



AQUIND Limited

AQUIND INTERCONNECTOR

Employment and Skills Strategy

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1.1. A range of consultations have taken place between AQUIND Limited (the “**Applicant**”) and host local authorities during the Examination of the application for the AQUIND Interconnector Development Consent Order (the “**Application**”), which seeks development consent for the proposed UK onshore and marine elements of the AQUIND interconnector project (the “**Proposed Development**”). Through this process it has emerged that an Employment and Skills Plan (“**ESP**”) would be helpful in capturing and fostering opportunities for local employment and training during the construction phase of the Proposed Development.
- 1.1.1.2. The ESP, to be produced in the future in accordance with this Employment and Skills Strategy (“**ESS**”) and pursuant to the relevant Requirement in this regard to be contained in the Development Consent Order (“**DCO**”), will focus on the four Local Authority areas in which the Proposed Development is located, as well as having consideration to the wider South East Region. The four host Local Authority Areas are:
- Portsmouth City Council
 - Havant Borough Council
 - Winchester City Council
 - East Hampshire District Council
- 1.1.1.3. The Applicant has engaged with both Solent LEP and the M3 Enterprise LEP to support the development of this ESS.
- 1.1.1.4. This ESS is produced in advance of the final ESP being generated. Many of its objectives will need to be implemented at the detailed level by the EPC Contractors for the Proposed Development and therefore it will need to be refined following formal Contract Award. It does however set clear parameters for the scope of matters that will be required to be included within the ESP.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1. TECHNICAL PROJECT OVERVIEW

2.1.1.1. AQUIND Interconnector is a new marine and onshore (HVDC) bi-directional electric power transmission link between Lovedean Substation in Hampshire, UK to Barnabos switching station in Seine-Maritime department of the Normandy region in France, with the net transmission capacity of 2000MW (the “Project”).

2.1.1.2. The Projects scope of works will include the design, manufacture, procurement, supply, transportation, construction, installation, testing, commissioning, inspection, maintenance, fault finding and repair of;

- Converter Stations (each 2 x 1000MW) in UK and France.
- Approximately 20km route length of Onshore Cable from Lovedean to Eastney.
- Approximately 182km route length of Marine Cable from Eastney to Pourville.
- Approximately 36km route length of Onshore Cable from Pourville to Barnabos.
- Approximately 238km route length of Fibre Optic Cables (up to 192 fibres), equipment and all necessary associated infrastructure.

2.2. CONVERTER STATION IN THE UK

2.2.1.1. The Converter Station in the UK is proposed to be located on the west of the existing 400kV NGET Lovedean substation, north-west of the village of Lovedean within administrative boundary of Winchester City Council, with elements of the Converter Station Area located in administrative area of East Hampshire District Council.

2.3. ONSHORE HVDC CABLE - UK

2.3.1.1. The proposed Onshore Cable Corridor passes through the urban areas of Waterlooville, Purbrook, Drayton and Portsmouth, with the landfall located at Eastney.

2.4. RESOURCES OVERVIEW

2.4.1.1. The Construction of the Proposed Development is relatively specialised. Elements such as construction of the Converter Station, onshore and marine cable installation and the undertaking of HDD require specialist contractors. There is a limited number of such contractors in the UK, and their workforce typically travels to the location of each project for the duration of construction for each specialist element. Depending

on their place of residence, they may commute, but more commonly will stay in temporary accommodation. The marine works will be undertaken by experienced crew on specialist vessels.

- 2.4.1.2. Some aspects of construction can be undertaken by local contractors, such as earthworks, landscaping and onshore cable trenching. The workforce for these elements, on many occasions are likely to be local to the South East Region.

3. OBJECTIVE OF EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS STRATEGY

3.1. OBJECTIVES

- 3.1.1.1. The Applicant has considered the approach taken by the CITB (Construction Industry Training Board) of working to achieve positive outcomes for local people and communities when developing this ESS. Its intention is to ensure that opportunities for employment and training arising from the Proposed Development can be captured in the South East Region and the more immediate local communities to the Proposed Development during the Construction Phase.
- 3.1.1.2. During the Operational Phase the Proposed Development requires very little maintenance, with the onshore cables being very reliable and buried underground and the Converter Station being design to operate unmanned. As such, there are not any substantial employment and training opportunities associated with the operation of the Proposed Development. Nonetheless, an approach is set out for local employment and skills engagement during the Operational Phase.
- 3.1.1.3. The ESS seeks primarily to support local businesses and education and skills enhancement. Employment opportunities are for the reasons set out in paragraph 2.4 are not substantial, but are fully considered as part of the Tender process being carried out in parallel to the Application process.

