23/12/2016

Environmental and Social Completion Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	OFFSHORE HVDC TRANSMISSION PROJECTS
Project Number:	2012-0630
Country:	Germany
Sector:	Energy
Project Description:	The Project consists of three High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) offshore power links - known as HelWin1, SylWin1 and DolWin1 - aimed at connecting far offshore wind farms located in the North Sea to the German Electricity Grid.
EIA required:	An EIA was required for the cable connection from the 12 nmz (nautical mile zone) limit to the onshore converter station of the DolWin1 power link.

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise[1]: no

Summary of Environmental and Social Assessment at Completion

The Project encompasses underground/undersea cables and converter stations, both onshore and offshore, which, by virtue of their technical characteristics, are neither listed under Annex I nor under Annex II of the EIA Directive. Given the size of the connections and the sensitivity of the sea area, however, the competent authorities requested environmental studies in line with the EU EIA Directives and Appropriate Assessments (AA) in line with the EU Nature Directives.

All relevant authorities, stakeholders, and the public were consulted during the authorisation process. The location of cable corridors and offshore converter stations are compliant with applicable spatial development plans which underwent Strategic Environmental Assessments themselves. Given the environmental sensitivity of the German Bight, the cable corridors cut through several areas of nature conservation interest, including Natura 2000 sites and Nature Parks.

The Project has been granted all key environmental consents and permits, including the permit related to the AC connection between the offshore converter station SylWin1 and the Butendiek offshore wind farm that was outstanding at appraisal. The Competent Authorities confirmed after detailed analysis that most potential risks are nonsignificant under the condition that specific mitigation measures are put in place. These comprise, inter alia, bundling of power links, cable routing along least sensitive areas, application of site-specific cable-laying techniques, limitation of works to time windows outside main bird breeding and nesting periods, and state of the art noise reduction during foundation piling. Construction activities in sensitive areas are monitored and supervised by qualified experts. The promoter had objected to one of the compensating measures in all three projects permits related to the German Exclusive Economic Zone (the mandatory decommissioning of certain amounts of third parties' idle cables in the North Sea). As of today no settlement agreement with the competent authorities has yet been reached in relation to this issue. The promoter will send to the Bank proof of such an agreement. The promoter's obligation to inform the Bank about the full implementation of its loan undertakings remains in force also after project completion.

The project is in operation. It will provide environmental benefits by facilitating the integration of renewable energy generation that will substitute thermal generation.

[1] Only projects that meet the scope of the Pilot Exercise, as defined in the EIB draft Carbon Footprint Methodologies, are included, provided estimated emissions exceed the methodology thresholds: above 100,000 tons CO2e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tons CO2e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.

No significant environmental and social issues and risks that may affect the Project operation have been noted and there is no ongoing legal action related to environmental and social aspects against the Project.

Summary opinion of Environmental and Social aspects at completion:

The EIB is of the opinion, based on reports from the promoter during implementation, that the Project has been implemented in line with the EIB environmental and social standards applicable at the time of appraisal. However, full implementation of the Bank's loan conditions requires further follow-up.