire landfall area at Cornborough Range, Devon, between Mean Low Water Springs and the transition joint bays inclusive of all construction works, including the offshore and onshore cable routes, and landfall compound(s).
Offshore Cable Corridor	The proposed corridor within which the offshore cables are proposed to be located, which is situated within the UK Exclusive Economic Zone.
Onshore Infrastructure Area	The proposed infrastructure area within the Order Limits landward of Mean High Water Springs. The Onshore Infrastructure Area comprises the transition joint bays, onshore HVDC Cables, converter stations, HVAC Cables, highways improvements, utility diversions and associated temporary and permanent infrastructure including temporary compound areas and permanent accesses.
Order Limits	The area within which all offshore and onshore components of the Proposed Development are proposed to be located, including areas required on a temporary basis during construction (such as construction compounds).
Preliminary Environmental Information Report	A report that provides preliminary environmental information in accordance with the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. This is information that enables consultees to understand the likely significant environmental effects of a project, and which helps to inform consultation responses.
Proposed Development	The element of Xlinks' Morocco-UK Power Project within the UK. The Proposed Development covers all works required to construct and operate the offshore cables (from the UK Exclusive Economic Zone to Landfall), Landfall, onshore Direct Current and Alternating Current cables, converter stations, and highways improvements.
Transboundary effects	Effects from a project within one state that affect the environment of another state(s).
Utility diversions	Works required by statutory utility providers to re-route infrastructure around the Proposed Development.
Xlinks' Morocco UK Power Project	The overall scheme from Morocco to the national grid, including all onshore and offshore elements of the transmission network and the generation site in Morocco (referred to as the 'Project').

Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
EEA	European Economic Area
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ES	Environmental Statement
EU	European Union
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
HVAC	High Voltage Alternating Current
HVDC	High Voltage Direct Current
SPA	Special Protection Area
UK	United Kingdom

Units

Units	Meaning
m	Metres
km	Kilometre
km ²	Square Kilometre
nm	Nautical mile

1 TRANSBOUNDARY SCREENING

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This document forms Volume 1, Appendix 5.2: Transboundary Screening, of the Environmental Statement (ES) prepared for the United Kingdom (UK) elements of Xlinks' Morocco-UK Power Project (the 'Project'). For ease of reference, the UK elements of the Project are referred to as the 'Proposed Development', which is the focus of this Appendix.
- 1.1.2 The Proposed Development would be located within the Order Limits shown on **Figure 1.1**. The locations of the onshore and offshore elements are detailed below.
- The onshore elements of the Order Limits would be located within the local authority area of Torrridge District Council (and Devon County Council at county level) in north Devon.
 - The offshore elements of the Order Limits would be located within the Bristol Channel and Celtic Sea, extending from Landfall to the limit of UK Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), south west of the UK.
- 1.1.3 Transboundary impacts are those that may arise from an activity within one state and affect the environment or other interests of another state. This transboundary screening appendix of the ES sets out the potential for such impacts to occur on the environment or interests of other states, and the potential for such impacts to result in significant effects. This screening assessment is based on what is currently known of the likely spatial scale of impacts (drawing on information presented in the technical chapters of the ES) and the interests of other states in the vicinity.
- 1.1.4 This appendix presents the outcome of the transboundary screening process and sets out the topics where an assessment of transboundary effects has been undertaken. These assessments are set out in the respective technical chapters. This document provides an update to the transboundary screening report that was published within the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR).

Phasing Considerations

- 1.1.5 The offshore elements of the Proposed Development (the Offshore Cable Corridor) extends to the edge of the UK EEZ, however the Proposed Development forms just one section of the overall Morocco-UK cable route. Xlinks 1 Limited ('the Applicant') will seek separate consents for the works within the French EEZ and other jurisdictions, with the intention that construction activities (e.g. cable lay and trenching) are carried out in a continuous, linear manner - continuous from one jurisdiction into the adjacent jurisdiction. The development characteristics and construction activities will be consistent across the two jurisdictions (in the vicinity of the EEZ boundary) and thus transboundary impacts on mobile and/or static receptors are expected to be less than those deriving from the immediate jurisdiction - because the magnitude of potential effect tends to decrease with distance from the impact source.
- 1.1.6 Since the associated significance of transboundary impacts will be less than the equivalent impact significance of works undertaken in either EEZ, the

transboundary impacts would, by definition be acceptable (if the in-country i.e. non-transboundary impacts are deemed acceptable). However, this is predicated on the assumption that permits/authorisations are granted in both jurisdictions, and the acceptable levels of impact significance are equivalent across jurisdictions.

- 1.1.7 Notwithstanding the considerations above, there is a specific requirement to set out transboundary impacts, as described in **section 1.2**.

