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:	Eastern Green Link 3 and Eastern Green Link 4 (EGL 3 and 4)
Address/Location:	The proposed development comprises two separate electrical link projects, each involving a 2 Gigawatt (GW) High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) link between Scotland and England. Eastern Green Link 3 (EGL 3) would be located between Peterhead, Aberdeenshire in Scotland and Walpole, Norfolk in England. Eastern Green Link 4 (EGL 4) would be located between Westfield, Fife in Scotland and Walpole, Norfolk in England. Both the EGL 3 and EGL 4 projects would make landfall on the Lincolnshire coastline in England, either at Theddlethorpe or Anderby Creek. The projects also include a common connection point to the existing transmission network at Walpole, in Norfolk, England.
Planning Inspectorate Ref:	EN0210003
Date(s) screening undertaken:	First screening – 08 May 2025 following the applicant's request for a scoping opinion

FIRST TRANSBOUNDARY SCREENING	
Document(s) used for transboundary Screening:	Eastern Green Link 3 and Eastern Green Link 4 Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report (Volumes 1 and 2) ('the Scoping Report') July 2024
Screening Criteria:	**The Inspectorate's Comments:**
Characteristics of the Development	The proposed development comprises two electrical transmission reinforcement link projects, referred to as Eastern Green Link 3 (EGL 3) and Eastern Green Link 4 (EGL 4). Each project would supply up to 2GW of electricity between Scotland and England. The proposed development for which development consent is being sought includes both offshore and onshore components in England and English waters. Works required beyond English waters will be consented separately under the Scottish consenting regime. The following key components are listed below (by project):

	Offshore EGL 3 comprises approximately 436km of subsea High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) cable from the mean high water springs (MHWS) mark at a proposed landfall at either Theddlethorpe or Anderby Creek, Lincolnshire, England to where it meets the marine boundary between English and Scottish waters. The subsea cable system would consist of two HVDC cables and a fibre optic cable. EGL4 comprises approximately 422km of subsea HVDC cable from the MHWS mark at a proposed landfall at either Theddlethorpe or Anderby Creek, Lincolnshire, England to where it meets the marine boundary between English and Scottish waters. The subsea cable system would consist of two HVDC cables and a fibre optic cable. The Scoping Report refers to all components of EGL 3 and EGL 4 within the English marine environment up to the MHWS in England that will be subject to a Development Consent Order (DCO) application as the 'Offshore English Scheme'. **Onshore** EGL 3 comprises: • a new converter station in the vicinity of the existing Walpole substation in Norfolk • approximately 100 km of new underground HVDC cable, from the landfall point (at either Theddlethorpe or Anderby Creek) to the proposed EGL 3 converter station • approximately 5km of new underground high voltage alternate current (HVAC) cable, between the EGL 3 Walpole converter station and a new 400kV Walpole substation in the vicinity of the existing Walpole substation in Norfolk EGL 4 comprises: • a new converter station in the vicinity of the existing Walpole substation in Norfolk • a new converter station in the East Lindsey area of Lincolnshire, in the vicinity of one of two 400kV Lincolnshire Connection Substations (LCS)), proposed by the Grimsby to Walpole Project • a new switching station in the vicinity of one of the proposed LCSs in East Lindsey (hereafter referred to as the 'Direct Current Switching Station (DCSS)') • approximately 11km of new underground HVDC cable, from the landfall point (at either Theddlethorpe or Anderby Creek) to the proposed EGL 4 DCSS in the vicinity of one of the proposed LCSs considered as part of the NGET Grimsby to Walpole Project • approximately 0.2km of new underground HVDC cable, from the DCSS to a proposed converter station in the vicinity of the proposed LCS

