

Natural Power - Blyth Offshore Demonstrator Project Case Study



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Project:

Blyth Offshore Demonstrator Project

Client:

Consent management: Narec
Pre-construction condition discharge: Blyth Offshore Demonstrator Limited (BODL)

Project Description:

The Blyth Offshore Demonstrator Project, off the Northumberland Coast close to the Port of Blyth, was originally developed and consented (2013) by Narec. The project was subsequently acquired by EDF Energies Nouvelles, who are now building out the project under the SPV Blyth Offshore Demonstrator Ltd. (BODL).

The project will be comprised of a maximum of 15 wind turbine generators, to be constructed across three arrays, on an array-by-array basis along with three associated export cables, resulting in a maximum of three construction phases. BODL is currently progressing with pre-construction planning for the closest inshore array, comprising of 5 WTGs with gravity base foundations.

Services Provided:

- Contribution to site design
- Production of the environmental scoping document
- Baseline assessment collection and impact assessment methodologies
- Co-ordination of the full EIA and submission of Section 36 and Marine Licence Application
- Public liaison management
- Co-ordination of supplemental environmental information to support application
- Negotiation of consent conditions
- Update of baseline for benthic and fish receptors
- Support of submissions to materially change design envelope following consent of a project situated partially within a Marine Conservation Zone designated (in part) for benthic habitat
- Co-ordination of plans required to discharge conditions prior to construction

Natural Power provided lead EIA co-ordination and consent management throughout the ES compilation and post submission consultations. The project was unusual in as much as it was funded through a government grant, and as such subject to EU procurement laws for public funded projects. This added a layer of complexity to contracting consultants and services to undertake the EIA that an offshore project is not usually subject to in UK waters.

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Natural Power undertook the full EIA co-ordination role on behalf of Narec, including management of third party consultants and Narec staff, to produce a robust, thorough and tailored environmental statement. Our staff coordinated the required survey work, studies, reports and final chapters for the environmental statement both from internal staff and external specialists. Natural Power also led on the submission and co-ordination of the supplementary environmental information (SEI) following submission that was required to address additional questions raised by stakeholders. We then represented Narec through negotiation of consent conditions, and latterly represented Narec as they sold the project.

Natural Power organised and attended public exhibitions for the project and produced a stakeholder engagement report, being responsible for follow up communication with the public. Natural Power undertook significant consultation with Natural England and the MMO which resulted in scoping out the requirement for an appropriate assessment on SPAs in England.

Natural Power led negotiations in the consultation process, bringing a professional and knowledgeable approach to a complex project. We became subject matter experts on the project, particularly for ecology and nature conservation issues, as well as taking on an advisory role, providing intelligent solutions to push the project forward.

Since the sale of the project to EDF Energies Nouvelles, now managed under the SPV Blyth Offshore Demonstrator Limited (BODL), Natural Power has undertaken benthic and fish monitoring to update baseline knowledge of the environment before construction. Since consent was awarded, a Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) has been designated (in part) for benthic habitats and this area includes the near shore section of the export cable route. During this pre-construction period, we have provided support for new marine licence submissions, and variations to the existing marine licence in order to materially change the design envelope consented. Variations have been required to allow more extensive seabed preparation works and the potential requirement for secondary cable protection works.

We now have a member of staff embedded within the BODL team whose responsibility is to assist in the co-ordination & submission of plans & technical reports required to discharge consent conditions (e.g. environmental monitoring plans, construction method statements, EPS risk assessments and consent conditions for material changes in the planning application).

Added Value

- Contribution to the corporate memory of the project for Narec during the consenting phase; a role which now continues for BODL as the project is progressed through to construction
- Led negotiations during the consenting process. We provided intelligent, cost effective solutions to provide stakeholder confidence to enable consent for a highly time constrained project
- Local office in Newcastle provides staff with a strong and relevant local knowledge base. This, coupled with relationships with local stakeholders, contractors and consultants, and experience gained from involvement of other nearby offshore schemes such as Teesside OWF, is being utilised in the provision of consent condition discharge services



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