1.2 Legislation and Guidance

Legislative Context

- 1.2.1 The need to consider transboundary impacts (and the resulting effects) has been embodied by The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in a Transboundary Context, adopted in 1991 in the Finnish city of Espoo and commonly referred to as the 'Espoo Convention'. The Convention requires that assessments are extended across borders between Parties to the Convention when a planned activity may cause significant adverse transboundary effects.
- 1.2.2 The Espoo Convention has been ratified by the United Kingdom (on behalf of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Bailiwick of Jersey, the Bailiwick of Guernsey, the Isle of Man and Gibraltar) and the European Union (EU). It is aimed at preventing, mitigating and monitoring environmental damage by ensuring that explicit consideration is given to transboundary environmental factors before a final decision is made as to whether to approve a project. The Espoo Convention requires that the Party of origin notifies affected Parties about activities listed in Appendix I of the Convention and likely to cause a significant adverse transboundary effect.
- 1.2.3 The Espoo Convention was implemented by EU Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU, on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (the EIA Directive). Following the UK's departure from the EU, the UK has no direct obligations under the EIA Directive, however, the requirements established under the EIA Directive (as transposed into UK law) continue to apply.
- 1.2.4 The EIA Directive is transposed into UK law by the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (the 2017 EIA Regulations). Regulation 32 of the 2017 EIA Regulations sets out a prescribed process of consultation and notification in relation to transboundary effects.
- 1.2.5 As set out in Volume 1, Chapter 1: Introduction of the ES, the Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) (the department which preceded the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero) has directed that the Proposed Development is to be treated as development for which development consent is required under the Planning Act 2008, as amended. Further details of the relevant planning policy context, including the approach to consenting, are provided in Volume 1, Chapter 2: Policy and Legislation of the ES.

Guidance

- 1.2.6 Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Transboundary Impacts and Process (The Planning Inspectorate, 2024) sets out the procedures for consultation in association with an application for a Development Consent Order, where such development may have significant transboundary impacts. The note sets out the roles of the Planning Inspectorate, other states and developers.
- 1.2.7 The Advice Note on Transboundary Impacts and Process (Planning Inspectorate, 2024) sets out the roles of the Planning Inspectorate, other states and developers. Applicants have no formal role under the Regulation 32 process, as the duties prescribed by Regulation 32 in notifying and consulting with other states on potential transboundary impacts are the responsibility of the Secretary of State. However, the Applicant should provide information about the potential for transboundary effects as part of:
- the scoping request under Regulation 8 of the EIA Regulations (if one is made); and
 - the suite of documents submitted as part of the application for development consent.
- 1.2.8 This transboundary screening appendix is provided in response to this advice. It provides information about the Proposed Development, which will be the subject of the application for development consent. It also sets out information relating to the potential effects of the Proposed Development and the interests of the other states in the vicinity, to assist the Planning Inspectorate in forming a view on the likelihood of significant transboundary effects arising from the Proposed Development. The information contained within the Annex to the Advice on Transboundary Impacts and Process (Planning Inspectorate, 2024), which sets out the criteria and relevant considerations that will be taken into account by the Planning Inspectorate during screening, have also been used in the preparation of this transboundary screening appendix.

1.3 Consultation

- 1.3.1 In January 2024, the Applicant submitted a Scoping Report to the Planning Inspectorate, which described the scope and methodology for the technical studies being undertaken to provide an assessment of any likely significant effects for the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development. It also described those topics or sub-topics which are proposed to be scoped out of the EIA process and provided justification as to why the Proposed Development would not have the potential to give rise to significant environmental effects in these areas.
- 1.3.2 Following consultation with the appropriate statutory bodies, the Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State) provided a Scoping Opinion on 7 March 2024. Key issues raised during the scoping process specific to transboundary impacts are listed in **Table 1.1**, together with details of how these issues have been addressed within the ES.
- 1.3.3 The Preliminary Environmental Information Report was published in May 2024 to form the basis of statutory consultation under the Planning Act 2008. Statutory consultation ran between 16 May 2024 and 11 July 2024. Feedback provided from consultation with the community, statutory consultation bodies and other

interested parties has helped refine the design of the Proposed Development and inform development of the ES. Relevant EU member states were notified by the Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State) in accordance with Regulation 32 of the 2017 EIA Regulations. These states were Belgium, France, Ireland and the Netherlands.

- 1.3.4 Key comments raised during the consultation process specific to transboundary impacts are listed in **Table 1.1**, together with details of how these issues have been addressed within the ES.

Table 1.1: Summary of key consultation topics raised during consultation activities undertaken for the Proposed Development relevant to transboundary impacts

Date	Consultee and Type of Response	Comment	How and Where is this Considered?
7 March 2024	Planning Inspectorate, Scoping Opinion	<p><i>'It is noted that the Scoping Report includes consideration of potential transboundary effects in relation to the following aspects:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Benthic Ecology;</i> • <i>Fish and Shellfish Ecology;</i> • <i>Commercial Fisheries;</i> • <i>Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles;</i> • <i>Offshore Ornithology;</i> • <i>Other Marine Users;</i> • <i>Marine Archaeology and Cultural Heritage;</i> • <i>Physical Processes;</i> • <i>Underwater Noise; and</i> • <i>Climate Change.</i> <p><i>The Inspectorate also notes reference to potential positive impacts on other EEA States at paragraphs 9.4.37 to 9.4.38 in respect of Socio-economic effects but these are proposed to be scoped out on the basis that they are positive.</i></p> <p><i>The Inspectorate recommends that the ES should identify whether the Proposed Development has the potential for significant transboundary effects, and if so, what these are, and which EEA States would be affected. The Inspectorate will undertake a transboundary screening on behalf of the SoS in due course.'</i></p>	<p>This appendix identifies the topics that should be screened in/out of the EIA for potential transboundary impacts. A series of screening matrices have been presented for the onshore (see Table 1.3), offshore (see Table 1.4) and combined onshore and offshore topics (see Table 1.5).</p> <p>Where potential transboundary impacts have been identified, an assessment has been carried out and presented in the corresponding topic Chapter within Volumes 2, 3 and 4 of the ES.</p>

