# Key Issues
The Project is not in descriptions of development in Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011, therefore EIA was not mandatory under these Regulations. In Belgian law the electrical infrastructure required to connect to the UK required EIA. National Grid Nemo Link Limited (NGNLL) and its joint venture partner, Elia decided to prepare and submit an Environmental Statement (ES) to accompany the application for planning permission for the UK parts of the Project.

A screening request was not submitted to the local planning authorities in the UK. A scoping report was prepared to determine the extent of the matters to be covered in the ES.

The ES topic chapters assessed the likely significant effects of the Project on: Land Use; Ground Conditions and Contamination; Hydrology and Flood Risk; Ecology; Archaeology and Cultural Heritage; Landscape and Views; Traffic and Transport; Noise and Vibration; Air Quality; Coastal Tourism, Recreation and Socio-Economics; and Electric and Magnetic Fields and Electromagnetic compatibility.

# Purpose of the project
The Project is a high voltage direct current (HVDC) electrical interconnector which will allow the transfer of electrical power via subsea cables between the UK and Belgium.

The Project will support offshore wind power generation which is intermittent. Interconnectors have plant and equipment that can respond to rapid changes in generating electrical output and they provide access other markets. They provide an effective way to manage fluctuations in supply and demand.

# Description of the project
The Project will have an approximate capacity of 1,000 megawatts (MW). The UK onshore infrastructure comprises a converter station, substation and 2.1km of onshore underground cables:

- Converter station and substation site utilises a former power station site;
- Construction will begin mid-2014 and take approximately 42 months;
- Operational life of the converter station, substation and cables is approximately 40 years; and
- HVDC cables pass through sensitive, internationally designated sites for ecology.
Lessons learnt
Clear communication – The Project is unusual, large and complex and crosses UK administrative and international boundaries. At the beginning of the consent process the local planning authority officers and statutory consultees were unfamiliar with electrical infrastructure projects and had limited experience of EIA on such projects. Clear communication throughout the Project contributed to the successful approval of planning permission.

Cumulative Effects – The Project ES considered the cumulative effects of other projects in the same geographical area, as well as the infrastructure required for the onward connection to the wider UK national grid for electricity distribution. The onward connection is proposed by a different developer and is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project under the Planning Act 2008. The Project ES provided details of the interrelationships between the Project and the onward connection and the forecast impacts. It was important to clearly distinguish between the two projects whilst allowing the local planning authorities and their planning committees to consider the cumulative effects of the Project and determine the application.

Lessons learnt continued
Maintaining open dialogue - Once the ES had been submitted, maintaining open dialogue with the local planning authorities and consultees throughout the determination period was essential in overcoming objections.

Collaborative working – Working together with the wider Project’s Marine consultants overcame stakeholder concerns in relation to the intertidal area which is covered by both the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Marine and Coastal Act 2009.

Using mechanisms for planning conditions under the Town and Country Planning 1990 to secure ecological mitigation set out in the ES, provided assurances to statutory consultees that there would be sufficient controls in place to influence and monitor proposed mitigation.

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