

HOW WE LISTENED

KEY QUESTIONS RAISED DURING PREVIOUS CONSULTATIONS

General

What studies have been undertaken and are they publicly available?

Studies on all ecological topics both for the onshore and offshore works have been prepared in accordance with the EIA Directive and Regulations. The topics include birds, fish, benthic ecology, marine mammals, onshore protected species, terrestrial flora and fauna. The EIA report will be published with the planning application and will be publicly available.

Offshore Construction

How many other wind farms are planned for the area?

Oriel is the only wind farm at the planning consent stage in the North Louth coastal area. Two Foreshore licences have been granted for surveys to assess the potential for other offshore wind farms to the east and south of the Oriel wind farm area. It is not known at this time if these wind farms will proceed to the planning consent stage.

How will the turbines get to site?

The turbines will be delivered to site from a marshalling harbour by ships specially designed for the purpose. A ship can typically carry two or three partially completed turbines for installation on each trip from the marshalling harbour.

What port will be used for the construction and for operations?

It is expected that the marshalling harbour will be an Irish Sea port. Belfast, Rosslare and Mostyn in North Wales are being considered. A smaller harbour will be used for operations, with the facilities for office space, a warehouse and tidal pontoon access for crew transfer vessels. Drogheda, Greenore Port and Kilkeel have potential facilities and are under consideration by the Project.

How deep will the cable be buried?

Offshore cables both within the wind farm area and for export of electricity back to shore, will be buried at a depth of up to 3m where the soil properties of the seabed allow this. Where this is not possible (e.g. due to rocky ground) cables will be buried at a shallower depth and protected by rock armour. This ensures that there is no danger of snagging from anchors or trawler nets.

Electricity Use

Where will the electricity be used? Will it be exported?

The electricity will be used within the island of Ireland. A single underground export cable will connect the offshore windfarm to the existing 220kV transmission grid at a new onshore substation close to Ardee. The transmission grid is operated across the island of Ireland by EirGrid and the System Operator of Northern Ireland (SONI), which is a part of EirGrid.

Onshore Construction

How was the cable route chosen?

A detailed assessment of a number of cable route options against a range of environmental factors (e.g. existing infrastructure, sensitive environmental receptors, housing density) was completed to identify a preferred option which was taken forward for assessment in the EIAR.

Why follow the roads? Why not go across fields or follow the river route?

The functional specification published by EirGrid requires that the cable is accessible along its entire route for potential maintenance or repair. Therefore location in an existing road is the preferred option.

Who is the body responsible for reinstatement of roads?

Oriel will be responsible for reinstatement of the roads to a standard required and approved by Louth County Council.

Will there be road closures?

A road opening licence will be sought from Louth County Council, prior to the installation of the cable. The project has held discussion with the roads section of the council in relation to this.

Will I be able to access my home?

Yes. Full access will be maintained at all times.

How long will construction take?

The construction programme has been adjusted based on feedback from stakeholders. The estimated programme for construction is two years. The exact programme will be confirmed with contractors and informed to all stakeholders before works start.

Environmental Effects

Can the turbines be located further from shore?

The current project layout has moved the turbines 20% further from shore. The distance from shore that Oriel can be built is determined by a range of factors. These include; the need to avoid trawling grounds, location of marine traffic, seabed conditions and water depth. The deeper the water, the more challenging to build and to maintain.

Is there a noise impact on land?

Modelling of the maximum source noise levels in the windiest conditions demonstrates that the turbines will not exceed existing background noise levels.

Is there a noise impact from operation on sea animals?

The assessment in the EIA shows that there will be no detectable noise impact from the operational turbines on sea animals, including whales, dolphins, seals, fish, and shellfish.

What impact will there be on whales, dolphins and seals?

Extensive baseline studies and assessment of potential impacts on all marine life have been completed for the EIAR. These studies show that there is no significant impact to marine life.

Will the project harm bird life?

Following an extensive study to map bird activity in the project area over five years, we are confident that the project will not have a significant impact on bird life.

Fisheries

What will the impact on the fishing industry be, and for how long?

The Oriel project team has been actively engaging with the fishing industry for several years and as a result of this engagement our aim is to coexist. Some limited disruption to existing fishing activities at the site is inevitable, particularly during the construction period. However, after the windfarm is constructed it is expected that the current fishing can continue as it is at present.

Can fishing continue during construction?

A safety exclusion zone of 500m around the construction vessel(s) will be required during the construction period, but this will only be during active construction works in a specific location.

Can fishing continue during operation?

Yes. Fishing can continue within the wind farm during its operation.