1.4 Screening of Transboundary Impacts and Effects

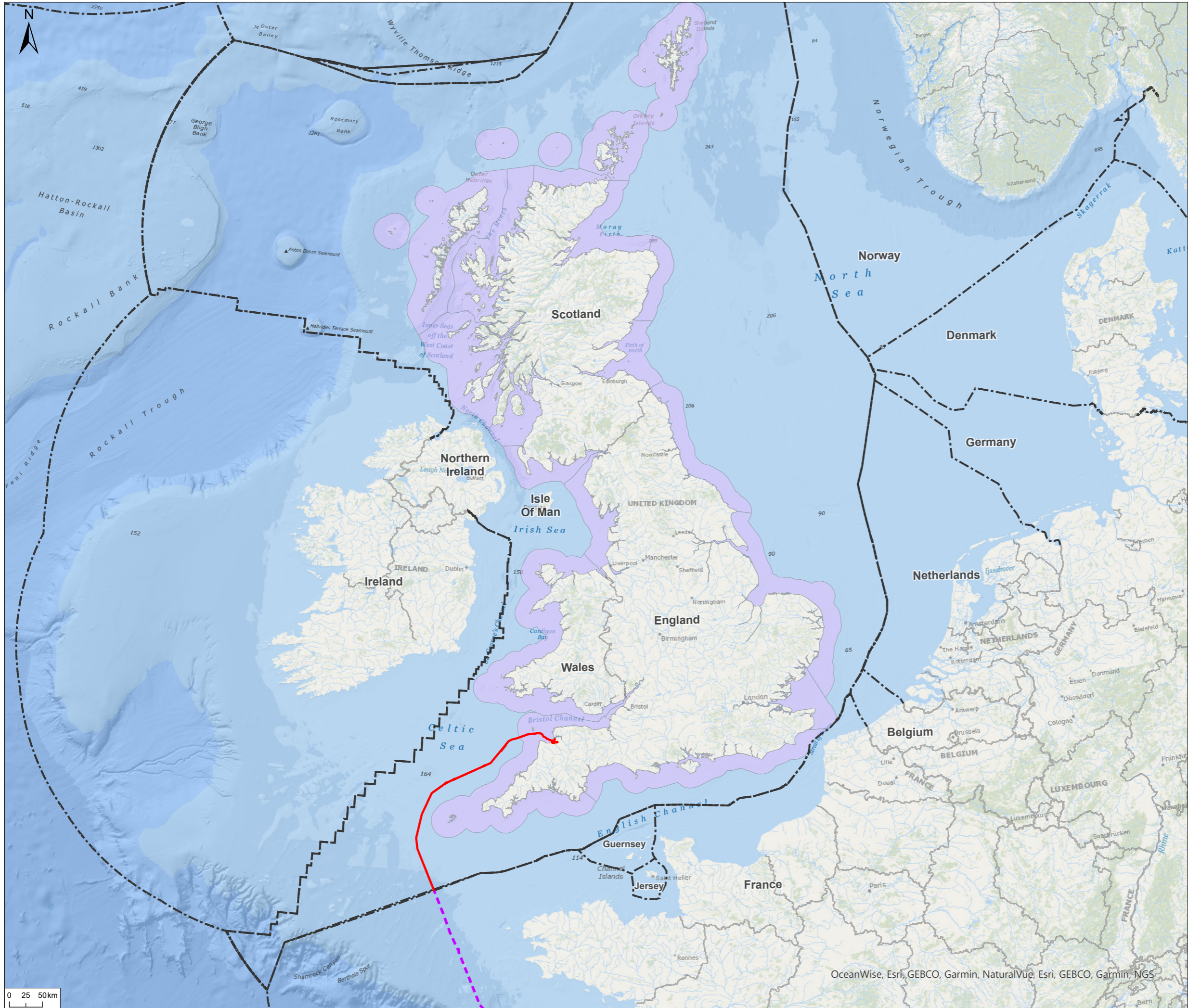
Introduction

- 1.4.1 A series of screening matrices for potential transboundary impacts associated with the Proposed Development are presented for the onshore (see **Table 1.3**), offshore (see **Table 1.4**) and combined onshore and offshore topics (see **Table 1.5**). These screening matrices have been based upon an understanding of the potential impacts arising from the Proposed Development (on the basis of the project description presented in Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project Description, of the ES) gathered during the EIA process and follow the suggested format set out by The Planning Inspectorate (2020).
- 1.4.2 The screening matrices consider all potential transboundary impacts that may occur from all phases of the Proposed Development (i.e., construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases). The matrices also address the predicted spatial and temporal scale of potential transboundary impacts for those interests that are assessed within the ES.
- 1.4.3 Potential impacts upon European designated sites within other states are considered separately within the screening process for the Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- 1.4.4 The nearest applicable state to the Proposed Development is France. The distance between the Order Limits and the jurisdictional boundary of the nearest other states is presented in **Table 1.2** and shown on **Figure 1.1**.

