Planning Inspectorate
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Transboundary screening undertaken by the Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) on behalf of the Secretary of State (SoS) for the purposes of regulation 32 of The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (The 2017 EIA Regulations)	
Project name:	East Irish Sea Transmission Project
Address/Location:	The area of the Irish Sea in English waters and a land fall area reaching from Crosby at the southern end, to Fleetwood at the northern end, and Penwortham at the Eastern extent.
Planning Inspectorate Ref:	EN0210008
Date(s) screening undertaken:	First screening – 18/02/2026 following the applicant's request for a scoping opinion

FIRST TRANSBOUNDARY SCREENING	
Document(s) used for transboundary Screening:	Environmental Impact Assessment – Scoping Report ('the Scoping Report') 14 August 2025
Screening Criteria:	**The Inspectorate's Comments:**
Characteristics of the Development	The proposed development comprises the construction, operation and decommissioning of transmission assets required to enable the export of electricity from the Mooir Vannin Offshore Wind Farm via offshore and onshore export cable corridors to the National Grid connection point at Penwortham, Lancashire. The proposed development is likely to include the following key components: **Offshore** • Offshore export cable corridor containing up to four cables in four circuits • Up to three offshore booster stations • Scour and cable protection • Cable crossings The Scoping Report states that multiple foundation types remain under consideration for the offshore booster stations. These include monopiles, piled jackets, suction bucket jackets and mono suction buckets. Multiple methodologies remain under consideration for the installation of offshore export cables. Table 3.2 lists the burial

	techniques including installation into a pre-cut trench, installation via post-lay burial, or a combination of trenching, dredging, jetting, mass flow excavator, ploughing and/or vertical injection. **Onshore** • A landfall site • Onshore export cable corridor containing four cables in four circuits • An onshore substation, either housed in a building or an open compound or a combination of the two. • Energy balancing infrastructure either housed in a single or multiple buildings (up to twenty, including tanks). **Duration** The Scoping Report sets out the construction elements and an installation period at section 3.6. Figure 3.7 provides a high-level illustration of the construction programme. It indicates that construction of the onshore elements of the proposed development will be initiated first, taking just over three years to complete each element. The offshore construction period will commence in the third year of construction and take approximately two years to complete. The proposed development is expected to be operational within Q2 of the fifth construction year. The operational and maintenance phase of the proposed development is described in section 3.7 of the scoping report. An operational lifespan is not stated. Section 3.8 describes the decommissioning phase. Paragraph 3.8.1.2 states that it is expected that all offshore structures above the seabed will be removed, with offshore cables, including protection measures, being left in-situ.
Location of Development (including existing use) and Geographical area	**Offshore:** The proposed development would extend from the Mooir Vannin Offshore Wind Farm, 11 km off the east coast of the Isle of Man, to one of two landfall sites under consideration on the coasts of Lancashire or Merseyside. The proposed development is located entirely within English territorial waters. The location of the offshore element of the proposed development is shown on figure 3.2. **Onshore:** The Onshore scheme is split into two options, both connecting to the proposed substation approximately 5km from the NGET Penwortham substation. The landfall for the northern option (Option A) is located in Fleetwood, north of Blackpool, within the county of Lancashire. The associated onshore cable route corridor is located entirely within Lancashire.

	The southern option (Option B) makes landfall near Sefton, within the county of Merseyside. The cable route then tracks north, following the Merseyside/Lancashire border, but remains primarily within Lancashire. The land uses within the Option A cable corridor are predominantly agricultural and urban, with small areas of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land. No sites designated for their ecological, landscape, or heritage value are within the red line boundary. The land uses within the Option B cable corridor are pre-dominantly agricultural, with some areas of BMV land. A number of historic and permitted waste and authorised landfill sites are located within the cable route corridor of both options. The nearest EEA state to the proposed development is the Republic of Ireland at 92.82km. Whilst the Isle of Man is not an EEA member, the Applicant has still considered it as a transboundary state for the purposes of their assessment. For the purposes of this screening, as it is not an EEA state, there will not be further consideration of the potential impacts to the Isle of Man as a result of the proposed development.
Environmental Importance	**Offshore environment:** Annex 6 of the Scoping Report summarises that transboundary impacts for the following environmental aspects are unlikely to arise and can be screened out: • Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment • Archaeology and Cultural Heritage (offshore) • Benthic, subtidal and intertidal ecology (offshore) • Marine oceanography and physical processes (offshore) • Marine water and sediment quality (offshore) • Military and Civil Aviation (offshore) • Other marine users and activities (offshore) • Ecology (onshore) • Land Use and Ground Conditions (onshore) • Traffic and Transport (onshore) • Onshore Archaeology and Heritage (onshore) • Noise and Vibration (onshore) • Air Quality (onshore) • Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Flood Risk (onshore) • Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (onshore) • Human Health and Wellbeing (onshore) • Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation (overarching) • Climate Change (overarching) • Materials and Waste (overarching) • Major Accidents and Disasters (overarching) A number of designated sites are present within the scoping boundary, including Morecambe Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Shell Flat and Lune Deep SAC, Fylde

	Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), West of Walney MCZ and West of Copeland MCZ. A number of designated sites are also within the wider scoping study area for the offshore area, including Sefton Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Lune Estuary SSSI, Ribble Estuary SSSI, Wyre Estuary SSSI, North Wirral foreshore SSSI, Morecambe Bay SSSI and South Walney and Piel Channel Flats SSSI. Table 3.8 and Figure 4.2 (Volume 5, Annexes 3 and 4) show the UK European sites and MCZ currently being assessed by the Applicant. As well as describing receptors of environmental importance located within the UK, the Scoping Report includes, within Table 6.2 of Volume 5 Annex 6, reference to potential receptors within EEA States within the following offshore aspect chapters: • Offshore and intertidal ornithology • Fish and shellfish ecology • Marine mammals and megafauna • Commercial fisheries • Shipping and navigation risk assessment <u>Offshore and intertidal ornithology</u> Table 6.2 of Volume 5 Annex 6 states that due to the wide foraging and migratory ranges of ornithological receptors identified within the Scoping Report, it is likely that transboundary effects may occur on offshore and intertidal ornithology receptors outside of UK territorial waters. Tables 3.3 and 3.4 of Volume 2 identify sites of international importance designated for offshore and intertidal ornithological features with potential connectivity to the offshore and intertidal ornithology study areas. The sites identified are all located within the UK, however. <u>Fish and shellfish ecology</u> Table 6.2 of Volume 5 Annex 6 states that due to the predicted impact ranges and the mobile nature of fish and shellfish receptors and their wide-ranging distribution, consideration of transboundary receptors is inherent within the assessment. The key fish and shellfish receptors considered present within the study area include: • Demersal species including whiting, dab, plaice, solenette, common sole, lemon sole, flounder, witch flounder, common dragonet, gurnards, Atlantic cod, poor cod, European seabass, hake, ling, anglerfish and lesser pipefish; • Pelagic species including herring, sprat, mackerel, and horse mackerel; • Sandeel species; • Elasmobranch species including basking shark, small-spotted catshark, thornback ray, spotted ray, cuckoo ray, blonde ray, spurdog, nursehound, starry smooth-hound, common skate and tope;

	• Migratory species including Atlantic salmon, sea trout, sea lamprey, river lamprey, Brook lamprey, European eel, twaite shad and European smelt; and • Shellfish species including Queen scallop, King scallop, Nephrops, brown crab, European lobster, spiny lobster, common whelk, razor clams, blue mussels and cockles. <u>Marine mammals and megafauna</u> Table 6.2 of Volume 5 Annex 6 states that due to the high level of mobility and variation in foraging distances, and the seasonal distribution of marine mammals, each species considered within the marine mammals and megafauna chapter will also be considered in terms of transboundary impact. The species considered include: • Harbour porpoise; • Bottlenose dolphin; • Short-beaked common dolphin; • Risso's dolphin; • Minke whale; • Grey seal; and • Harbour seal. Table 6.2 does not identify European sites designated for marine mammal populations. <u>Commercial fisheries</u> Table 6.2 of Volume 5 Annex 6 states that due to the predicted impact ranges and the mobile nature of fish and shellfish receptors and their wide-ranging distribution, consideration of transboundary receptors is inherent within the assessment. Key receptors relevant to the assessment include: • Irish demersal otter trawlers targeting nephrops and mixed demersal finfish; • Belgian beam trawlers targeting sole, plaice, thornback ray and other flatfish and ray species; <u>Shipping and navigation risk assessment</u> Table 6.2 of Volume 5 Annex 6states that vessels passing through the study area may originate from other jurisdictions (e.g. the Stena Line commercial ferry route operating between Liverpool and Dublin). Therefore, transboundary effects may occur on shipping and navigation receptors outside of UK territorial waters. These receptors include commercial vessels, military vessels, commercial fishing vessels in transit, recreational vessels, ports/harbours and related services, and emergency responders. **Onshore environment:**

