



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:	Tarchon Interconnector Project ('the proposed development')
Address/Location:	The proposed development comprises offshore and onshore underground electricity cables, an onshore converter station, and associated infrastructure to facilitate the transmission of electricity between Essex, East Anglia, United Kingdom (UK), and Niederlangen, Lower Saxony, Germany. The proposed development would make landfall along the Essex Coast, south of Harwich, with onshore underground cabling connecting the converter station to the National Grid's proposed East Anglia Connection Node (EACN) Substation, located east of Ardleigh in Essex. The offshore part of the proposed development is located in the North Sea within UK territorial waters, extending to the boundary of the UK Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) with the Netherlands. The proposed development includes offshore and onshore components in England and English waters only. Works required beyond English waters will be consented separately under the Netherland Marine Scheme (in Dutch waters) and under the German consenting regime (in German waters), the latter includes onshore cabling and a converter station connecting to a new substation.
Planning Inspectorate Ref:	EN0210009
Date(s) screening undertaken:	First screening – 10 July 2026 following the applicant's request for a scoping opinion

FIRST TRANSBOUNDARY SCREENING

Document(s) used for transboundary Screening:	Transboundary impacts are set out within the aspect chapters of: • Tarchon Interconnector Project Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report ('the Scoping Report') volumes 2 to 4. • Annex A32-1 of the Scoping Report volume 06 April 2026
Screening Criteria:	The Inspectorate's Comments:
Characteristics of the Development	The proposed development consists of an electrical transmission link between the UK and Germany that would supply up to 1.8 Gigawatts (GW) of electricity to the UK's National Electricity

Transmission System (NETS). The key components of the proposed development are set out below:

Offshore

The proposed development consists of up to two High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) cables, and one fibre optic offshore cable. The cable corridor would be approximately 280 kilometres (km) in length, accounting for a maximum cable length of 35km from the Mean High-Water Springs (MHWS) to UK territorial waters, and up to 245km from UK territorial waters to the UK-Netherlands EEZ. These subsea cables would run from the proposed landfall location in Essex to the marine boundary of the UK EEZ with the Netherlands. Associated offshore infrastructure would include cable protection and cable crossings. The Scoping Report states that two potential cable corridor routes into Netherlands waters are being considered, and following refinement of the offshore route, a final corridor would be selected.

Onshore

The onshore components of the proposed development comprise:

- A buried Transition Joint Bay (TJB) located in land at the proposed UK Landfall location to join offshore and onshore HVDC cables.
- A converter station, where HVDC would be converted to High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) for onward transmission to the National Grid. The two proposed converter buildings would be up to 7.5 hectares (ha) in area, with maximum building heights of 26 metres (m) for the main buildings, and 30m for the lightening masts.
- Additional converter station infrastructure, including a potential Gas Insulated Substation (GIS) building, control building and spare parts building.
- HVDC cables would connect the converter station to the UK Landfall. The onshore HVDC cable route would have a maximum length of 20km and would comprise up to two HVDC cables and one fibre optic cable. There would also be up to 25 joint bays/link boxes, up to 4 m² in area along the HVDC corridor.
- HVAC cables linking the converter station to National Grid's proposed EACN 400 kilovolt (kV) substation. The onshore HVAC cable route would have a maximum length of 5km and would consist of up to six HVAC cables and two fibre optic cables.

Duration

The Scoping Report states that the construction phase of the proposed development is likely to be up to 5 years. The offshore elements, including subsea cable installation is anticipated to take up to three years. The onshore components, including installation of the HVDC cables is expected to take up to two years, as well as up to two years for the HVAC cables, and up to four years for construction of the converter station.

	The anticipated operational lifetime of the proposed development is 40 years, although the Scoping Report states that it is possible that this operational lifetime could be extended.
Location of Development (including existing use) and Geographical area	Offshore The offshore components of the proposed development would be located in the North Sea within UK territorial waters, extending from the MHWS at the landfall location off the coast of Essex, to the UK-Netherlands EEZ boundary. Figure 2-3 of the Scoping Report shows the offshore scoping boundary, referred to as the UK Marine Scheme (UKMS) in the Scoping Report. The exact length off the offshore route is yet to be finalised. Onshore The onshore scoping boundary is located within the Local Authority areas of Tendring District Council and Essex County Council, displayed in figure 2-2 of the Scoping Report. Several villages and settlements fall partially or wholly within the onshore boundary, including Little Bromley, Horsleycross, Wix, Great Oakley, Little Oakley and Dovercourt. The UK landfall location is proposed along the Essex coastline to the south of Harwich, and the onshore boundary extends to the EACN Grid Connection Point northeast of Colchester, as shown in figure 2-5 of the Scoping Report. The converter station location is yet to be finalised but will be situated within 5km of the National Grid connection point (EACN), the location of which is also yet to be confirmed. The current land use of the onshore area is predominantly agricultural, comprised of arable farmland, along with nearby areas of pastureland, wetlands, and woodland. Urban areas also surround the proposed development area, which include the town of Harwich to the northeast of the onshore scoping boundary. The western extent of the onshore boundary is between 30m and 40m above ordnance datum (AOD), and the eastern extent of the onshore boundary slopes down towards the coast at 20 to 0m AOD. Other major development nearby Chapter 32 (paragraph 32.5.1.3) of the Scoping Report identifies a list of other major existing infrastructure projects that may give rise to cumulative effects with the proposed development, including North Falls Offshore Wind Farm, Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm, East Anglia One, Two and Three, Greater Gabbard, Galloper, Norfolk Vanguard East Offshore Windfarms, and Sea Link and Lionlink interconnectors. Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm and North Falls Offshore Windfarm would also connect into National Grid's proposed EACN Substation. Distance to European Economic Area (EEA) States