Table 1.2: Summary of approximate distance to the nearest applicable states

State	Distance from the Order Limits to nearest jurisdictional boundary (km)
France	0
Ireland	54
Guernsey	168
Jersey	225
Spain	320
Belgium	448
The Netherlands	474

To note, measurements are taken from the nearest point of the Order Limits. In the cases of Guernsey, Jersey, Belgium and the Netherlands, the distance is calculated from the eastern end of the onshore Order Limits.



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- Legend**
- Order Limits
 - Indicative Cable Centreline (beyond UK Jurisdictional Boundary)
 - Jurisdictional Boundary
 - UK Inshore Waters (12mn Limit)

PO1	FINAL	MP	MB	04.11.24
Rev	Description	By	CB	Date

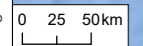


Client **Xlinks 1 Limited**
 Project **Xlinks' Morocco-UK Power Project**
 Title **Offshore Cable Route**

Status **FINAL** Scale @ A3 **1:5,500,000** Date Created **Nov 2024**
 Figure Number **1.1** Rev **P01**

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Onshore Transboundary Impacts and Effects

- 1.4.5 A transboundary screening matrix has been completed for onshore transboundary impacts and is presented in **Table 1.3**. The conclusions of the transboundary screening for each onshore topic are presented, together with additional justification, in the following sections.

Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation

- 1.4.6 The onshore ecology and nature conservation baseline for the Proposed Development is set out in Volume 2, Chapter 1: Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation of the ES.
- 1.4.7 Potential impacts on onshore ecology and nature conservation arising from the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning of the Proposed Development would be confined to a localised area around the footprint of the Onshore Infrastructure Area and/or its immediate surrounding area. These impacts would occur within the Order Limits. There is no pathway by which direct or indirect impacts arising from the Proposed Development could result in significant effects on the onshore ecology and nature conservation of another state.
- 1.4.8 Furthermore, due to the large distance between the onshore elements of the Order Limits and Natura 2000 sites located outside of the UK, it is not considered feasible that migratory birds directly associated with Natura 2000 sites in other states would be disturbed or suffer from loss of foraging or resting opportunities in any way that would be likely to result in significant effects on those Natura 2000 sites.
- 1.4.9 Therefore, potential transboundary impacts and effects on onshore ecology and nature conservation have been screened out of the EIA process.

Historic Environment

- 1.4.10 The historic environment baseline for the Proposed Development is set out in Volume 2, Chapter 2: Historic Environment of the ES.
- 1.4.11 Potential impacts on the historic environment arising from the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning of the Proposed Development would be confined to a localised area within the footprint of the onshore elements of the Proposed Development. These impacts would occur within the Order Limits and/or its immediate surrounding area. There is no pathway by which direct or indirect impacts arising from the Proposed Development could result in significant effects on the onshore historic environment of another state. Therefore, potential transboundary impacts and effects on the historic environment have been screened out of the EIA process.

Hydrology and Flood Risk

- 1.4.12 The hydrology and flood risk baseline for the Proposed Development is set out in Volume 2, Chapter 3: Hydrology and Flood Risk of the ES.
- 1.4.13 Potential impacts on hydrology and flood risk arising from the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning of the Proposed Development would be confined to a localised area affected by the footprint of the Onshore

Infrastructure Area. These impacts would occur within the Order Limits and/or its immediate surrounding area. There is no pathway by which direct or indirect impacts arising from the Proposed Development could result in significant effects on the hydrology and flood risk of another state. Therefore, potential transboundary impacts and effects on hydrology and flood risk have been screened out of the EIA process.

Geology, Hydrogeology and Ground Conditions

- 1.4.14 The geology, hydrogeology and ground conditions baseline for the Proposed Development is set out in Volume 2, Chapter 4: Geology, Hydrogeology and Ground Conditions of the ES.
- 1.4.15 Potential impacts on geology, hydrogeology and ground conditions arising from the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning of the Proposed Development would be confined to a localised area affected by the footprint of the Onshore Infrastructure Area. These impacts would occur within the Order Limits. There is no pathway by which direct or indirect impacts arising from the Proposed Development could result in significant effects on the geology, hydrogeology or ground conditions of another state. Potential transboundary impacts and effects on geology, hydrogeology and ground conditions have therefore been screened out of the EIA process.

Traffic and Transport

- 1.4.16 The traffic and transport baseline for the Proposed Development is set out in Volume 2, Chapter 5: Traffic and Transport of the ES.
- 1.4.17 Potential impacts on traffic and transport arising from the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning of the Proposed Development would be confined to a localised area of the UK highway infrastructure. There is no pathway by which direct or indirect impacts arising from the Proposed Development could result in significant effects on traffic and transport in another state. Therefore, potential transboundary impacts and effects on traffic and transport have been screened out of the EIA process.

