

# French licences and Consent

## **1. Refusal of Project by Prefet of Seine Maritime**

As of today it seems that Aquind has received neither licences nor consents to start the process of a DCO or equivalent in France - on the contrary, France has clearly rejected the application.

The Prefet of Seine Maritime came to the conclusion that Aquind did not meet the necessary standards and conditions such a project would require. Considering the damage this project would cause in France's countryside and the effects it would have on the residents the Prefet found there were too many negative concern. A document by Non A Aquind , a non profit organisation set up in January 2019 , fully recognised as an interlocuter between the mayors, deputes, senators, specialised organisations as well as the French government via the Prefet, is attached. This document explains clearly the devastation this project would have on their local environment and its residents. The 15 mayors of the affected areas are unitedly opposed to this project.

The refusal of this project by the Prefet in 2021 is attached. According to the Secretary of the Prefet , by March 2023, Aquind had not launched an appeal. Therefore this decision is up to date and Aquind has not got a licence nor a consent for the Aquind Interconnector in France.

## **2. Loss of PCI status**

Europe refused to renew Aquind's status as a Project of Common Interest in 2021 and 2023, even though Aquind appealed against this decision. A judge within the EU Court of Justice General has dismissed Aquind's challenge to keep the interconnector plan on a list of PCI's.

## **3. A new law "Zero Net Artificialization" would not support the construction of the Aquind Interconnector**

The Zero Net Artificialization's objective is to suspend any net increase in the total amount of artificial surfaces at a time of ecological emergency, protecting biodiversity and natural soils. It stresses the importance of protecting large rural areas , together with their biodiversity and wild life habitats.

## **4. Environmental damage in France**

The Aquind Interconnector threatens to damage the beach of Pourville sur Mer. The cables would then continue along roads for for 30 km, passing through 15 villages near schools, homes, campsites, shops or sensitive buildings. All the works/amenities carried out by the municipalities along the roads over several years could be destroyed. The 320 000 Volt cables would be laid 1.20 m deep in sand , this represents a health threat to the population, fauna and flora. The 15 mayors involved are absolutely against this project. At the end of the route (30 kms), AQUIND wants to build two enormous Converter Halls, each measuring 70 meters long, 50 m wide and 22 m high, on a plot of 12 to 15 hectares of agricultural land as well as electrical equipment of substantial size. These would be constructed near homes in the villages of Varneville-Bretteville and Bertrimont. This would be connected to the Barnabos substation, which was built in the 1960s and 1970s to receive electrical output from the Penly and Paluel nuclear power stations, which already cause disturbance to local residents.

## 5. Socio-economic effects in France

The communities are extremely concerned about the effects this project would have for them during and after construction. Non A Aquind, a local officially recognised group/organisation, set up in 2019 represents the concerns of the residents of the area affected by this project. Non a Aquind has worked and corresponded with local and national governmental representatives to point out the harmful effects of this project. This has already put enormous stress on their mental and physical health .

## 6. France - Interconnectors already in existence

France has already 3 existing Interconnectors connected with GB

1. IFA - 2 GW
2. IFA 2 – 1 GW
3. Eleclink – 1GW)

A further two interconnectors have been approved

1. Gridlink -1.4 GW
2. FAB link – 1.4GW

<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/energy-policy-and-regulation/policy-and-regulatory-programmes/interconnectors>

France also has interconnectors with Belgium (IFB), Germany ( IFD), Italy (IFI), Spain (IFE) and Switzerland (IFS)

[REDACTED]

A further interconnector between Ireland and France, capacity 700Megawatts, Project of Common Interests, has been confirmed between French energy regulator CRE and their Irish counterpart CRU. (10.11.2022)

[REDACTED]

Considering the existing and planned future interconnectors, the question arises if the Aquind Interconnector is needed in France's energy supply. Would the Aquind Interconnector threaten the cost /benefit balance of the other interconnectors? What is the public benefit of the Aquind Interconnector, run by a privately owned company, not having the status of Project of Common Interest ?

The harms and benefits of this project have to be carefully considered, particularly taking into account climate emergency and biodiversity loss. Is the harm of this project to the local environment, 30 km inland) outweighing the benefits ( energy supply for a relatively short period of time in human history) Is this approach not very short sighted long term especially if there are various interconnectors currently under construction?

Aquind's position in France is then questionable. We suggest that, put together, the cumulative sum of problems facing their interconnector project, makes it unfeasible.

### **Postscript**

It is interesting to note that just before the Energy Security and Net zero SoS asked Aquind for further information relating to engagement and progress with the French side of the project, Aquind reengaged with the authorities in Normandy to secure temporary access and land investigation rights.