	Table A32-1, annex A32-1 of the Scoping Report identifies the following distances from the proposed development to EEA states jurisdictional boundaries: • Netherlands, 0km (directly adjacent) • Belgium, 1.8km • France, 31.9km • Germany, 223km • Wales, 272.9km (direct)/ 722.2km (around coastline) • Denmark, 288.6km • Norway, 350.7km • Scotland, 410.3km • Ireland, 457.8km (direct)/ 739km (around coastline) The distance of EEA states from the scoping boundary is also illustrated in figure A32-1 of annex A32-1 of the Scoping Report (part 5).
Environmental Importance	Onshore The following internationally and nationally designated sites are identified in the Scoping Report (table 10-2) as either within or partially within the onshore scoping boundary: • Hamford Water Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar site, Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Additional designated sites located within 10km of the onshore scoping boundary include: • Stour and Copperas Woods, Ramsay SSSI; • Stour Estuary SSSI; • Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site; • Cattawade Marshes SSSI; • Orwell Estuary SSSI; • Landguard Common SSSI; • Outer Thames Estuary SPA; • Colne Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 2) SPA and Ramsar site; and • Essex Estuaries SAC. The Scoping Report also identifies Dedham Vale and Suffolk National Landscape and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape to be located within 1km of the onshore scoping boundary. 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: Marine Physical Environment (Scoping Report Chapter 13) The Scoping Report in table 13-5 identifies a number of designated sites and their associated protected features in the

marine physical environment in close proximity to the offshore scoping boundary, including:

- Margate and Long Sands SAC (within the offshore scoping boundary);
- Orford Inshore Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ);
- Alde, Ore and Butley Estuaries SAC;
- Kentish Knock East MCZ;
- Hamford Water SSSI (within the offshore scoping boundary);
- Harwich Foreshore SSSI;
- Stour Estuary SSSI;
- The Naze SSSI; and
- Orwell Estuary SSSI.

Offshore: Benthic and Intertidal Ecology (Scoping Report Chapter 14)

Designated sites and their qualifying features that are designated for benthic features or habitats dependent on those features are identified within 16.5km of the project's MHWS are set out in table 14-2. These include the following sites within or partially within the offshore scoping boundary:

- Hamford Water SAC, SPA and SSSI;
- Margate and Long Sands SAC; and
- Outer Thames Estuary SPA.

Bruine Bank SPA is also identified in this chapter as being immediately adjacent to scoping boundary.

Offshore: Fish and Shellfish Ecology (Scoping Report Chapter 15)

The Scoping Report in section 15.5.2 describes the likely fish and shellfish assemblages present within the fish and shellfish ecology study area. A list of protected marine and estuarine species present within the fish and shellfish study area are presented in table 15-5, including Atlantic salmon, herring, and lesser sandeel.

Designated sites of relevance to fish and shellfish ecology receptors and within the study area are identified in table 15-6. These include the following sites within or partially within the offshore scoping boundary:

- Southern North Sea SAC;
- Hamford Water SPA; and
- Outer Thames Estuary SPA.

Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuary MCZ is also within the study area and has a designated qualifying feature of native oyster. No other fish and shellfish qualifying features are present within the designated sites identified in the study area, although the Scoping Report states that forage fish species and/ or shellfish species are essential to supporting qualifying bird designated features for several of the identified designated sites.

Offshore: Marine Mammal Ecology (Scoping Report Chapter 16)

The Scoping Report provides an early indication of the designated sites with marine mammals and their qualifying features (table 16-4 of the Scoping Report) in the vicinity of the proposed development, including:

- Southern North Sea SAC (within the offshore scoping boundary);
- Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC;
- Humber Estuary SAC;
- Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC;
- Southern Trench Marine Protected Area (MPA) (Scottish waters); and
- Sea of the Hebrides MPA (Scottish waters).