Noise and Vibration

- 1.4.18 The noise and vibration baseline for the Proposed Development is set out in Volume 2, Chapter 6: Noise and Vibration of the ES.
- 1.4.19 Potential noise and vibration impacts arising from the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning of the Proposed Development would be confined to a localised area in the vicinity of the Order Limits. There is no pathway by which direct or indirect impacts arising from the Proposed Development could result in significant effects in another state. Therefore, potential transboundary impacts and effects on noise and vibration have been screened out of the EIA process.

Air Quality

- 1.4.20 The air quality baseline for the Proposed Development is set out in Volume 2, Chapter 7: Air Quality of the ES.
- 1.4.21 Potential transboundary impacts to air quality arising from the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning of the Proposed Development are anticipated to be minor and localised in extent and would be confined to the duration of the construction phase only. There is no pathway by which direct or indirect impacts arising from the Proposed Development could result in significant effects in another state. Therefore, potential transboundary impacts and effects on air quality have been screened out of the EIA process.

Land Use and Recreation

- 1.4.22 The land use and recreation baseline for the Proposed Development is set out in Volume 2, Chapter 8: Land use and Recreation of the ES.
- 1.4.23 Potential impacts on land use and recreation arising from the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning of the Proposed Development would be confined to a localised area within the footprint of the Onshore Infrastructure Area. These impacts would occur within the Order Limits. There is no pathway by which direct or indirect impacts arising from the Proposed Development could result in significant effects on the land use and recreation of another state. Therefore, potential transboundary impacts and effects on land use and recreation have been screened out of the EIA process.

Table 1.3: Onshore environment transboundary screening matrix for the Proposed Development

Screening Criteria	Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation	Historic Environment	Hydrology and Flood Risk	Geology, Hydrogeology and Ground Conditions	Traffic and Transport	Noise and Vibration	Air Quality	Land Use and Recreation
Characteristics of the development	For a detailed description, see Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project Description of the ES. Key onshore components of the Proposed Development include: the Landfall, onshore High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) cables, converter stations, High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) cables, utility diversions and highways improvements.							
Location	The Order Limits is 206 km ² in area (onshore and offshore). The Onshore Infrastructure Area includes land between the landfall at Cornborough Range (along the coast) and the existing Alverdiscott Substation Site in north Devon.							
Environmental Importance	No transboundary impacts are predicted. See Volume 2, Chapter 1: Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation of the ES.	No transboundary impacts are predicted. See Volume 2, Chapter 2: Historic Environment of the ES.	No transboundary impacts are predicted. See Volume 2, Chapter 3: Hydrology and Flood Risk of the ES.	No transboundary impacts are predicted. See Volume 2, Chapter 4: Geology, Hydrogeology and Ground Conditions of the ES.	No transboundary impacts are predicted. See Volume 2, Chapter 5: Traffic and Transport of the ES.	No transboundary impacts are predicted. See Volume 2, Chapter 6: Noise and Vibration of the ES.	No transboundary impacts are predicted. See Volume 2, Chapter 7: Air Quality of the ES.	No transboundary impacts are predicted. See Volume 2, Chapter 8: Land Use and Recreation of the ES.
Potential impacts and carrier								
Extent								
Magnitude								
Probability								
Duration								
Frequency								
Reversibility								
Cumulative Impacts	See Volume 2, Chapter 1: Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation of the ES.	See Volume 2, Chapter 2: Historic Environment of the ES.	See Volume 2, Chapter 3: Hydrology and Flood Risk of the ES.	See Volume 2, Chapter 4: Geology, Hydrogeology and Ground Conditions of the ES.	See Volume 2, Chapter 5: Traffic and Transport of the ES.	See Volume 2, Chapter 6: Noise and Vibration of the ES.	See Volume 2, Chapter 7: Air Quality of the ES.	See Volume 2, Chapter 8: Land Use and Recreation of the ES.
Conclusion – potential for significant effects	No significant transboundary effects.	No significant transboundary effects.	No significant transboundary effects.	No significant transboundary effects.	No significant transboundary effects.	No significant transboundary effects.	No significant transboundary effects.	No significant transboundary effects.

Offshore Transboundary Impacts and Effects

- 1.4.24 A transboundary screening matrix has been completed for offshore transboundary impacts and is presented in **Table 1.4**. The conclusions of the transboundary screening for each offshore topic are presented, together with additional justification, in the following sections. Where transboundary impacts have been screened into the EIA process, the assessment is presented in the relevant ES topic chapter.

Benthic Ecology

- 1.4.25 The benthic ecology baseline for the Proposed Development is set out in Volume 3, Chapter 1: Benthic Ecology of the ES.
- 1.4.26 There is potential for transboundary impacts upon benthic ecology due to construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning impacts of the Proposed Development. The suspension of sediment as a result of dredging during pre-lay activities and burial activities during cable laying will result in a sediment plume that could potentially cause some transboundary effects, particularly close to the French EEZ. Therefore, potential transboundary impacts and effects on benthic ecology have been screened into the EIA process.

