



Overview - Transboundary screening undertaken by the Secretary of State	
Project name:	North Wales Wind Farms Connection
Address/Location:	Clocaenog Forest to St Asaph, Denbighshire, North Wales
Planning Inspectorate Reference:	EN020014
Date(s) screening undertaken:	First screening: 23 April 2014, following the issue by the Secretary of State of a scoping opinion. Second screening: 1 May 2015, following acceptance of the application.
EEA States identified for notification:	First screening: none identified Second screening: none identified

FIRST TRANSBOUNDARY SCREENING UNDERTAKEN BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE	
Document(s) used for transboundary Screening:	North Wales Wind Farm Connections EIA Scoping Report Natural Resources Wales Scoping Report consultation response (10 February 2014)
Date	January 2014
Screening Criteria	Secretary of State Comments
Characteristics of the Development	<p>The proposed development is a single circuit 132kV overhead line, approximately 20km long, which would provide a connection to the national transmission network for four proposed/consented wind farms in the TAN 8 Strategic Search Area. These are located at Clocaenog, Brenig, Nant Bach and Derwydd Bach.</p> <p>The connection would run from a proposed new collector substation in Clocaenog Forest to a terminal tower near an existing substation at St Asaph. It is proposed that underground cables would then be used to connect the terminal tower at the northern end of the overhead line to the St Asaph substation. It is indicated that underground cables may be used for some sections of the connection where there are technical or environmental constraints (to be determined following environmental assessment). Neither the new collector substation, the underground cables to the St Asaph substation, nor any underground sections of the connection would form part of the proposed development.</p> <p>It is anticipated by the applicant that the supports for the overhead line would be double wood poles, although steel poles or steel towers could also be used in some locations (to be determined following environmental assessment). The wood poles would be up to 15m in height, 285mm in diameter on average, and spaced up to 100m apart. The steel poles would be of a similar height and 600-660mm in diameter. Steel towers</p>

	<p>would be approximately 26m in height and be spaced approximately 180m apart.</p> <p>Temporary working areas would be needed throughout the construction process along the route, and temporary storage areas may be required for plant and equipment.</p> <p>Traffic generation is likely to be light vehicles and vans bringing construction staff to site; deliveries of components, including wood poles, steel work, conductors, ducts and cable drums; and deliveries of plant at the start and finish of the construction period including tractors and tree felling equipment, excavators, tensioners and mobile elevated working platforms. It is anticipated that existing road accesses would be utilised where practicable and include the use of temporary trackways, comprising metal plates or hardcore of approximately 5m width.</p> <p>It is anticipated that, were a development consent order (DCO) to be granted in 2016, construction works would start as soon as possible after that and continue for a minimum of 18 months.</p>
<p>Geographical area</p>	<p>The Scoping Report does not identify any potential impacts on any area under the jurisdiction of another EEA State.</p>
<p>Location of Development (including existing use)</p>	<p>The connection would run between Clocaenog Forest and a point near an existing substation at St Asaph. It would straddle Denbighshire County Council's (DCC's) and Conwy County Council's (CCC's) administrative boundaries.</p> <p>The area is predominantly rural, made up of a mix of grazing and arable land. The connection route passes through fields, woodland and forest, watercourses and roads, and near some residential properties.</p> <p>Snowdonia National Park and the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are in the local area.</p> <p>The Elwy Valley Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are located to the north-west of the route. The distance is unspecified in the Scoping Report, however Natural Resources Wales' (NRW's) scoping consultation response suggest that the route overlaps the SAC boundaries. They are identified on the Environmental Constraints plans at Figures 2.1a – 2.1d of the Scoping Report. The Mynydd Hiraethog SSSI lies approximately 2.3 km west of the route.</p>
<p>Cumulative impacts</p>	<p>Paragraphs 5.20 – 5.24 of the Scoping Report refer to potential cumulative impacts, and identify schemes that will be considered in the cumulative impacts assessment as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clocaenog Wind Farm and substation • Brenig Wind Farm and substation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nant Bach Wind Farm • Derwydd Bach Wind Farm • Mynydd Mynllod Wind Farm • Burbo Bank Extension: onshore connection to the National Grid substation at Bodelwyddan • Gwynt y Mor substation • Bodelwyddan Key Strategic Site • North Wales Connection: 400kV reinforcements to the National Grid <p>None of the identified schemes are within the jurisdiction of another EEA State.</p> <p>It is also stated in the Scoping Report that those elements that will be related to, but not form part of, the proposed development will also be included in the cumulative impacts assessment, i.e. the new collector substation, the underground cabling to the St Asaph substation, and any sections of the connection that are undergrounded.</p>
Carrier	<p>Potential impact pathways include the transmission of pollutants by air, land or water, primarily during the construction phase as a result of, for example, excavation activity, disturbance of watercourses, or construction traffic.</p>
Environmental Importance	<p>Snowdonia National Park, the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB, and an Area of Outstanding Beauty (AOB), designated by DCC, are in the local area.</p> <p>The Elwy Valley Woods SAC and SSSI are located to the northwest of and potentially straddled by the route. The Mynydd Hiraethog SSSI lies approximately 2.3 km west of the route.</p> <p>There are five Registered Parks and Gardens in the local area.</p>
Extent	<p>Potential impacts on the features of environmental importance described above are discussed in the Scoping Report, and will be assessed in the Environmental Statement (ES), although little information is provided on potential impacts on the Elwy Valley Woods SAC. Paragraph 6.16 of the Scoping Report states that it is considered unlikely that the SAC would be significantly affected.</p> <p>At this stage, no potential effects have been identified which would be likely to result in significant effects on the environment of another EEA State.</p>
Magnitude	<p>At this stage, no potential effects have been identified which would be likely to result in significant effects on the environment of another EEA State.</p>
Probability	<p>At this stage, no potential effects have been identified which would be likely to result in significant effects on the environment of another EEA State.</p>