4. DELIVERY – CONSTRUCTION PHASE

4.1. OVERVIEW

4.1.1.1. There are many elements of the construction phase works that require specialist contractors and resources. The Applicant is intending to engage with two EPC Contractors to complete the Construction phase of the Proposed Development.

4.1.1.2. These Contractors will be engaged following a formal Tender Process. The Tender Process was launched in 2019 when a Pre-qualification process with interested organisations was completed and the subsequent Tender Documentation was issued to the pre-qualified Tenderers in December 2020.

4.2. PROJECT SCOPE OF WORKS

4.2.1.1. The scope of works for the EPC Contractors consists of;

- Design
- Manufacturing of equipment, including factory and site testing
- Site surveys
- Civil works
- Performance testing
- Installation and commissioning of equipment

4.3. CONTRACTOR COMMITMENTS

4.3.1.1. The Tender Documentation clearly states that the Applicant is committed to supporting the local communities where the Project is located.

4.3.1.2. The Tenderers are required to provide information that will further support the ESS, as demonstrated by the following instruction included in the Tender Documentation:

4.3.1.3. “The Employer is committed to supporting the local communities that the Project impacts. It is expected that the Contractor will utilise local resources and businesses wherever practicable in both the UK and France, maximising the potential for the workforce and supply chain to be sourced locally. These measures could include:

- Working with local people and local business to ensure that, where practicable, investments stay in the South East of the UK and northern France.
- Engaging with Jobcentre Plus in the UK to ensure local job opportunities, where practicable, are advertised to local unemployed people and identifying opportunities to help people get back into employment through work placements, education and skills training.

- Upskill people working on the Project, where practicable, through experiences, training and development programmes.

4.3.1.4. The Tenderers are expected to demonstrate throughout their Tender Submissions what their approach will be to adhere to this commitment made by the Employer.”

4.3.1.5. Each Tender Submission received will be evaluated against a set of specific criteria (for commercial confidentiality reasons it is not possible to share this information with parties or organisations that are not directly involved in the Tender Process), and part of this will be the Tenderers responses to the questions relevant to employment and skills shown in Table 4-1 below.

Table 4.1 - Technical Tender Return Questions

Section	Question Reference	Question
1.0 General	1.1.2.2	<p>The Tenderer shall provide up to date copies of all relevant policies and procedures associated with their organisation(s) and any Subcontractor and Consultancy arrangements they intend to have in place during Contract execution, including but not limited to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment (specifically to include recruitment of local resource) • Employment and Training Programmes for Project Resource (including apprenticeships or equivalent schemes) • Purchasing (specifically to include identification and use of local supply chain and services)
3.1 Project management	3.1.3.1 Project Execution Plan	<p>The Tenderer shall provide a project execution plan, covering both UK and France.</p> <p>The plan should include, as a minimum;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary Communication plans with the Employer, stakeholders (including residents and business in the local communities) and third parties. • Preliminary Employment and Skills Plans to support the Employer's commitments detailed in the Employment and Skills Strategy document, including but not limited to; employment, apprenticeships (or equivalent schemes), training, work placements / experience, engagement with and support of local schools, colleges and Portsmouth University, along with volunteering and community support opportunities.
	3.1.4.1 Contractor Organisation	<p>The Tenderer shall provide a description of the project organisation, including a detailed organogram. The information provided should, as minimum, provide for the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of resources (type and number, including any details that support the Employment and Skills Strategy commitments) across all disciplines and trades of the Works, defects management and all aspects of health & safety, environmental and quality management (including supervision), by location. • Interface with Employer, LOT 2 Cable Contractor, Stakeholders and Third Parties.
	3.1.5.1 Subcontractors	<p>The Tenderer shall provide details of Equipment, Plant and Works intended to be Sub-Contracted. The Tenderer shall include the following information where it is known;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Company Name, • Details of work discipline / scope to be Sub-Contracted (where applicable, clear identification of use of local resources and suppliers), • Details of equipment and plant to be purchased, • Indication of subcontract & supply resource to obtained locally.

- 4.3.1.6. In addition each Tenderer has to sign a declaration as part of their Tender Submission, this declaration states the following;
- 4.3.1.7. “Having examined the Invitation to Tender Documentation for the Project:
- We confirm that we have taken all necessary steps to inform ourselves regarding the Works, services, supplies and commitments to be provided by us pursuant to the ITT Documentation, and we understand and agree that the Employer will not be liable for any inaccuracy or insufficiency in the information available to us in connection with the Tender Process.
 - We confirm that we have understood and commit to supporting the local communities (UK and France), including the provision and delivery of an Employment and Skills Plan for the UK in conjunction with the Employer.
 - Our Tender Submission shall remain fixed and binding on us and may be accepted by the Employer at any time before the expiration of the Tender Validity Period,
- 4.3.1.8. Following the Contract Award all commitments included in the Contractor’s tender proposal will form part of the EPC Contract awarded by the Client Organisation.
- 4.3.1.9. Following engagement with both Solent LEP and the M3 Enterprise LEP, the Client Organisation has developed the Tender requirements further, issuing a formal Tender Bulletin to each of the Tenderers, providing them with further support information to ensure their responses to the questions detailed in Table 1, will deliver against the proposals made in this ESS.