	Landfall option A: Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA and the Wyre Estuary SSSI lie within the landfall and cable route corridor for option A. Morecambe Bay SAC is adjacent to the landfall area. Landfall option B: The Downholland Moss SSSI lies within the cable route corridor. Sefton Coast SAC/SSSI, Martin Mere Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar site, and the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA are adjacent to the landfall area. Substation: The Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site/SSSI and the Newton Marsh SSSI are within the scoping boundary for the substation area. No potential receptors of environmental importance have been identified in the onshore environment. Subsequently there is unlikely to be any potential for transboundary impacts in this regard. Onshore receptors and impacts are therefore not discussed further in this screening.
Potential impacts and Carrier	**Offshore** <u>Offshore and intertidal ornithology</u> • Disturbance and displacement due to vessel activity • Disturbance and displacement due to vessel/ plant/ vehicle/ personnel activity • Disturbance and displacement due to construction <u>Fish and shellfish ecology</u> • Mortality, injury, behavioural impacts and auditory masking arising from noise and vibration • Temporary seabed habitat loss / disturbance as a result of seabed preparation • Increases in Suspended Sediment Concentration (SSC) due to seabed preparation • Deposition of sediments suspended/ re-suspended as a result of seabed preparation • Release of sediment-bound contaminants from disturbed sediments resulting from seabed preparation • Effects on fish and shellfish receptors as a result of change in fishing pressure • Permanent and / or long-term habitat loss/ alteration due to the addition of structures <u>Marine mammals and megafauna</u> • Permanent Threshold Shift (PTS) from underwater noise • Temporary Threshold Shift (TTS) caused by underwater noise • Disturbance due to underwater noise • Disturbance due to vessel presence

	• Risk of vessel collision with marine mammals <u>Commercial fisheries</u> • Reduction in access to, or exclusion from, established fishing grounds due to the presence of infrastructure • Displacement leading to gear conflict and increased fishing pressure on adjacent grounds due to the presence of infrastructure • Displacement or disruption of commercially important fish and shellfish resources due to impacts on target species • Physical presence of infrastructure leading to gear snagging <u>Shipping and navigation risk assessment</u> • Traffic displacement • Increased vessel to vessel collision risk • Vessel to structure allision risk • Reduced access to local ports due to increased vessel traffic • Reduction of under keel clearance resulting from cable protection • Anchor interaction with subsea cables • Interference with communications and position fixing equipment due to the presence of offshore structures • Reduction of Search and Rescue (SAR) capability due to increased incident rates and reduced access for surface / air responders
Extent	The following figures outline the study areas relevant to the transboundary assessment and, by extension, the extent of potential impacts: • Offshore and Intertidal ornithology: ES Volume 2 Figure 3.1 • Fish and shellfish ecology: ES Volume 2, Figure 5.1 • Marine mammals and megafauna: ES Volume 2, Figure 6.1 • Commercial fisheries: ES Volume 2, Figure 7.1 • Shipping and navigation risk assessment: ES Volume 2, Figure 8.1
Magnitude	With regards to the offshore aspect areas considered above, no information is currently available on the magnitude of any potential transboundary impacts.

Probability	With regards to the offshore aspect areas considered above, no information is currently available on the probability of any potential transboundary impacts.
Duration	With regards to the offshore aspect areas considered above, no information is currently available on the duration of any potential transboundary impacts.
Frequency	With regards to the offshore aspect areas considered above, no information is currently available on the frequency of any potential transboundary impacts.
Reversibility	With regards to the offshore aspect areas considered above, no information is currently available on the reversibility of any potential transboundary impacts.
Cumulative impacts	The applicant's cumulative impact assessment has not yet been undertaken and the applicant has not identified any likely significant cumulative effects at this stage.

Transboundary screening undertaken by the Inspectorate on behalf of the SoS

Under regulation 32 of The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (The 2017 EIA Regulations) and on the basis of the current information available from the applicant, the Inspectorate is of the view that the proposed development **is likely** to have a significant effect on the environment in an EEA State.

In reaching this view the Inspectorate has applied the precautionary approach (as explained in its Advice Page Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Transboundary Impacts and Process) and taken into account the information currently supplied by the applicant.

Action:

Transboundary issues notification under regulation 32 of The 2017 EIA Regulations is required.

States to be notified:

Republic of Ireland – Offshore and intertidal ornithology, fish and shellfish, marine mammals and megafauna, commercial fisheries, shipping and navigation

Belgium – Commercial fisheries.

Date: 18/02/2026

Note: The SoS' duty under regulation 32 of The 2017 EIA Regulations continues throughout the application process.

Note: The Inspectorate's screening of transboundary issues is based on the relevant considerations specified in the annex to its Advice Page, Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Transboundary Impacts and Process, available at:

'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Transboundary Impacts and Process'.