	• approximately 90km of new underground HVDC cable, from the DCSS to the proposed EGL 4 converter station in the vicinity of the existing Walpole substation in Norfolk • approximately 5 km of new underground HVAC cable, between the LCS converter station and one of the proposed LCS considered as part of the NGET Grimsby to Walpole Project • approximately 5 km of new underground HVAC cable, between the EGL 4 Walpole converter station and a new 400 kV Walpole substation in the vicinity of the existing Walpole substation in Norfolk The Scoping Report refers to all components of EGL 3 and EGL 4 between the electricity transmission connection point in England and the Mean Low Water Spring (MLWS) in England that will be subject to a DCO application as the 'Onshore English Scheme'. **Duration** Construction of the English Onshore Scheme is anticipated start in 2028 and take approximately five years. It is expected to be operational by Q4 2033 and expected to operate for a period of 40 years. The Scoping Report states also that after this period it is anticipated that rather than be decommissioned, parts would be replaced to extend the operational life. Construction of the English Offshore Scheme is anticipated to start in 2029 and take between three to five years to complete. The design life of the offshore cables is stated to be 40 years.
Location of Development (including existing use) and Geographical area	**Offshore** The English Offshore Scheme would be located within English territorial waters, from the boundary with Scottish waters to MHWS at the landfall site in Lincolnshire. The location of the English Offshore Scheme is shown on Figure 1-9 of the Scoping Report (Volume 1, Part 1) and Figure 19-1 (Volume 1, Part 3). **Onshore** The English Onshore Scheme is located within the counties of Lincolnshire and Norfolk in eastern England. The most northerly elements of the English Onshore Scheme would be located along the Lincolnshire coast in East Lindsey and the most southerly elements would be in vicinity of the existing Walpole substation in Norfolk. The location of the English Onshore Scheme is shown on Figure 1-7 'English Onshore Scoping Boundary' of the Scoping Report. The Onshore English Scheme is located in a predominantly rural area. The Scoping Report describes the location and existing use of the Onshore English Scheme by 'Sections' in Section 4.4 of Volume 2, Part 2.2. A summary is also provided below. The Walpole Substation Area is located in largely agricultural land, with the other main land use being existing electrical

	infrastructure, including the existing Walpole substation, the Rose and Crown Solar Farm and electricity transmission lines. The LCS Convertor Station Area is located in a predominantly rural area. This area includes an A-road and one main river. The Viking Link interconnector is noted to cross the boundary in the north of this location. The two landfall options are located in a predominantly rural setting, with agricultural land present to the west. The most prominent coastline features in both locations are stated to be a beach with tidal flood defences and sand dunes. The onshore cable corridor is described by discrete sections in the Scoping Report (see Section 4.4, Volume 1, Part 2.1). The proposed cable corridor onshore between the landfalls and the Walpole Substation Area (Sections 1 to 8) largely comprises agricultural land. There are some areas (eg Section 6) that include more recreational properties, such as campsites and caravan parks. **Distance to European Economic Area (EEA) States** The applicant has not identified within the Scoping Report the nearest EEA state to the proposed development; however, the Scoping Report states that the proposed development would be located approximately 130km from the UK EEZ boundary.
Environmental Importance	**Onshore scheme** The scoping boundary of the Onshore English Scheme identifies that the sand dunes and beach at the Theddlethorpe landfall option are designated ecological sites, comprising the Saltfleetby – Theddlethorpe Dunes and Gibraltar Point Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the Greater Wash Special Protection Area (SPA), the Humber Estuary SPA, the Humber Estuary Ramsar, the Saltfleetby – Theddlethorpe Dunes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Lincolnshire Coronation Coast National Nature Reserve (NNR). The beach at the Anderby Creek landfall is also designated as part of the Greater Wash SPA and the sand dunes are identified as coastal sand dune priority habitat. The Sea Bank Clay Pits SSSI is located adjacent to the north of the scoping boundary west of Huttoft Bank, together with the National Trust's proposed Sandilands nature reserve, formerly Sandilands golf course. There are multiple designated heritage assets within the scoping boundary, including Scheduled monuments and listed buildings. There are areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3, together with several watercourses, including main rivers and notable drains. No potential receptors of environmental importance have been identified in the onshore environment that could result in transboundary impacts. Onshore receptors and impacts are therefore not discussed further in this screening.

	Offshore environment A number of designated sites are present within the scoping boundary, including the Saltfleetby – Theddlethorpe Dunes and Gibraltar Point SAC, the Southern North Sea SAC, the Greater Wash SPA, the Humber Estuary SAC, the Humber Estuary SPA, the Humber Estuary Ramsar, Holderness Offshore Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), and the Lincolnshire Coronation Coast National Nature Reserve (NNR). Table 22-4 and Figure 22-1 of the Scoping Report (Volume 1, Part 3) show the UK European sites and MCZ currently being considered by the applicant in respect of Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening and MCZ assessments. The Scoping Report describes receptors of environmental importance located within the UK and does not identify any potential likely significant effects on receptors within EEA States. It is noted that the Scoping Report does, however, within Volume 2, Part 3 include reference to potential receptors within EEA States within the following offshore aspect chapters: • Fish and shellfish • Marine mammals and marine reptiles • Commercial fisheries • Other marine users In addition, the Intertidal and Offshore Ornithology aspect chapter (Section 26 of the Scoping Report, Volume 1, Part 3) states any relevant transboundary sites will also be taken into consideration as part of the HRA and EIA. No specific receptors or designated sites in EEA States are identified at this stage. <u>Fish and shellfish</u> The Scoping Report in Section 25.4 (Volume 1, Part 3) describes the likely fish and shellfish present within the study area. A list of protected species is included as Table 25-7 of the Scoping Report. A number of UK European sites designated for their fish and shellfish qualifying features are identified within the study area, including Holderness Offshore MCZ, North East of Farnes Deep Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMA) and MCZ, River Tweed SAC, and Tweed Estuary SAC. The Scoping Report describes the landed catches for the nine International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) rectangles crossed by the scoping boundary, namely 35F0, 36F0, 37F0, 38E9, 38F0, 39E9, 40E9, 40E8 and 41E9. <u>Marine mammals and marine turtles</u> The Scoping Report in Section 27.1 (Volume 1, Part 3) describes the study area for the proposed assessment of marine mammals and marine turtles. Table 27-1 of the Scoping Report identifies in respect of grey seal, that is estimated that grey seal forage up to 100km from haul-out sites on the coast and that telemetry data

