## EIA Quality Mark Case Study

### Thanet Extension Offshore Wind Farm

#### Key Issues:

This paper addresses three key issues raised on the project during the planning phase:

1. Biogenic reefs;
2. Learning lessons relating to potential operation and maintenance effects from the existing Thanet project; and

Biogenic reefs are widespread in the region of the Thanet Offshore Wind Farm. However, the risk posed was that, whilst the installation of Thanet Extension is expected to provide a long-term overall benefit to the formation of biogenic reefs, the construction activities may damage some existing reef features.

Ensuring that the project assessed robust Operations and Maintenance (O&M) assumptions to ensure that lessons had been learnt from the existing Thanet Offshore Wind Farm.

Concerns were raised by statutory and non-statutory consultees regarding the reduction in sea room to the west of the array and the associated risks for navigation and safety. Concerns were also raised regarding the impacts on existing pilotage activities in the region.

### Purpose of the project:

Vattenfall Wind Power Limited propose to develop an offshore wind farm, to surround the existing Thanet Offshore Wind Farm, and will be located approximately 8km off the Isle of Thanet, Kent. The project is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and would have the capacity of up to 340 MW. The onshore cable route will run between Pegwell Bay and the Richborough Energy Park.

### Description of the project:

GoBe Consultants Ltd was commissioned to support the DCO application and lead the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The DCO application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in June 2018. The examination phase of the project will be held between December 2018 and June 2019.

The DCO application includes all infrastructure associated with the offshore wind farm and connection to the National Grid, including up to 34 wind turbine generators, 64km of inter-array cables, 120km of offshore export cables, landfall works, approximately 2.5km onshore export cables, a new project substation and connection at the Richborough Energy Park.

### EIA Learning Outcomes
Lessons learnt:

The agreed solution for biogenic reefs with the SNCB was to apply a core reef approach that enabled the development to gain some certainty that the development could build out (if consented) whilst giving certainty that areas of important reef would still be avoided. GoBe Consultants achieved this by using the of extensive site-specific data available to facilitate the discussions and agreement. Early engagement and a collaborative approach helped to engender trust and identify a site-specific novel solution that gave both client/developer and SNCB a satisfactory resolution. Thanet Extension is the first OWF project to reach an agreement on the use of a core reef approach.

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Lessons learnt continued:

Close consultation with stakeholders meant that concerns on O&M activities and installation techniques were understood early. These were of concern for the stakeholders based on the experiences of TOWF. This consultation enabled the developer/client to endeavour to develop robust and appropriate assumptions, for the purposes of the EIA assessments, based on the lessons learnt from TOWF and previous installations.

A detailed collaborative study into pilotage operations was undertaken in partnership with the relevant port authority and pilotage operators. This resulted in a simulation exercise using port authority facilities, combined with expert practitioners which engendered trust between stakeholders and developer and a position reached whereby there was an understanding that operations could continue. This matter remains under discussion but there is an agreed evidence base on which to progress discussions. The early engagement and an openness to work within the systems employed by regulatory authorities engendered trust and facilitated the development of an agreed evidence base on which to undertake an assessment. Whilst the issue was not fully resolved the agreed positions allow constructive negotiation and helps to inform appropriate mitigation and management.

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