The following species are identified as the key marine mammal receptors in paragraph 16.5.3.1:

- Harbour porpoise
- White-beaked dolphin
- Minke whale
- Grey seal
- Harbour seal

The offshore components of the proposed development would be located within the Southern North Sea SAC, designated for harbour porpoise.

Offshore: Commercial Fisheries (Scoping Report Chapter 17)

The Scoping Report states that the commercial fisheries study area supports a range of commercial fishing activities, including beam trawls and dredges.

The Scoping Report describes fleet composition and vessel sizes within International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) rectangles. Commercial vessels within the central areas of the English Channel (33F2, 32F2 and 34F2) support demersal seines and demersal trawls, targeting squid and surmullet.

Key species that are targeted by commercial fisheries in the study area include squid, cockles, sole, whelks, surmullet, bass, horse mackerel, whiting, lobsters, mackerel, thornback ray, tub gurnard, plaice, herring and turbot.

Table 17-1 lists the top 20 ports that have landed catches from the study area, with four located in the Netherlands and one in Belgium. The Scoping Report states that vessels from Belgium, France and the Netherlands, carry out commercial fishing within ICES rectangles 32F1, 32F2, 33F1, 33F2, 33F3, 34F2 and 34F3.

Offshore: Shipping and Navigation (Scoping Report Chapter 18)

The Scoping Report states that the offshore scoping boundary overlaps with the Harwich Deep-Water Channel, which provides

	access to the key ports of Harwich and Felixstowe within the study area. Two potential routing options are identified within the offshore scoping boundary (paragraphs 18.5.1.6 to 18.5.1.8), comprising a central route option which crosses the Sunk Inner and Sunk Outer Precautionary Areas, and a northern route option, which passes to the north of the Sunk Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) North. The Scoping Report (paragraph 18.5.1.22) states that the majority of vessels in the study area are commercial, in the form of cargo vessels and tankers, although a number of recreational vessels have also been recorded. Increased vessel numbers have been recorded in the summer months, associated with higher numbers of passenger vehicles and wind farm support vessels, particularly in connection with the Greater Gabbard and Galloper offshore wind farms. The key routes of the passenger vessels are listed in paragraph 18.5.1.27 of the Scoping Report, and include P&O Ferries services to Rotterdam and Zeebrugge, and the Stena Line route to the Hook of Holland. Offshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage (Scoping Report Chapter 19) Section 19.5.2 of the Scoping Report describes potential marine archaeology resource within the study area. There is potential for the presence of paleogeographic material dating from the pre-Anglian to early Holocene periods, maritime craft from the Mesolithic to the modern period, as well as 20th century aircraft, particularly in relation to the Second World War. Offshore Infrastructure and Other Users (Scoping Report Chapter 20) The Scoping Report (at paragraph 20.5.2.1) identifies other marine users around the proposed development including: • Several Offshore Windfarms (OWF) at various stages of development, including nine adjacent to the offshore scoping boundary • Oil and gas license blocks • Dredging and disposal sites • Military areas • Subsea power and telecommunications cables at various stages of development Offshore Ornithology (Scoping Report Chapter 23) Designated sites and their qualifying features within 10km of the offshore boundary are outlined in table 23-1 of the Scoping Report. These include the internationally designated Hamford Water SPA and Ramsar site, Bruine Bank SPA, as well as the nationally designated Hamford Water SSSI, all of which are partially located within the scoping boundary. The Scoping Report states (at paragraphs 23.4.1.40 to 23.4.1.54) that site-specific ornithological surveys were undertaken between
--	---

	October 2024 and September 2025, which identified the following key species within the scoping boundary: • Wader species who use the intertidal environment, including avocet, dunlin, redshank, ringed plover and grey plover. • Raptor species, who use the intertidal environment, including marsh harrier. • Non-breeding species who use the intertidal environment, including wildfowl such as shelduck, and seabirds including Mediterranean gull, herring gull, black-headed gull, lesser black-backed gull, and Sandwich tern. • Wintering bird species, including waders such as oystercatcher and lapwing, and waterfowl such as mute swan and greylag goose. • Breeding wader species, including lapwing. • Little tern.
Potential impacts and Carrier	The Scoping Report identified potential transboundary impacts for the following environmental aspects: • Offshore: Marine Physical Environment ○ Changes to seabed levels from temporary increases in suspended sediments concentrations (SSC) ○ Deterioration of water quality due to suspended sediments and possible release of drilling fluids ○ Release of sediment bound contaminants due to seabed disturbance • Offshore: Benthic and Intertidal Ecology ○ Temporary increase in SSC and sediment deposition ○ Release of sediment-bound contaminants due to direct and indirect seabed disturbance • Offshore: Shipping and Navigation ○ Impacts on vessel movements within UK waters (of vessels based outside of the UK) ○ Impacts on international passages to ports outside of UK waters • Offshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage ○ Direct and indirect effects to seabed and sub-seabed heritage receptors (e.g. shipwrecks or aircraft crash sites) of different nationalities ○ Direct and indirect effects to palaeogeographic receptors of international interest • Offshore Infrastructure and Other Users ○ Impacts on other marine users from the offshore components of the scheme, including on aggregate exploration zone owners, pipeline owners and Offshore Windfarm owners • Offshore Ornithology ○ Temporary disturbance and displacement from airborne noise, and presence of vessels and infrastructure