Fish and Shellfish Ecology

- 1.4.27 The fish and shellfish ecology baseline for the Proposed Development is set out in Volume 3, Chapter 2: Fish and Shellfish Ecology of the ES.
- 1.4.28 There is potential for transboundary impacts upon fish and shellfish ecology due to construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning impacts of the Proposed Development. The suspension of sediment as a result of dredging during pre-lay activities, jetting and excavation during cable laying and cable repairs will result in a sediment plume that may cause some transboundary effects, particularly close to the French EEZ boundary. Therefore, potential transboundary impacts and effects on fish and shellfish ecology have been screened into the EIA process.

Commercial Fisheries

- 1.4.29 The commercial fisheries baseline for the Proposed Development is set out in Volume 3, Chapter 3: Commercial Fisheries of the ES.
- 1.4.30 Baseline data indicates the presence of foreign fishing fleet activity. Consultation with stakeholders in other relevant Member States, and data gathered from other relevant Member States, will inform the scope of any future transboundary impact assessment within the EIA. Therefore, potential transboundary impacts and effects on commercial fisheries have been screened into the EIA process.

Marine Mammals and Turtles

- 1.4.31 The marine mammals and turtles baseline for the Proposed Development is set out in Volume 3, Chapter 4: Marine Mammals and Turtles of the ES.

- 1.4.32 There is a potential for transboundary impacts on marine mammals due to the mobile nature of marine mammal species and the geographical scale of management units, particularly where these extend beyond the limits of UK waters. For example, grey seals can travel large distances of up to 1,200 km and have been recorded crossing the English Channel from France to haul-out sites in the south-west of the British Isles. There is also potential for transboundary impacts on sea turtles due to their highly mobile nature. Leatherback turtles travel large distances during seasonal migrations and have been recorded throughout the English Channel and wider European waters.
- 1.4.33 Direct impacts may occur during the construction and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development. However, based on the activities outlined in the scope of works, the majority of impacts during construction (and similar activities during other project phases) are likely to be localised, short-term and temporary.
- 1.4.34 Likely significant effects upon European Sites with marine mammals as qualifying features are assessed within the HRA. There are no European Sites with leatherback turtles as qualifying features to be assessed within the HRA.
- 1.4.35 Potential transboundary impacts and effects on marine mammals and turtles have been screened into the EIA process.

Offshore Ornithology

- 1.4.36 The offshore ornithology baseline for the Proposed Development is set out in Volume 3, Chapter 9: Offshore Ornithology of the ES.
- 1.4.37 There is the potential for transboundary impacts on offshore ornithology receptors due to the large foraging ranges of breeding seabird species. For example, species which breed in one jurisdiction could forage in waters in another jurisdiction. As the offshore ornithology study area encompasses breeding seabird colonies (including Natura 2000 sites) beyond the UK EEZ, there is the potential for associated seabirds to forage within the Offshore Cable Corridor. There is potential for connectivity to colonies within Irish and French EEZs. However, sites designated for breeding seabirds within the Irish and French EEZs are a considerable distance from the Offshore Cable Corridor, therefore there would be no direct impacts at colonies. It is also noted that sites within the French EEZ will be assessed within the separate application which covers the section of the Offshore Cable Corridor within the French EEZ. The scale of any potential interaction between the UK activities and sites in the French jurisdiction will by definition be less than the same linear activities when conducted within the French EEZ.
- 1.4.38 There is a single designated site, Mers Celtiques - Talus du golfe de Gascogne Special Protection Area (SPA), which is present adjacent to the Offshore Cable Corridor (in French waters but adjacent to the Offshore Cable Corridor). Due to the proximity of the SPA to the Offshore Cable Corridor, there is the potential for impacts on foraging species, where the SPA is within 2 km of the Offshore Cable Corridor. The area impacted would be very small as a proportion of the SPA, and impacts would be of a very short duration, of low magnitude and therefore negligible. Direct impacts on the SPA would be assessed within a separate application which covers the section of the Offshore Cable Corridor within the French EEZ (Potential impacts deriving from the French EEZ would, by definition, be of a greater magnitude). For transparency and to ensure consistency with the HRA (which assesses the Proposed Development's potential to affect bird species associated with relevant European Sites irrespective of EEZ borders)

transboundary impacts on offshore ornithology have been screened into the EIA process.

Shipping and Navigation

- 1.4.39 The shipping and navigation baseline for the Proposed Development is set out in Volume 3, Chapter 5: Shipping and Navigation of the ES.
- 1.4.40 Since international shipping will be included in the baseline assessment, there is no potential for additional transboundary impacts upon shipping and navigation receptors due to construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. Therefore, potential transboundary impacts and effects on shipping and navigation have been screened out of the EIA process.

Other Marine Users

- 1.4.41 The other marine users baseline for the Proposed Development is set out in Volume 3, Chapter 6: Other Marine Users of the ES.
- 1.4.42 Some transboundary impacts on other marine users may be expected due to the offshore environment between nations being frequented by marine activities including shipping, recreational boating and subsea infrastructure (cables/pipelines). However, these impacts are not anticipated to be greater than the individual impacts assessed within the UK and France offshore areas alone and are anticipated to be largely captured as part of the UK assessment (international shipping is included in the Shipping & Navigation baseline for example). Therefore, potential transboundary impacts and effects upon other marine users have been screened into the EIA process.

