### Key Issues

IFA2 comprises onshore and offshore components in the UK and France covered by different consent regimes. The onshore UK elements of IFA2 to Mean Low Water require planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in the UK. The onshore French elements of IFA2 are subject to a mandatory requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) under the ‘Code de l’environnement.’ The offshore elements of IFA2 (HVDC cables from UK Mean High Water to France and, in this specific project, AC marine cables below high water between the converter station and grid connection point) require a Marine Licence under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. The intertidal area is an area of ‘overlap’ between consenting regimes and was considered in both the onshore and offshore EIAs. In addition to EIA the project was also subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to consider the effects on Southampton Water SPA.

The European Union Regulation on Guidelines for Trans-European Energy Infrastructure (EU 347/2013), known as the ‘TEN-E Regulation’ applies to the IFA2 project. The TEN-E Regulation provides a framework for consenting the project as a ‘whole’ by National Competent Authorities in the UK and France.

### Purpose of the project

IFA2 is a proposed high voltage direct current (HVDC) bi-directional electricity interconnector between Tourbe in Normandy and Chilling in Hampshire. It is a joint venture between National Grid IFA2 Ltd and Réseau de Transport d’Electricite (RTE, the French Transmission owner and operator). The project will connect the British and French electricity networks enabling the import and export of power between the two countries to improve energy security and improve use of resources across Europe.

### Description of the project

The UK elements of the project are in the borough of Fareham in Hampshire and comprise:
- Subsea and onshore HVDC cables
- A converter station to the north east of Daedalus Airfield
- Onshore and offshore HVAC cables between the converter station and connection with the electricity transmission network at Chilling
- Mitigation including new public open space

The onshore proposals were granted planning consent in early 2017 with construction commencing in late 2017 for operation in 2020.
Lessons learnt

Importance of feasibility study
Potential environmental effects were taken into account from the outset. The project was developed from 2010 and feasibility studies considered various connection options on the south coast of England. The preferred option balanced technical feasibility, economic viability and deliverability with the least disturbance to the environment and people relative to the other options that were considered.

Role of consultation
Consultation played an important part in the development of the project and included:
- Liaison with Fareham Borough Council, Gosport Borough Council and Hampshire County Council, particularly in identifying the location of the converter station and AC cables connection to the grid connection point.
- Consultation with Natural England to ensure the Southampton Water SPA and qualifying species (Brent geese) were appropriately considered.
- Liaison with residents’ associations, parish councils and public consultation events enabled concerns to be considered in the development of the project. This was particularly important as the converter station was close to a district boundary with potentially affected residents living in the adjoining borough.
- Consultation needed to be compliant with the requirements of the TEN E Regulation.

Level of detail required with application
Outline consent is required for a development of this nature as the contractor is not usually appointed until consent is obtained. A higher level of detail was required on the converter station appearance to address concerns raised by the local planning authority. The EIA also included assessment of options where the technology was to be determined by the contractor (ie open-cut or trenchless cable techniques).

Phasing of Planning Conditions
Liaison with the planning authority during the determination process ensured the planning conditions attached to the consent were specific to phases (Converter station; Daedalus cables; Chilling cables; public open space) so that the commencement of one part of the development was not dependent on another.

Sufficient time for ecology surveys
- Minimum two winter bird survey seasons required by Natural England
- Extensive bat and dormice surveys

For access to more EIA case studies and hundreds of non-technical summaries of Environmental Statements visit:
www.iema.net/qmark