	○ Indirect impacts on prey species and habitat Table A32-2 of the Scoping Report also identifies the potential for transboundary impacts for Chapter 29: Carbon and Climate Change, relating to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the climate change implications of the scheme. It further identifies potential transboundary impacts for Chapter 30: Risk of Major Accidents and Disasters, which include malicious attacks in UK waters that could affect Germany through direct power losses. The Scoping Report confirms that transboundary effects for fish and shellfish ecology, marine mammal ecology, and commercial fisheries are likely to arise but not enough information is available at this stage to fully determine these effects. The Planning Inspectorate considers that the following could potentially arise: • Fish and shellfish ecology ○ Temporary increase in suspended sediment and deposition ○ Temporary habitat loss/ disturbance ○ Long term habitat loss ○ Underwater noise changes ○ Water quality changes due to suspended sediments and accidental spills • Marine mammal ecology ○ Injury and disturbance from subsea noise generated from unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance ○ Injury due to collision with vessels ○ Effects on marine mammals due to altered prey availability ○ Disturbance from pre-construction site investigation surveys ○ Disturbance due to vessel use and other activities • Commercial fisheries ○ Temporary increase in suspended sediment and deposition ○ Temporary restricted access to fishing grounds ○ Temporary displacement of fishing activity into other areas ○ Loss of grounds ○ Changes in distribution of target species The Planning Inspectorate notes that information on the proposed development and potential transboundary impacts provided within the Scoping Report are high level at this stage and will be refined further in the ES.
Extent	With regards to the aspect areas considered above, limited information is currently available on the extent of any potential transboundary impacts. However, the Scoping Report appendix states that it is anticipated that most impacts would be limited in spatial extent in proximity to the EEZ boundary, with the possible exclusion of climate change. The Scoping Report also states, in relation to commercial fisheries, that the North Sea may be used by vessels from Belgium, France and the Netherlands, and in

	relation to shipping and navigation notes that the North Sea is used by vessels from Belgium and the Netherlands.
Magnitude	With regards to the aspect areas considered above, no information is currently available on the magnitude of any potential transboundary impacts.
Probability	With regards to the aspect areas considered above, no information is currently available on the probability of any potential transboundary impacts.
Duration	With regards to the aspect areas considered above, no information is currently available on the duration of any potential transboundary impacts apart from the information on the duration of the proposed developments construction and operational phases as described above.
Frequency	With regards to the aspect areas considered above, no information is currently available on the frequency of any potential transboundary impacts.
Reversibility	With regards to the aspect areas considered above, no information is currently available on the reversibility of any potential transboundary impacts. However, the Scoping Report does states that some impacts would be temporary such as changes in water quality associated with an increase in suspended sediments and disruption of navigation routes during subsea cable installation.
Cumulative impacts	The applicant's cumulative impact assessment (CIA) has not yet been undertaken and the applicant has not identified any likely significant cumulative effects at this stage. The applicant has not yet identified an exhaustive list of the projects to be included within the cumulative impact assessment. However, the Scoping Report considers other major existing and planned infrastructure in paragraph 32.5.1.3 of chapter 32, which include North Falls and Five Estuaries OWFs.

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 – due to potential impacts on the marine physical environment; benthic and intertidal ecology; fish and shellfish ecology; marine mammal ecology; commercial fisheries; shipping and navigation; offshore archaeology and cultural heritage; offshore infrastructure and other users; offshore ornithology; and carbon and climate change.

- The Netherlands – due to potential impacts on the marine physical environment; benthic and intertidal ecology; fish and shellfish ecology; marine mammal ecology; commercial fisheries; shipping and navigation; offshore archaeology and cultural heritage; offshore infrastructure and other users; offshore ornithology; and carbon and climate change.
- France, Denmark and Ireland – due to potential impacts on marine mammal ecology and commercial fisheries.
- Germany – due to potential impacts on marine mammal ecology and risk of major accidents and disasters.
- Norway – due to potential impacts on marine mammal ecology and offshore infrastructure and other sea users.

Date: 10 July 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'](#).