Marine Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

- 1.4.43 The marine archaeology and cultural heritage baseline for the Proposed Development is set out in Volume 3, Chapter 7: Marine Archaeology and Cultural Heritage of the ES.
- 1.4.44 Geomorphological change as a result of dredging during pre-lay activities, jetting during cable laying and cable repairs may change the local hydrodynamic and sedimentary processes. This change may cause some transboundary effects in certain areas. Therefore, potential transboundary impacts and effects on marine archaeology and cultural heritage have been screened into the EIA process.

Physical Processes

- 1.4.45 The physical processes baseline for the Proposed Development is set out in Volume 3, Chapter 8: Physical Processes of the ES.
- 1.4.46 There is potential for transboundary physical processes impacts given that the cable route would extend beyond the UK EEZ into the French EEZ (noting that most impact pathways are scoped out for water >20 m depth). However, the scheme is linear in nature and the activities in the vicinity of the EEZ boundary are not expected to differ in character or approach compared to those within the UK jurisdiction. For completeness, potential for transboundary physical processes impacts have been screened into the EIA process.

Underwater Noise

- 1.4.47 The underwater noise assessment for the Proposed Development is set out in Volume 3, Appendix 4.1: Underwater Noise Technical Assessment of the ES.
- 1.4.48 There is potential for transboundary underwater noise impacts given that the cable route would extend beyond the UK EEZ into the French EEZ. The scheme is linear in nature and the activities in the vicinity of the EEZ boundary will not differ in character or approach compared to those locally within the UK jurisdiction (or those locally within the French jurisdiction). There are thus no additional transboundary noise impacts identified, and no predicted increases in e.g., the magnitude of noise generation associated with transboundary impacts.
- 1.4.49 Where other relevant developments are identified within 5 nm of the EEZ boundary, the potential for transboundary cumulative impacts have been considered.

Table 1.4: Offshore environment transboundary screening matrix for the Proposed Development

Screening Criteria	Benthic Ecology	Fish and Shellfish Ecology	Commercial Fisheries	Marine Mammals and Turtles	Offshore Ornithology
Characteristics of the development	For a detailed description, see Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project Description of the ES.				
Location	The Order Limits is 206 km ² in area (onshore and offshore). The Offshore Cable Corridor extends from Cornborough Range, on the coast of Devon, through the Bristol Channel and Celtic Sea to the limit of the UK EEZ, south west of the UK.				
Environmental Importance	Potential transboundary impact. See Volume 3, Chapter 1: Benthic Ecology of the ES.	Potential transboundary impact. See Volume 3, Chapter 2: Fish and Shellfish Ecology of the ES.	Potential transboundary impact. See Volume 3, Chapter 3: Commercial Fisheries of the ES.	Potential transboundary impact. See Volume 3, Chapter 4: Marine Mammals and Turtles of the ES.	Potential transboundary impact. See Volume 3, Chapter 9: Offshore Ornithology of the ES.
Potential impacts and carrier					
Extent					
Magnitude					
Probability					
Duration					
Frequency					
Reversibility					
Cumulative Impacts	See Volume 3, Chapter 1: Benthic Ecology of the ES.	See Volume 3, Chapter 2: Fish and Shellfish Ecology of the ES.	See Volume 3, Chapter 3: Commercial Fisheries of the ES.	See Volume 3, Chapter 4: Marine Mammals and Turtles of the ES.	See Volume 3, Chapter 9: Offshore Ornithology of the ES.
Conclusion – potential for significant effects	Transboundary effects will be considered within the EIA process.	Transboundary effects will be considered within the EIA process.	Transboundary effects will be considered within the EIA process.	Transboundary effects will be considered within the EIA process.	Transboundary effects will be considered within the EIA process.

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Screening Criteria	Shipping and Navigation	Other Marine Users	Marine Archaeology and Cultural Heritage	Physical Processes	Underwater Noise
Characteristics of the development	For a detailed description, see Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project Description of the ES.				
Location	The Order Limits is 206 km ² in area (onshore and offshore). The Offshore Cable Corridor extends from Cornborough Range, on the coast of Devon, through the Bristol Channel and Celtic Sea to the limit of the UK EEZ, south west of the UK.				
Environmental Importance	No transboundary impacts are predicted.	Potential transboundary impact.	Potential transboundary impact.	Potential transboundary impact.	Potential transboundary impact.
Potential impacts and carrier	See Volume 3, Chapter 5: Shipping and Navigation of the ES.	See Volume 3, Chapter 6: Other Marine Users of the ES.	See Volume 3, Chapter 7: Marine Archaeology and Cultural Heritage of the ES.	See Volume 3, Chapter 8: Physical Processes of the ES.	See Volume 3, Appendix 4.1: Underwater Noise Technical Assessment of the ES.
Extent					
Magnitude					
Probability					
Duration					
Frequency					
Reversibility					
Cumulative Impacts	See Volume 3, Chapter 5: Shipping and Navigation of the ES of the ES.	See Volume 3, Chapter 6: Other Marine Users of the ES.	See Volume 3, Chapter 7: Marine Archaeology and Cultural Heritage of the ES.	See Volume 3, Chapter 8: Physical Processes of the ES.	See Volume 3, Appendix 4.1: Underwater Noise Technical Assessment of the ES.
Conclusion – potential for significant effects	No significant transboundary effects.	Transboundary effects will be considered within the EIA process.	Transboundary effects will be considered within the EIA process.	Transboundary effects will be considered within the EIA process.	Transboundary effects will be considered within the EIA process.

