



## Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	Nautilus Interconnector
<b>File reference</b>	EN020023
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	21 October 2020
<b>Meeting with</b>	National Grid Ventures (NGV)
<b>Venue</b>	Microsoft Teams
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Project Update Meeting
<b>Circulation</b>	All attendees

### **Summary of key points discussed and advice given**

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section (s) 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under s51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

### ***Project Update***

The Applicant explained National Grid Ventures (NGV) is separate from the core regulated businesses of National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) Transmission Owner (TO) and National Grid System Operator (ESO). NGV have historically delivered other interconnectors through the Town and Country Planning regime rather than through the Development Consent Order (DCO) regime.

The Applicant advised it has a 1.5-Gigawatt connection agreement to connect to an as-yet unconsented and unbuilt substation in proximity to the Sizewell 400Kv network. A new NGET substation in this area is currently being promoted through Scottish Power Renewables (SPR) East Anglia 1 North (EA1N) and East Anglia 2 (EA2) DCOs. The Applicant stated that in the absence of a determination on the SPR applications, it is exploring options and locations to connect to the network in line with their connection agreement. Nautilus has received Project of Common Interest (PCI) status and is being promoted with Belgian partners Elia. Given the PCI status, the TEN-E Regulation applies, and the Applicant is looking to ensure they are mapped and programmed accordingly, with due regard to the schedule of permits and consultation requirements in affected Member States and the Applicant advised that Brexit doesn't affect this).

### ***Re-classification***

The Applicant stated that the Nautilus project has been re-classified as a Multi-Purpose Interconnector (MPI). This harnesses the point to point 'spine' of a typical point to point interconnector whilst also providing for an offshore convertor station platform to connect offshore wind and then for onward transmission. The ability to utilise transmission capacity for the offshore wind sector will reduce infrastructure in the marine and

terrestrial environments. The Applicant stated that the most likely comparison for the offshore convertor station would be a smaller scale offshore oil rig, which would most likely be sited a significant distance from shore, potentially beyond 12 nautical miles, and therefore not be immediately visible from the shore.

### ***Consultation/ Engagement***

The Applicant stated that pre the Covid-19 pandemic, it had been engaging with the communities of Suffolk and held a number of parish and town council meetings and ward member briefings with district and county councillors. The Applicant advised it has been engaging with the local authorities and has had regular meetings with East Suffolk and Suffolk County Council. The Inspectorate suggested the Applicant may wish to explore with the local authority opportunities to attend wider forums such as the East Suffolk Coast Energy Steering Board.

The Applicant stated it had established good relationships with other promoters working within the locality of Suffolk and that Briefing Packs and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents are available on the Applicant's project website.

The Applicant advised it has sought technical stakeholder feedback on the onshore siting and routing methodology. The methodology informs identification of potential locations for the routing of High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) cables, High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) cables and siting options for the convertor station siting as it related to the Sizewell overhead line and the proposed NGET substation being promoted by SPR. Further feasibility studies are being progressed into 2021.

The Applicant stated it had received constructive and positive feedback from technical stakeholders focusing on the methodology adopted to identify initial siting and routing options. The Applicant stated that the feedback included comment on the issues relating to the number of proposed developments in the area.

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to pay close attention to other proposed developments timetables when carrying out engagement or consultation to avoid peak periods.

### ***Flexibility/ Optionality***

The Applicant was advised to look at the advice note published on the National Infrastructure website which discusses the Rochdale Envelope. The Applicant advised flexibility would likely be required for the offshore platform and subsequent connections to offshore wind farms, this flexibility must be robustly justified and reasonable.

The Applicant advised more work was required on the concept offshore including technical assessment to define the project elements. It stated that optionality could be connections to different wind farms which makes the scope of assessment larger and believed there were interface issues that were required to be resolved as to whether the connection would be part of the wind farm project or the MPI.

The Inspectorate stated that projects have put forward several options, as it relates to siting and routing, for scoping but with the intention that once an application is received it is then a single or reduced number of options. The Inspectorate asked for clarification on what constituted the project beyond the interconnector aspect; was it to

develop a connector and the convertor station and then allowing for a connection in a future point in time. The Applicant confirmed that scope of the DCO would be addressed with BEIS in due course via refinement of the s35 Direction.

The Inspectorate stated that they would respond to the Applicant on the question of flexibility as further internal discussion was required. A new scoping report would be required if the Applicant put forward an application which expanded the scheme in future after the EIA scoping direction.

### ***Section 53***

The Applicant stated that there may be a need for s53 authorisation to enter land for the purposes of environmental surveying. The Inspectorate recommends that efforts should be made to agree access voluntarily and that where access has been unreasonably refused, authorisation requests may be appropriate. Engagement in respect of voluntary land access is typically for a period of 6 months but this may vary dependent on the circumstances of the negotiations. The Inspectorate added that if these powers are required, to approach PINS early as it may have significant programme implications. The Inspectorate recommended that all interaction with landowners (e.g. correspondence or conversations) regarding access should be documented to inform the s53 application.

### ***Landfall***

The Applicant advised that there is no interdependency with SPR's plan for landfall and the landfall for Nautilus. The Applicant stated that although the projects are independent, it is seeking to have a conversation with SPR to find possible ways of reducing the disruption of construction, which the Applicant advised this could involve reviewing whether there may be feasible options to consider further at the landfall. If such considerations were progressed, this would be a matter for Nautilus to assess

### ***Associated Development***

The Applicant is of the view it is likely that there may be Associated Development within scope of the project. The s35 Direction allows for this. This could include Associated Development as it relates to facilitating a connection to the transmission network. Further feasibility work will inform the scope as it relates to Associated Development.

### ***Anticipated Submission Date***

The Applicant anticipates submission of the DCO application will be Q2 2023.

### ***Specific decisions/ follow-up required?***

The following actions were agreed:

- The Inspectorate to respond on the issue of optionality and flexibility.
- The Inspectorate to arrange another meeting for Q1 2021