



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

**Record of Meeting**  
**ABP- 315801-23**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> meeting**

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	Offshore windfarm with a maximum of 42 WTGs off the coast of Dublin, Meath and Louth.		
<b>Case Type</b>	Marine pre-application consultation under Section 287		
<b>1st / 2nd / 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup>		
<b>Date</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> September 2023	<b>Start Time</b>	11:00am
<b>Location</b>	Offices of An Bord Pleanála	<b>End Time</b>	12:35pm

<b>Representing An Bord Pleanála</b>
Ciara Kellett, Director of Planning
Stephen Kay, Assistant Director of Planning
Karla McBride, Senior Planning Inspector
Eugene Nixon, Consultant
Maeve Flynn, Ecologist
Cora Cunningham, Senior Executive Officer
Ashling Doherty, Executive Officer

<b>Representing the Prospective Applicant</b>
Tina Raleigh, Statkraft Ireland
Enda O'Doherty, Statkraft Ireland
Anna Jamieson, Statkraft Ireland
Erin Snaith, Statkraft Ireland

The meeting commenced at 11:00

The Board referred to the record of the last meeting and asked if the applicant has any comments.

**Presentation by the prospective applicant:**

The prospective applicant gave a recap of the proposed development which is North Irish Sea Array (NISA) offshore windfarm which will be located approximately 13km off the coast of counties Dublin, Meath and Louth. The offshore infrastructure will include 35-46 offshore wind turbines, foundations and offshore cabling (subject to change – iterative design process), offshore substation, onshore cable and grid facility. Associated infrastructure will include an operation and maintenance (O&M) facility which will be subject to a separate planning application.

The prospective applicant stated that it was successful in the Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (ORESS) auction in June 2023. Six public consultation meetings have been held in June and July 2023 which were well attended. Further public consultations are due to be held in Q4 of 2023.

The proposed project is advancing with a reduced offshore footprint of up to 64% in comparison to the Marine Area Consent (MAC) extent. The onshore cable is approximately 33km in length. Two landfall locations had previously been proposed this has now been reduced to one which is located north of Balbriggan, to the existing EirGrid/ESBN substation at Belcamp, Co. Dublin. While the initial Malahide cable route was considered, an alternative route is also being considered due to heavy congestion and the proposed Metro Link development along the Malahide cable route. The alternative route being considered may be along the Hole in the Wall Road and onto the Malahide Road to substation at Belcamp.

The new North-West Irish Sea candidate Special Protection Area (cSPA) was designated in mid-July under the EU Birds Directive and is ecologically connected to several existing Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in the area. The prospective applicant met with Wind Energy Ireland and National Parks and Wildlife Service

(NPWS) in July 2023 to discuss the new designation. The prospective applicant is awaiting a response from NPWS in relation to the conservation objectives. The NPWS confirmed that they do not consider this cSPA to be a barrier to consent and that SPAs and ORE are not mutually incompatible. The prospective applicant will be including the cSPA as part of the Natura Impact Assessment (NIS).

### **Discussion:**

The Board's representatives sought an update on the surveys in relation to the proposed development. The prospective applicant stated that Geophysical surveys are ongoing and environmental, and consent focused. The Belle Hill wreck will require further investigation. Shallow geotechnical surveys were carried out. Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) have been completed with design surveys ongoing. Collision risk models are being carried out with cumulative effects assessed in consultations with other Phase 1 projects.

The Board's representatives sought an update on the public consultations that were held. The prospective applicant stated the public consultations were well attended and there was a keen interest in the proposed development including construction and the operational element. There were visualisation rooms set-up to demonstrate the proposed layout of the development. Meetings were attended with the fisheries community. Further public consultations are to be held.

The Board's representative sought an update on port options for the turbine delivery. The prospective applicant confirmed their preference would be an Irish port but the challenges they face include the ports not being ready. They are liaising with Irish and UK ports.

The Board's representatives sought clarity on the turbine foundation with regards to the drilling and piling in relation to where the sediment would go. The prospective applicant stated they are reviewing this, and it will depend on the nature of the sediment (fine or coarse). It confirmed that both fine or larger sediment will settle on the seabed. Engagement with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is ongoing having regard to this. How the sediment settles will be fully assessed in the EIAR. They also stated that any drilling additive would be non-toxic. The Board's

representatives advised that if a Dumping at Sea licence is required, this should be stated on the public notices for clarity.

The Board's representatives sought an update on bird surveys and bird collision. The prospective applicant stated that a robust assessment will be submitted. The prospective applicant discussed monitoring devices on turbines on a recent assessment in Scotland, which shows the birds and bats are flying through the array but avoiding the turbines.

The Board's representatives highlighted the importance of the potential legislative change in the Historic and Archaeological Heritage Bill 2023. It is important to monitor its progress, as changes may be required before submitting an application. Reference was made to the recent cSPA designation and sensitivity mapping which will be addressed in the submitted Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and NIS. The prospective applicant stated that they had a pre-application consultation open under section 182A and will assess this when it comes to lodging this application. Both projects are fully described under section 182A and section 287.

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 and it would be optimal for the prospective applicant to systematically assess the application on the basis of each of these policies. The prospective applicant confirmed that they would assess each policy and will provide it as a standalone document or an appendix to the EIAR.

The prospective applicant stated they are of the opinion that there are no transboundary issues but will engage with any relevant bodies. The 4 coastal planning authorities are Louth, Meath, Fingal and Dublin City Council, they do not believe Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council need to be included but may be notified as a prescribed body. The Board's representatives stated that the impacts on developed and proposed windfarms on the west coast of the UK should also be considered.

The prospective applicant noted that Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations do not appear to be relevant to the proposed development but will be assessed in the proposed application. The Board's representatives advised that if the Regulations apply that this would need to be referenced in the public notice.

The prospective applicant raised some queries in relation to design option flexibility and stated flexibility would be required for the construction element of the project having regard to the turbine layout. The Board's representatives referred to the contents of the letter issued on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 and advised the prospective applicant to submit a formal request to the Board under section 287A of the Act and stated that a further meeting will be scheduled to discuss this matter.

The prospective applicant stated they are hopeful to submit the application in Q1 of 2024.

The Board's representative confirmed that all procedural matters together with an application form and sample public notices will be provided at the final meeting.

**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 onus is on the prospective applicant to either request a further meeting.

The meeting concluded at 12:35pm



**Ciara Kellett**

**Director of Planning**