4.4. EMPLOYMENT

- 4.4.1.1. It is anticipated that the Client Organisation (comprised of the Undertaker and the lead engineering team), which will be responsible for overseeing the Project Management of the Proposed Development, will consist of an estimated 25 personnel, this team will comprise of existing employees and project specific roles, many of which will be specialised, however the Client Organisation commits to ensuring that the only currently known non-specialist project specific role (Project Administrator) will be advertised (via Job Centre Plus and other avenues) and recruited locally (within the four Local Authority areas) on a contract term basis where suitably skilled personnel are available.
- 4.4.1.2. In addition, where vacancies exist for project specific roles these will be advertised both within the local area and the wider South East Region and should suitably skilled personnel be available the Client Organisation commits to recruiting from that region on a contract term basis. It is anticipated that up to 10% of the Client Organisation could be recruited on this basis.
- 4.4.1.3. All project specific roles required by the Client Organisation will be temporary / short term employment requirements during the construction phase. The Client

Organisation does not have any long-term employment requirements being generated by the Proposed Development.

4.4.1.4. At this stage it is not possible for the Client Organisation to specify the resource requirements the EPC Contractors will propose. However, it is anticipated that the Converter Station EPC Contractor could source up to 5% of their directly recruited resource locally. It is also anticipated that the HVDC Cable EPC Contractor could source up to 25% of their directly recruited resource locally.

4.4.1.5. The Client organisation has engaged with both the Solent LEP and the M3 Enterprise LEP, who have provided additional information and contact details of organisations and individuals who can support the preparation of the final ESP. These details have been shared with the Tenderers.

4.5. APPRENTICESHIPS

4.5.1.1. The Client Organisation itself will not have any long-term employment or Apprenticeship opportunities.

4.5.1.2. It is known that the majority of the Tenderers do run their own apprenticeship schemes. As part of the Tender Process, the Tenderers are required to commit to the generating at least two Level 2 Apprenticeship schemes per EPC Contract, for each year of Construction.

4.5.1.3. In addition, the Client Organisation requires the Tenderers include details of how they will support the delivery of the commitments set out in the ESS, and encourages them to consider additional apprenticeship, or equivalent scheme opportunities.

4.5.1.4. Once the Contract Award is in place the ESP will be produced in accordance with the scope of this ESS to reflect the agreements in place with the successful EPC Contractor(s), which will form part of their Contractual obligations.

4.6. EDUCATION

4.6.1.1. The Client Organisation has engaged with both Solent LEP and M3 Enterprise LEP to identify the schools and colleges in the areas of the Project. Once the list of schools, colleges and universities are confirmed, this information will be shared with the Tenderers.

4.6.1.2. It is proposed that the Client Organisation will work with Solent LEP, M3 Enterprise LEP and the nominated Careers and Enterprise Companies to formally engage and work with a number of schools, colleges and universities in the region of the Proposed development. It is anticipated that the Client Organisation, working with their chosen EPC Contractors, will make contact with all of the schools, colleges and universities identified through the engagement process, and is committed to partnering with at least 25% of the schools and colleges identified as being in the vicinity of the Proposed Development, along with engagement with Portsmouth University. These partnerships will work to deliver;

- Knowledge share educational sessions.
- Enterprise Adviser
- Work Experience opportunities

4.6.2. KNOWLEDGE SHARE EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

4.6.2.1. The Client Organisation, working with the EPC Contractors, will commit to delivering one knowledge share / educational session per partnered school per academic year.

The educational sessions will be based around one of the following three topics;

- Electricity HVDC Infrastructure and the Energy market in the UK
- Job identification / career planning (in connection with the Construction and Electricity Industry)
- Environmental Sustainability in Construction

4.6.2.2. In addition, the Client Organisation and its EPC Contractors, will commit to delivering one presentation per academic year, to each of the colleges and universities partnered with, focusing on HVDC Technology and Infrastructure (including non confidential elements of the Proposed development), targeting students associated with Engineering, Electrical and Construction based courses.

4.6.3. ENTERPRISE ADVISER

4.6.3.1. The Client Organisation, working with its Contractors, commits to placing at least one Enterprise Adviser with local College[s] in the area of the works. The college and the Adviser will be identified through engagement with the LEP's.

