



Overview - Transboundary screening undertaken by the Secretary of State	
Project name:	Mid Wales Electricity Connections (SPEN) ('the Proposed Development')
Address/Location:	Powys, Mid Wales between eight proposed wind farm developments and a proposed new 400kV/132kV National Grid substation near Cefn Coch.
Planning Inspectorate Ref:	EN020008
Date(s) screening undertaken:	First screening – 17 October 2014 following the applicant's request for a scoping opinion
EEA States identified for notification:	First screening: None identified

FIRST TRANSBoundary SCREENING UNDERTAKEN BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE	
Document(s) used for transboundary Screening:	SP Mid Wales Connections Scoping Report ('the Scoping Report')
Date	23 July 2014
Screening Criteria:	Secretary of State Comments:
Characteristics of the Development	<p>The Proposed Development forms part of plans to provide new 132kV connections between eight 'contracted' wind farm developments (for which consents are being proposed/submitted separately) and a proposed new 400kV/132kV National Grid (NG) substation near Cefn Coch. The key components of the proposed development are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approximately 67 km 132kV single circuit overhead wood pole lines and 4 km 132kV double circuit overhead steel tower design;• Options for potential 132kV underground cable;• Diversion of approximately 150 m of the existing 132kV overhead line that runs from Carno I and Carno II wind farms into the existing 132kV Newtown – Oswestry circuit;• Integral undergrounding of a section of the existing 33kV overhead line south of Trefeglwys;• Integral construction works and accesses for the above works; and• Integral Mitigation works for the Proposed Development (e.g. screen planting, habitat enhancements). <p>The proposed new 132kV overhead lines and underground cables and the majority of the integral construction, access and mitigation works will be within 100m wide Preferred Line Route Alignments. There is also a need for some new integral construction accesses to be formed outside of these Line Routes.</p> <p>Linked development that does not form part of the proposed NSIP (and for which separate consent applications will be submitted) comprises:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 33kV overhead line connection (2km of single circuit overhead wooden poles) between one of the eight contracted wind farms (Neuadd Goch Bank Wind Farm) and the proposed development; and • A 132kV/33kV substation and associated construction works/Accesses. <p>The source of energy generation and the means by which this energy will connect to the national electricity grid are identified as 'Related Developments' which will also be subject to separate planning consents. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The eight proposed Contracted Wind Farms; • The proposed NG 400kV/132kV substation; and • The proposed NG 400kV connection. <p>It is currently anticipated that (subject to consents being granted) work on site will commence in 2016. Construction is anticipated to take approximately three years. The construction phase is therefore anticipated to be completed and the Proposed Development operational in 2019.</p>
Geographical area	The Scoping Report does not identify any impacts upon other EEA states.
Location of Development (including existing use)	<p>The Preferred Line Route Alignments (PLRA) are situated within the Powys County Council (PCC) authority area in Mid Wales. They pass through the rural valleys of Powys County where there exists a variety of land types and uses, including farmland; residential properties and villages; woodland and plantations; wind farms and moorland.</p> <p>The distance to the nearest EEA State or nearest coast is not provided in the Scoping Report. Given the location of the site in Mid Wales the nearest other EEA State is likely to be the Republic of Ireland, separated from Wales by the Irish Sea.</p>
Cumulative impacts	Section 5 of the Scoping Report sets out the proposed approach to the assessment of cumulative effects of the Proposed Development with other relevant projects. The projects to be considered in the assessment include the linked development described above together with another proposed substation and any other reasonably foreseeable proposed developments considered by PINS, PCC and other statutory consultees as relevant.
Carrier	Transmission by movement of or loss or disturbance of species which are important to other EEA States.
Environmental Importance	<p>Environmental designations/features identified within 2km of the PLRA include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC): represents a large, linear ecosystem which acts as an important wildlife corridor, an essential migration route and