Duration	At this stage, no potential effects have been identified which would be likely to result in significant effects on the environment of another EEA State.
Frequency	At this stage, no potential effects have been identified which would be likely to result in significant effects on the environment of another EEA State.
Reversibility	At this stage, no potential effects have been identified which would be likely to result in significant effects on the environment of another EEA State.

Transboundary screening undertaken by the Secretary of State

Under Regulation 24 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 (as amended) ('the EIA Regulations') and on the basis of the current information available from the applicant, the Secretary of State is of the view that the proposed development **is not likely** to have a significant effect on the environment in another EEA State.

In reaching this view the Secretary of State has applied the precautionary approach (as explained in the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note 12: Transboundary Impacts Consultation), and taken into account the information currently supplied by the applicant.

Action: No further action required at this stage.

Date: 23 April 2014

Note: The Secretary of State's duty under Regulation 24 of the EIA Regulations continues throughout the application process.

SECOND TRANSBOUNDARY SCREENING UNDERTAKEN BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Document used for transboundary Screening:

The North Wales Wind Farms Connection Project Environmental Statement (March 2015)

The North Wales Wind Farms Connection Project Habitats Regulations Assessment No Significant Effects Report (March 2015)

Date:

Re-screened on 1 May 2015 following acceptance of the application

Transboundary re-screening undertaken by the Secretary of State

Following acceptance of the DCO application, which included the applicant's Environmental Statement (ES) and Habitats Regulations Assessment No Significant Effects Report (HRA NSER), the Secretary of State has reconsidered the transboundary screening decision undertaken on 23 April 2014.

The Secretary of State has had regard to the following matters that were not considered or differ from those considered at the time of the previous transboundary screening decision:

- the description of the proposed development;
- identification of additional European sites that could be affected by the proposed development.

Description of the proposed development

The design and dimensions of some elements of the proposed development had not been finalised at the time that the Scoping Report was submitted and a number of possible alternatives were described. The details of those elements have now been finalised, and they are confirmed and described in the ES. None are likely to give rise to significant effects on the environment of another EEA State. They are as follows:

- the over-grounding of the entire connection route;
- the length of the overhead line, which will be 17km; and
- the selection of double wood poles for the entire connection route, which will be between 11m and 16.6m in height, up to 470mm in diameter, and on average 79m apart.

Identification of additional European sites that could be affected by the proposed development

- In addition to the identification of the Elwy Valley Woods SAC in the Scoping Report, the ES and HRA NSER identify a number of other European sites within the selected study areas, which are 15km from the application site for SACs; and 70km from the application site for SPAs and Ramsar sites. The 70km study area was selected as a result of the Welsh Government identifying, in a consultation response, the Dyfi Estuary SPA, 68km from the application site, as potentially affected by the proposed development. Four SACs and seventeen SPAs/Ramsar sites are identified in the NSER. None of these sites lie within another EEA State.

All the European sites are screened out after an initial assessment, on the basis of their distance and/or lack of a potential pathway from the application site, with the

exception of the Elwy Valley Woods SAC and Dyfi Estuary SPA, as identified by NRW and the Welsh Government respectively, which are taken forward for further assessment.

It is concluded in the NSER that the proposed development will not have any likely significant effects, alone or in combination, on any European site and that it will not be necessary for an appropriate assessment to be undertaken. A letter from NRW dated 4 February 2015 is included in the NSER, in which NRW state that they concur with the conclusions of the NSER and are of the view that significant effects alone or in combination are unlikely to occur as a result of granting development consent for the proposed development.

The Secretary of State's conclusion

Under Regulation 24 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 (as amended) ('the EIA Regulations') and on the basis of the current information available from the applicant there is no change to the previous conclusion, and the Secretary of State remains of the view that the proposed development is **not likely** to have a significant effect on the environment in another EEA State.

In reaching this view the Secretary of State has applied the precautionary approach (as explained in the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note 12: 'Transboundary Impacts Consultation'), and taken into account the information currently supplied by the applicant.

Action: No further action required at this stage.

Date: 1 May 2015

Note: The Secretary of State's duty under Regulation 24 of the EIA Regulations continues throughout the application process.

Note:

1. The Secretary of State's screening of transboundary issues is based on the relevant considerations specified in Annex 4 to the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note 12, available on the Planning Inspectorate's website at <http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/>