



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

Record of Meeting ABP- 316332-23 1st meeting

Case Reference / Description	Offshore windfarm with a maximum of 42 WTGs off the coast of Dublin, Meath and Louth.		
Case Type	Marine pre-application consultation under Section 287A		
1st / 2nd / 3rd Meeting	1 st		
Date	2 nd November 2023	Start Time	11:40am
Location	An Bord Pleanála	End Time	12:30am

Representing An Bord Pleanála
Ciara Kellett, Director of Planning
Stephen Kay, Assistant Director of Planning
Karla McBride, Senior Planning Inspector
Eugene Nixon, Consultant
Marcella Doyle, Senior Executive Officer
Ashling Doherty, Executive Office

Representing the Prospective Applicant
Anna Jamieson, Statkraft Ireland
Erin Snaith, Statkraft Ireland
Fiona Patterson, Arup
Tina Raleigh, Statkraft Ireland via Microsoft Teams
Enda O'Doherty, Statkraft Ireland via Microsoft Teams

The meeting commenced at 11:40

The Board referred to the letter received from the prospective applicant requesting pre-application consultations under Section 287A. The Board mentioned general procedures in relation to the pre-application consultation process as follows:

- The Board will keep a record of this meeting. Such records will form part of the file. The record of the meeting will not be amended by the Board once finalised, but the prospective applicant may submit comments on the record which will form part of the case file.
- The prospective applicant should note that a separate Board opinion will issue in respect of 287B of the Act which will not be available for public inspection until an application for permission is made to the Board.
- At the conclusion of the pre application process under section 287A, the case file including the record of the meeting held and the report of the reporting Inspector detailing the issues arising in the consultation, will be forwarded to the Board. The Board will issue an opinion under section 287B as to whether or not it is satisfied that it is appropriate that the proposed application be made and decided before the prospective applicant has confirmed certain details of the application.
- The holding of consultations does not prejudice the Board in any way and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or any legal proceedings.

Presentation by the prospective applicant:

The prospective applicant gave a brief description of the policy and guidance context which included design flexibility for maritime development. It outlined the key areas in which it would be requesting design flexibility including wind turbine types, foundations, siting of offshore infrastructure including offshore substation platforms (OSP). The justification as to why the proposed development would require flexibility includes technological advancements in turbine design with more efficient turbines being designed and produced at a rapid rate. Due to turbine manufacturers ceasing production of less efficient turbines the prospective applicant is uncertain as to what type of turbine will be available at the time of construction. The type and size of

foundations is reliant on a number of key factors which will be unknown at the time of the application but include the model of the turbine and geotechnical investigations at the identified turbine locations. The siting of offshore infrastructure including OSP will also be reliant on wind turbine types being confirmed, the final layout and geotechnical investigations at the confirmed locations.

The proposed development boundary has been reduced by 64% from the Maritime Area Consent (MAC) boundary which significantly reduces the extent of the request for flexibility. While it will be putting forward a fixed turbine layout, it will require a limit of deviation of 500m radius from the centre point. The reasoning behind the 500m is due to the variability of the seabed and underlying geology at the proposed location site. The first round of investigation surveys on the entire site has taken place using survey lines that are 500m apart.

The export cable corridor limit of deviation will be wider at the array and narrower at the landfall but on average it is seeking a 1km limit of deviation either side of the central line, with up to 2km closer to the array end of the cable and 250 metres close to the landfall point.

Discussion:

The Board's representative sought clarity regarding the two options for the turbine layouts and queried if both would require the 500m limit of deviation radius around each turbine, to which the prospective applicant confirmed that it is what they will be applying for at application stage.

The Board's representatives stated that the prospective applicant must clearly state what is being applied for to ensure that the Board and the public have a clear understanding of the proposed development.

The Board's representative sought clarity on the OSP and if it will be presenting a number of options in relation to the layout. The prospective applicant stated it will be one location per layout. The application will include two plans and two layouts, (Option A, Option B), with the OSP location dependent on the turbine layout.

The prospective applicant stated they will have a marine archaeological interpretation of their geophysical results which will be submitted to the National Monuments Service (NMS) under their foreshore licence. The geophysical data has

been interpreted and areas of archaeological potential have been identified and resulted in recommended archaeological exclusion zones. The documents have been submitted and approved by NMS.

The Board's representatives sought clarity on the export cable alignment and how it will be reliant on which option is chosen. The prospective applicant confirmed that the export cable corridor will be the same for both layouts and confirmed it will be buried.

The Board's representatives sought clarity in relation to the prospective applicant requiring flexibility with respect to the subsea cabling size as part of the design opinion. The prospective applicant stated that the cable size is based on the kilovolts (kV) it can carry which is increasing on an ongoing basis due to technological advances. The more kV a cable can carry determines the amount of cable that will be required with the expectation in the future being the cable carrying a higher kV, will require less cable. For these reasons the prospective applicants stated that it was their intention to present a range of cable diameters.

The Board's representative sought clarity in relation to why flexibility was required for cable protection in relation to the proposed development and why it should be part of the design option. The prospective applicant stated that cable burial is the most effective form of protection. Cables are buried to a certain depth of cover which is a function of the existing seabed and future erosion potential. It also stated it is not uncommon for projects to fail to achieve the burial depth of cover due to geological reasons. It has not carried out a cable burial risk assessment in relation to the potential impacts of marine traffic on those cables. In the event that the array area or export cable carries a risk including from anchor strikes or trawling activities it will increase cable protection in the form of rock armour or concrete mattresses. A navigational risk assessment will form part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

A further discussion was held in relation to the cable protection being included in the design flexibility option to which the prospective applicant stated they would discuss it further to consider if it should be included in the design opinion request or normal construction. The Board's representative highlighted how the section 287A process

allows for only one meeting as per legislation and no further meetings can be held to discuss this further.

The prospective applicant discussed submitting a separate planning statement at application stage to include the document submitted to the Board with respect to the design options, the opinion of the Board and the commitment they will make to the conditions issued by the Board in relation to the flexibility.

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.

The meeting concluded at 12.30pm

C. Kellett 22/11/23

Ciara Kellett

Director of Planning