	<p>a key breeding area for many nationally and internationally important species. The Upper Wye is of special interest for its associated plant and animal communities, including aquatic plants, otters, fish and invertebrates that are important in a European context. Its character spans a range of types from an upland base-poor stream to lowland river.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coedydd Llawr-y-Glyn SAC: five separate areas of woodland situated on hill slopes around the headwaters of the River Trannon. All are dominated by, mostly even-aged, sessile oak but there are variable amounts of downy birch, hazel, holly and rowan, and in some areas pedunculate oak is present. Some areas of flora are also identified. • Berwyn a Mynyddoedd De Clywd (Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains) SAC: a large upland site, containing the largest area of blanket bog and European dry heath in Wales. • The Gweunydd Camnant SSSI: supports a large population of the greater butterfly-orchid. Other locally uncommon plant species recorded include adder's-tongue and smooth brome. The fields are bordered by species-rich hedgerows and deciduous and coniferous woodland. This SSSI is designated for habitat mosaics including herb-rich neutral grassland, marshy grassland and mires. • River Ithon SSSI: represents a large, linear ecosystem, which acts as an important wildlife corridor, an essential migration route and a key breeding area for many nationally and internationally important species. The River Ithon is of particular interest for aquatic habitats, fish and otter populations. • Gweunydd Esgairdraenllwyn (Esgairdraenllwyn Pastures) SSSI: includes a large area of pasture land supporting a range of vegetation types and a rich variety of plants, including a number of locally uncommon species. The most frequent plant community is unimproved acid grassland, which has transitions to associated marshy grassland, swamp and riparian habitats. • Coid Hafor-Fraith SSSI: This SSSI is a good example of sessile oak woodland with plentiful rowan and a ground layer dominated by moss carpets on freely draining soils. Wetter areas adjacent to streams increase the variety of plant species present and the occurrence of the oak fern is of particular interest. • Coed Craig-iar SSSI: a good example of sessile oak-birch woodland with a variable quantity of hazel understorey. Different acidic woodland types are also present, including pure high forest oak, birch-hazel, birch areas and a local development of birch-alder-willow carr. A large number of flowering plant species have also been recorded. • Llyn Mawr SSSI: a good example of a moderately nutrient-poor upland lake in a catchment only partially modified by agricultural improvement. It is of considerable ornithological importance and is extensively used by waterfowl. In summer, typical species are mallard, tufted duck and goosander, whilst in winter species include
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	<p>whooper swan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gweynydd Dolwen SSSI: stands of dry acid grassland are dominated by sheep's fescue and common bent together with characteristic forbs such as betony, common bird's-foot-trefoil and bitter-vetch. Other plant species, indicative of agriculturally unimproved grassland swards, are present, including a population of the uncommon greater butterfly-orchid. • Bryn Coch SSSI: fen and associated wetland vegetation has developed at the watershed between two streams. It contains a variety of vegetation types, including deep peat (including bog pools), rich and transitional fen vegetation, peat cuttings, acidic and base-rich flushes, fen-meadow and various types of grassland. • Coed y Lawnt a Coed Oli SSSI: a good example of a wet hillside woodland characterised by birch, with a significant amount of alder and including a wet moss carpet in the ground layer. Species with a good representation are ferns, notably hard fern, lady-fern and soft shield-fern, and moisture-loving plants such as opposite-leaved golden-saxifrage, bog stitchwort and marsh violet. • Corl Llyn Coethlyn SSSI: a good example of a valley mire system. It supports three vegetation types of outstanding interest – extensive areas of bog-moss lawn, mid- nutrient areas with slender sedge, and birch/ willow carr. • Various protected species including badgers, water voles, otter, dormice, bats, red squirrels, nesting/breeding birds, great crested newts and various reptiles/invertebrates/fish; • Dyfnant National Forest; • Natural/Ancient Woodland; and • Local Wildlife Sites; • Archaeological/Heritage assets; • Flood Zones. <p>Snowdonia National Park is located approximately 9 km to the north-west and Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) lies approximately 6 km to the east.</p> <p>Land use in the surrounding area is mainly rural, with a mix of pastoral and small scale arable farming in lower-lying areas. On higher ground, rough grassland and heather moorland predominates. There are also some relatively large areas of commercial forestry such as Dyfnant Forest. Nearby settlements include small villages, hamlets and dispersed individual properties with the large settlement of Newtown approximately 7 km to the north east of the site.</p>
Extent	The zone of influence for potential ecological impacts is not defined in the Scoping Report and no information is provided on the movements of migratory species that could be affected.

	No potential impacts which have the potential to affect another EEA State are identified in the Scoping Report.
Magnitude	There are no potential impacts which would be likely to affect another EEA State.
Probability	There are no potential impacts which would be likely to affect another EEA State.
Duration	There are no potential impacts which would be likely to affect another EEA State.
Frequency	There are no potential impacts which would be likely to affect another EEA State.
Reversibility	There are no potential impacts which would be likely to affect another EEA State.

Transboundary screening undertaken by the Secretary of State

Under Regulation 24 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 (as amended) (the EIA Regulations) and on the basis of the current information available from the Applicant, the Secretary of State is of the view that the proposed development is **not likely** to have a significant effect on the environment in another EEA State.

In reaching this view the Secretary of State has applied the precautionary approach (as explained in the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note 12: Transboundary Impacts Consultation); and taken into account the information currently supplied by the Applicant.

Action:

No further action required at this stage.

Date:

17 October 2014

Note: The Secretary of State's duty under Regulation 24 of the EIA Regulations continues throughout the application process.

Note:

1. The Secretary of State's screening of transboundary issues is based on the relevant considerations specified in Annex 4 to Planning Inspectorate Advice Note 12 available on the Planning Inspectorate's website at <http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/>