Combined Onshore and Offshore Topics Transboundary Impacts

Introduction

- 1.4.50 A transboundary screening matrix has been completed for those topics falling under the onshore and offshore combined topics and this is presented in **Table 1.5**. The conclusions of the transboundary screening for each combined topic are presented in the following sections, together with additional justification.

Climate Change

- 1.4.51 The climate change baseline for the Proposed Development is outlined in Volume 4, Chapter 1: Climate Change of the ES.
- 1.4.52 Potential transboundary impacts associated with the Proposed Development have been identified in Volume 4, Chapter 1: Climate Change, of the ES. It is noted that over the lifetime of the Proposed Development, when considered cumulatively with the Project, potential transboundary impacts and resulting effects will be beneficial. All development processes which emit greenhouse gases (GHGs) have the potential to impact the atmospheric mass of GHGs as a receptor, and so may have a transboundary impact on climate change. Transboundary impacts due to other specific international development projects are not individually identified but have been taken into account when evaluating the impact of the Proposed Development by defining the atmospheric mass of GHGs as a high sensitivity receptor. Each country has its own policy and targets concerning carbon and climate change which are intended to limit GHG emissions to acceptable levels within that country's defined budget and international commitments.
- 1.4.53 Therefore, there is potential for significant transboundary effects on climate change.

Landscape, Seascape and Visual Resources

- 1.4.54 The landscape, seascape and visual resources baseline for the Proposed Development study area is outlined in Volume 4, Chapter 2: Landscape, Seascape and Visual Resources of the ES.
- 1.4.55 Potential impacts on landscape and visual resources arising from the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning of the Proposed Development would be confined to a localised area in the vicinity of the Order Limits. There is no pathway by which direct or indirect impacts arising from the Proposed Development could result in significant effects on the landscape and visual resources of another state.
- 1.4.56 Therefore, significant transboundary effects upon seascape, landscape and visual resources are not anticipated and potential transboundary impacts and effects on seascape, landscape and visual resources have been screened out of the EIA process.

Socio-economics and Tourism

- 1.4.57 The socio-economics and tourism baseline for the Proposed Development is outlined in Volume 4, Chapter 3: Socio-economics and Tourism of the ES.
- 1.4.58 Potential transboundary impacts associated with the Proposed Development have been identified in Volume 4, Chapter 3: Socio-economics and Tourism of the ES. It is noted that, when considered cumulatively with the overall Project, there would be potential transboundary impacts upon other economic study areas, including:
- the development, construction and operation of renewable energy generation assets in Morocco; and
 - the installation of an HVDC cable which passes through international waters and near to other countries.
- 1.4.59 Given that these socio-economic impacts are likely to be positive and will happen outside of the UK, they have been screened out.

Human Health

- 1.4.60 Any impacts on human health arising from the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning of the Proposed Development would be confined to a localised area affected by the footprint of the Proposed Development. These impacts would occur within the Order Limits. There is no pathway by which direct or indirect impacts arising from the Proposed Development could result in significant effects on the human health of another state. Therefore, potential transboundary impacts and effects on human health have been screened out of the EIA process.

Table 1.5: Offshore and onshore environment combined topics transboundary screening matrix for the Proposed Development

Screening Criteria	Climate Change	Landscape, Seascape and Visual Resources	Socio-economics and Tourism	Human Health
Characteristics of the development	For a detailed description, see Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project Description of the ES. Key components of the Proposed Development include: the Offshore Cable Corridor, Landfall, onshore HVDC cables, converter stations, HVAC cables, utility diversions and highways improvements.			
Location	The Order Limits is 206 km ² in area (onshore and offshore). The Onshore Infrastructure Area includes land between the landfall at Cornborough Range (along the coast) and the existing Alverdiscott Substation site in north Devon. The Offshore Cable Corridor extends from Cornborough Range, on the coast of Devon, through the Bristol Channel and Celtic Sea to the limit of the UK EEZ, south west of the UK.			
Environmental Importance	Potential transboundary impact.	No transboundary impacts are predicted.	No transboundary impacts are predicted.	No transboundary impacts are predicted.
Potential impacts and carrier				
Extent				
Magnitude				
Probability				
Duration				
Frequency				
Reversibility				
Cumulative Impacts	See Volume 4, Chapter 1: Climate Change of the ES.	See Volume 4, Chapter 2: Landscape, Seascape and Visual Resources of the ES.	See Volume 4, Chapter 3: Socio-economics and Tourism of the ES.	See Volume 4, Chapter 4: Human Health of the ES.
Conclusion – potential for significant effects	Transboundary effects will be considered within the EIA process.	No significant transboundary effects.	No significant transboundary effects.	No significant transboundary effects.

1.5 References

Planning Inspectorate (2024). Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Transboundary Impacts and Process. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-on-transboundary-impacts-and-process> (Accessed: October 2024).