	indicates that there is exchange of grey seals between colonies in the Netherlands, France, England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.
	
	A number of UK European sites designated for their marine mammal qualifying features are identified within the study area, including the Southern North Sea SAC, Humber Estuary SAC, the Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC, Berwickshire and Northumberland Coast SAC, and Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SSSI and NNR. The Scoping Report states that any transboundary sites (Natura 2000 sites) within 250km of the scoping boundary will also be considered.
	
	<u>Commercial fisheries</u>
	
	The Scoping Report confirms the proposed development would cross several different commercial fishing areas; this includes nine ICES rectangles. The Scoping Report states that the North Sea is home to important fishing grounds also used by international vessels from Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, France, Ireland, Spain and Germany. However, it states the majority of this occurs in ICES rectangles next to the scoping boundary further offshore.
	
	The Scoping Report states that a variety of demersal species such as whiting, haddock, sole, halibut and plaice are fished in the area, not only by the UK fleet but also by international vessels from Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, France, Ireland, Spain and Germany. In respect of pelagic fish, the Scoping Report describes that shoaling species such as herring, mackerel and horse mackerel are present. It states that many of the large catches of herring are landed in Norway and the Netherlands rather than UK ports.
	
	<u>Other marine users</u>
	
	The Scoping Report identifies other marine users around the proposed development including:
	
	• Offshore wind farms
	• Power and telecommunications cables
	• Disposal sites
	• Aggregate extraction sites
	• Ministry of Defence (MoD) practice area and exercise areas
	• Oil and gas operations
	• Carbon capture storage (CCS) and natural gas storage
	• Recreational activities, comprising
	  ○ Bathing waters
	  ○ SCUBA diving
	  ○ Sailing and cruising
	  ○ Water sports
	  ○ Angling
	
	Several interconnectors and telecommunication cables between the UK and EEA States (both operational and proposed) have been identified as being crossed or potentially crossed by the

	proposed development (See Table 30-3 and Figure 30-1 of the Scoping Report (Volume 1, Part 3)).
Potential impacts and carriers	The Scoping Report states at Section 21.9 (Volume 1, Part 3) that given the approximate distance of 130km to the UK EEZ boundary, there is no potential for international transboundary impacts. The Scoping Report also states that transboundary designated sites will be taken into consideration and captured in the HRA (Sections 22.5, 26.4 and 27.4). Potential impacts considered in those offshore aspect chapters of the Scoping Report that include reference to potential receptors in EEA States are as follows: **Fish and shellfish** • Temporary habitat loss/ seabed disturbance • Permanent habitat loss • Temporary increase and deposition of suspended sediments • Temporary increase and deposition of suspended sediments • Electromagnetic changes/ barrier to species movement • Temperature increase **Marine mammals and marine reptiles** • Temporary habitat loss/ seabed disturbance • Permanent habitat loss • Underwater noise changes • Changes in prey availability **Commercial fisheries** • Temporary restricted access to fishing ground (including required static gear clearance) • Temporary displacement of fishing activity into other areas • Loss of grounds • Changes in distribution of target species • Temporary increase and deposition of suspended sediments **Other marine users** • Interaction with other seabed infrastructure • Occupancy of seabed – below seabed • Occupancy of seabed – on seabed
Extent	With regards to the offshore aspect areas considered above, limited information is currently available on the extent of any potential transboundary impacts. However, the information on commercial fisheries does note that the North Sea is used by vessels from Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, France, Ireland, Spain and Germany

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:

- Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, and Spain – due to potential impacts on fish and shellfish and commercial fisheries
- Denmark, the Netherlands, and Norway – due to potential impacts on fish and shellfish, commercial fisheries and other marine users

Date: 08 May 2025

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'.