4.6.3.2. The Enterprise Adviser, will be made available to the local college to support the development of career planning and activities for the college, better preparing their students for the world of work. With a focus of drawing students to the Energy, Infrastructure and Construction Industry.

4.6.4. WORK EXPERIENCE

4.6.4.1. In addition, the Client Organisation, working with their EPC Contractors, propose to generate the following work experience placements per academic year (usually a 1 week duration), for each of the schools partnered with.

- 14–16-year-old work experience placement x 2

4.6.4.2. The Client Organisation has requested the Tenderers to generate additional work placement / work experience opportunities for 16+ and 19+ year old students, and the details of these commitments will be confirmed as part of the Tender Evaluation and will become part of the final ESP.

4.7. SUPPLY CHAIN UTILISATION

- 4.7.1.1. All works will be completed by Contractors, and not directly by the Client Organisation.
- 4.7.1.2. As part of the Tender Submission, each Tenderer must provide a list of their proposed Sub-Contractors. This list will not be fully developed prior to Contract Award.
- 4.7.1.3. The Client Organisation has made it clear to the Tenderers that they are committed to utilising local resources and businesses wherever possible (see above), which is reflected in the evaluation criteria of the Tender Submissions.
- 4.7.1.4. In addition, the Client Organisation has made each Tenderer aware of the resources available to them via both Solent LEP and M3 Enterprise LEP, including the Business Support Hub maintained by the Solent LEP and the Growth Hub maintained by the M3Enterprise LEP.
- 4.7.1.5. It is anticipated that around 25% - 40% of the sub-contracted works / supplies contracts could be placed with local (South East Region) organisations.

4.8. COMMUNITY SUPPORT / ENGAGEMENT

Working with Solent LEP, M3 Enterprise LEP and the local authorities, the Client Organisation, working with the EPC Contractors once appointed, commits to supporting at least one local voluntary and / or community group in the area of the works, per each of the local authorities, in advance of and during the construction period. Upon identification of the voluntary and community groups the ESP will be finalised to reflect the detail of the commitments. The Client Organisation, working with its EPC Contractors, commits to;

- Supporting one charity fund raising event, with each of the identified groups each year of the construction phase of the Proposed Development.
- Provision of volunteers to support one community event, with each of the identified groups each year of the construction phase of the Proposed Development.

4.8.1.1. In addition, further volunteering support will be provided to at least one educational / skills development organisation in the area of the works.

4.8.1.2. It would be intended that this support and engagement would always focus on one of the following aspects;

- Education
- Skills development / opportunities
- Environmental and sustainability projects

5. DELIVERY – OPERATIONAL PHASE

5.1. OVERVIEW

- 5.1.1.1. Following completion of the Construction Phase, the Proposed Development will move to the operational phase. The operation of the Proposed Development will not see personnel being permanently based at the Converter Station site in Lovedean. The Client Organisation's operational resource requirements will be small in scale specialised remote demand management and may not be located in the South East region.
- 5.1.1.2. All maintenance and repair works associated with the Interconnector (Converter Station and Cable route) will be carried out under a specialist Contract, awarded following a formal tender process.

5.2. APPROACH

- 5.2.1.1. As with the Construction Phase, the Client Organisation has encouraged the Tenderers to utilise local resource and services wherever possible.
- 5.2.1.2. There are aspects of the Operational maintenance requirements that are planned, however most of these activities are performed by specialist Engineers, employed directly by the Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) of the specialist Converter Station equipment. Other work activities that take place during the operational phase of the Project fall into two categories;
- Planned non-specialist maintenance
 - Emergency repair
- 5.2.1.3. The Client Organisation anticipates that the Maintenance and Repair Contractor will engage with local organisations to provide the non-specialist maintenance activities (such as landscaping works)..
- 5.2.1.4. The requirements for the Emergency repair activities may also benefit from utilising local organisations (such as civils contractors, traffic management and plant hire businesses), however the nature of the activity will mean the main driver or organisations to be contracted to do the work is speed of availability.

6. MONITORING & REPORTING

6.1. CONSTRUCTION PHASE

- 6.1.1.1. The Client Organisation will produce quarterly reports to be issued to the LEPs and the host local authorities, detailing progress against each of the commitments made.
- 6.1.1.2. In addition, it is also a requirement under the EPC Contract for the Contractors to provide the Client Organisation with a monthly Project Progress Report, and this report will include progress against the commitments they have agreed to and included in their EPC Contract which the Client Organisation will monitor against the commitments in the approved ESP. The relevant content within the monthly reports will be collated so that one complete quarterly report is issued to the LEPs and the host local authorities.

