



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting
ABP- 315796-23
2nd meeting

Case Reference / Description	Proposed development of an offshore wind farm and associated infrastructure for Arklow Bank Wind Park (ABWP) Located on and around the Arklow Bank, approximately 6 to 15 km from the shore at Arklow, Co. Wicklow.		
Case Type	Marine pre-application consultation under Section 287		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	2 nd		
Date	23 rd August 2023	Start Time	11:00am
Location	Offices of An Bord Pleanála & MS Teams	End Time	12.30pm

Representing An Bord Pleanála

Ciara Kellett, Director of Planning (Chair)

Stephen Kay, Assistant Director of Planning

Auriol Considine, Planning Inspector

Eugene Nixon, Consultant

Marcella Doyle, Senior Administrative Officer

Cora Cunningham, Senior Executive Officer

Ashling Doherty, Executive Officer

Representing the Prospective Applicant

Kaj Christiansen, ABWP 2

James O'Hara, ABWP 2
Lauren Kirkland, GoBe
Eimear Lenehan – Head of Offshore Consents (Microsoft Teams)

The meeting commenced at 11:10

The Board's representatives began the meeting by referring to its previous meeting with the prospective applicant on the 13th of June 2023 asking if there were any comments on the record. The prospective applicants confirmed they had no comments.

Presentation by the prospective applicant:

The prospective applicant provided an update on the proposed development.

Project Design update: Having regard to the letter issued by the Board on 31st July 2023 in relation to design options, the prospective applicant is currently revising the proposed development and reducing the Wind Turbine Generator (WTG) options from 4 to 3.

It was stated that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Appropriate Assessment Report are currently underway.

The offshore Geotechnical survey has been carried out over a 3 month period.

Public consultation commenced in March 2023 and is now complete. Scoping consultation (including transboundary) issued in July 2023 and has now concluded.

Discussion:

The Board's representatives stated that the prospective applicant should be aware of the Historical and Archaeological Heritage Bill which is expected to be enacted in the coming months. The prospective applicant stated that they are aware of it and do not consider it applicable to this development as the onshore element - substation and grid connection - has already been consented by the Board.

The Board's representatives advised the applicant to be aware of the recent candidate SPA designation which needs to be assessed as part of the Appropriate

Assessment. The prospective applicant stated that it will be fully assessed in the Natura Impact Statement. They also stated they are confident of no risk of bird collision and stated that the array area is in a low to medium area of sensitivity with respect to the MPA Sensitivity Mapping that has recently been published.

The prospective applicant stated that they will address the presence of the Arklow Bank 1 windfarm in all assessments. The Board's representatives raised and emphasised the importance of including all stages of the existing windfarm in the application, which may also include the decommissioning or replacement of the development.

The prospective applicant stated that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) had been carried out as part of the OREDP I which stated that the east coast has the greatest potential for offshore renewable development including Arklow Bank 2.

A discussion took place in relation to the matters which need to be addressed in relation to the making of the application.

With respect to dates for submitting the application the prospective applicant stated that due to revising the assessment and reducing the WTG options from 4 to 3, it is now proposed that a revised date of February 2024 is envisaged to submit the application. It is their intention to submit a formal request for consultations under S.287A in relation to design flexibility over the next 2 to 3 weeks and they are expecting to conclude both pre-application consultations at the same time.

With respect to transboundary impacts, screening concluded that the following topics should be screened in having regard to the transboundary assessments in the EIAR: Air quality and climate, fish, shellfish and sea turtle ecology, marine mammals, offshore ornithology, commercial fisheries, shipping and navigation and population and human health. Assessments for these are currently underway.

The Board's representatives enquired as to whether there were any Seveso sites identified under the COMAH Regulations and advised that any reference to this needs to be included in the public notices. The prospective applicant highlighted that based on quantities of materials used with the proposed development the project does not trigger COMAH requirements. The Board's representatives stated they would also consult with the HSA in relation to this matter once the application was

submitted. The Board's representatives raised the issue of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) licence requirements, and if a dumping at sea licence will be required. The Board's representatives noted that if an EPA licence is required, this should be referred to in the public notices.

The discussion moved on to the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF). The Board's representatives stated that there are 92 policies contained within this framework. The Board's representatives noted that it would be advisable that they review all 92 policies and to use the best available data and science in the assessment. This is to ensure a thorough and robust application is submitted.

The Board's representatives suggested that the information could possibly be presented in tabular form. It is envisaged that the information is not repeated but cross referenced to the assessment in the relevant documents.

The Board's representatives advised the prospective applicant that the most up-to-date survey work should be included in the application.

The Board's representatives sought information on the location of the ports that will be used for providing the delivery and construction of the proposed development, noting that all options and elements should be included in the proposed application. The prospective applicant stated that a number of ports will be used for construction, which will include Ireland, the United Kingdom and Europe but work is ongoing in this respect. This will be covered in the development description in the EIA Report. They also stated local support will be provided for the day-to-day management of the windfarm.

The Board's representatives indicated that while Wicklow County Council is a coastal planning authority, Wexford County Council and Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council should be consulted. The Board will include a full list of prescribed bodies who will need to be notified of the application as part of closing of these consultations.

The Board's representatives raised the issue in relation to consultations with prescribed bodies specifically the National Parks and Wildlife Service NPWS.

The prospective applicant stated the Arklow Project Team met with prescribed bodies and the NPWS in 2019, 2020 and 2022. The Phase 1 Offshore Wind Projects

submitted a joint methodology for ornithological assessment to the NPWS. Wind Energy Ireland (WEI), on behalf of the Phase 1 projects, subsequently met with NPWS on 26th July 2023, at which the NPWS committed to reviewing the joint methodology, following on from the meeting additional information was submitted to NPWS.

The prospective applicant noted that they were preparing a list of existing and consented projects with respect to cumulative impact assessment including UK offshore projects.

The meeting moved on to discussing the flexibility on design option and in this regard gave a brief presentation in relation to this. It was stated that while some of the other projects may be able to progress with two options, it was felt that the project is more viable with 3 options. One Wind Turbine Generators (WTG) design to be installed on monopile foundations (previously monopile or jacket options proposed) and its associated WTG layout to be reduced from 4 to 3 options. The third option is required to avail of technology which is in development and justification will be provided. The other factors in relation to the number of options relates to the limited number of vessels with capacity to supply turbines and the limited number of turbine manufacturers. In this regard it is hoped to have consent for the project by 2025 taking into account any delays that might arise.

In this context the Board's representatives stated it is the prospective applicant's responsibility to fully justify the 3 options proposed and to address all items in relation to the legislation. A formal request under section 287A of the Act will be required to be submitted to the Board regarding the design options.

In any formal request under section 287A the prospective applicant was advised to have regards to the contents of the Board's letter issued on the 31st July 2023, and that future presentation at application stage should be in a clear and concise manner to enable the Board to fully assess each option and also to ensure that third parties would have a clear understanding of what is involved when the application is submitted to the Board.

The Board's representatives recommended that a formal request under section 287A be submitted ahead of any further meeting. In this context the prospective applicant was advised to provide clarity around flexibility and to clearly state the parameters proposed arising from which option is chosen and also to state whether any temporary construction arrangements will be in place.

Conclusion:

The record of the instant meeting will issue in due course and the prospective applicant can submit any comments it may have in writing or alternatively bring any comments for discussion at the time of any further meeting.

The meeting concluded at 12:30PM

 9/10/23

Ciara Kellett

Director of Planning