

1 Introduction

Purpose of This Document

This Environmental Risk Assessment Report has been prepared by RPS on behalf of FAB Link Ltd. This document reports on the findings of the environmental risk assessment of the UK cable route, which forms part of the FAB Link Interconnector.

Introduction to the FAB Link Interconnector

- 1.1 FAB Link is a proposed interconnector which will allow the exchange and trading of up to 1400MW of electricity between France, Alderney and Britain. The cable will cross the channel island of Alderney in order to connect future renewable tidal stream generation in the seas around Alderney.
- 1.2 The main components of the FAB Link Interconnector are shown on the Figure 1.1 and would comprise:
- High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) electricity cables buried in or placed (and protected) upon the sea bed between the Contentin (or Cherbourg) Peninsula, Normandy, France and the South Devon coast of Britain – the Offshore Cable Route;
 - HVDC electricity cable landing and traverse (as underground cables) of the Channel Island of Alderney;
 - HVDC onshore and offshore cable ‘transitions’ at the shorelines of all three territories;
 - HVDC to High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) converter stations in both Normandy and Devon; and
 - HVDC onshore cables from the transition points to the converter stations and HVAC onshore cables from the converter stations to substations in both territories — the Onshore Cable Route.
 - Connection to the electricity system in Great Britain via the high voltage National Electricity Transmission System (NETS) substation near Exeter, operated by National Grid Electricity Transmission (‘National Grid’).
- 1.3 The FAB Link Interconnector is designated as a Project of Common Interest (PCI) under the Connecting Europe Facility and has received financial support for its development under that programme. It has been granted an Interconnector Licence by the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority and has been granted Interim Project Approval under the interconnector “cap and floor” regime by the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem).
- 1.4 FAB Link Ltd is developing the applications for the UK onshore, UK offshore and Alderney elements of the FAB Link Interconnector (as shown on Figure 1.1).

Selection of the UK Onshore Cable Route

- 1.5 The selection of the connection point to the UK National Grid is described in the UK Connection Point Selection Report (Transmission Investment, 2016).
- 1.6 Factors such as land availability, proximity to the NGET substation, access, planning and environmental constraints led to the selection of the preferred converter station site near to Exeter Airport in 2015, which overall was determined to be most consistent with the project's efficiency and cost requirements. The detail of the selection process is provided in the HVDC Converter Station Site Selection Process Report (RPS, 2015).
- 1.7 Factors such as the long-term viability of the cables, minimising construction risk and compatibility with viable onshore and offshore cable routes were taken into account in the selection of the UK landfall point. This process is described in detail in the "Landfall Selection Process Report (RPS, 2016a). The land cable route was selected through a series of phased appraisals of the engineering, environmental and land-use constraints. This process is described in the Cable Corridor Selection Process Report (RPS, 2016b).

Statutory Framework and Planning Approach

- 1.8 FAB Link Ltd is a licence holder under section 6 of the Electricity Act 1989. The company therefore has certain permitted development rights as set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GPDO).
- 1.9 The onshore underground cable routes are permitted development under Part 15 Class B:
- Permitted development: (a) the installation or replacement in, on, over or under land of an electric line and the construction of shafts and tunnels and the installation or replacement of feeder or service pillars or transforming or switching stations or chambers reasonably necessary in connection with an electric line; and*
- (b) the installation or replacement of any electronic communications line which connects any part of an electric line to any electrical plant or building, and the installation or replacement of any support for any such line.*
- 1.10 A certificate of lawful development will be sought from East Devon District Council confirming that the proposed underground cable is permitted development.
- 1.11 The proposed UK converter station requires planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and a separate environmental report has been prepared to accompany that application.

Assessment Methodology

- 1.12 In formulating its proposals in the UK, FAB Link Ltd has a duty (as a licence holder) under Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 to:
- a) have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest; and*

b) do what he reasonably can to mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects.

- 1.13 This duty applies independently of any other requirement under relevant UK environmental legislation.
- 1.14 Each topic chapter in this report sets out whether there are risks or impacts from the permitted cable development that require mitigation to ensure that FAB Link Ltd complies with its Schedule 9 duties. Each chapter also details the relevant national policy and guidance, relevant consultation, assessment methodology and method statements with mitigation measures to ensure compliance with the Schedule 9 duties.

Structure of the Environmental Risk Assessment Report

- 1.15 The Report has been structured in order to allow relevant environmental information to be easily accessible. This volume of the Report (Volume 1) includes the main text of the Report. The description of the project is provided in Chapter 2. The remainder of Volume 1 contains topic by topic environmental information as shown in Table 1.1.
- 1.16 Figures and appendices to accompany the text of the Report are provided separately in Volumes 2 and 3. Volume 3 includes specialist reports providing relevant background and technical information.
- 1.17 The FAB Link Project Summary (available as a separate document) has been produced which provides an overview of the entire FAB Link Interconnector project and summarises impacts and proposed mitigation measures in non-technical language.

Table 1.1: Structure of the Report

Structure of Report	
Volume 1: Text	
Contents and Glossary	
Executive Summary	
Chapter 1	Introduction
Chapter 2	Project Description
Chapter 3	Ecology and Nature Conservation
Chapter 4	Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
Chapter 5	Transport and Traffic
Chapter 6	Air Quality and Health
Chapter 7	Hydrology and Flood Risk

Structure of Report	
Chapter 8	Geology, Hydrogeology, Ground Conditions and Contamination
Chapter 9	Land Use Agriculture and Soils
Chapter 10	Draft Code of Construction Practice
Volume 2: Figures	
Including all figures and drawings to accompany the text.	
Volume 3: Appendices	
Including specialist reports forming technical appendices to the main text.	

FAB Link Limited

- 1.18 The FAB Link Interconnector is being developed through an unincorporated joint venture between RTE (Réseau de Transport d'Électricité) of France and FAB Link Limited of Guernsey. RTE is the owner and operator of the French national electricity grid. FAB Link Limited is an incorporated joint venture between Transmission Investment LLP of the UK and Alderney Renewable Energy Ltd (ARE).
- 1.19 Transmission Investment LLP is an operator and maintainer of various offshore transmission assets under Offshore Transmission Operator (OFTO) arrangements for connection of wind farms in the North Sea. ARE is the developer of a proposed tidal power station to be constructed off the south-east coast of Alderney and designed to take advantage of the extreme tidal currents in that area.
- 1.20 FAB Link Limited will own the assets in Alderney and Britain and RTE will own the assets in France.

The Assessment Team

- 1.21 RPS has provided the specialist topic assessments within this Environmental Risk Assessment Report.

References

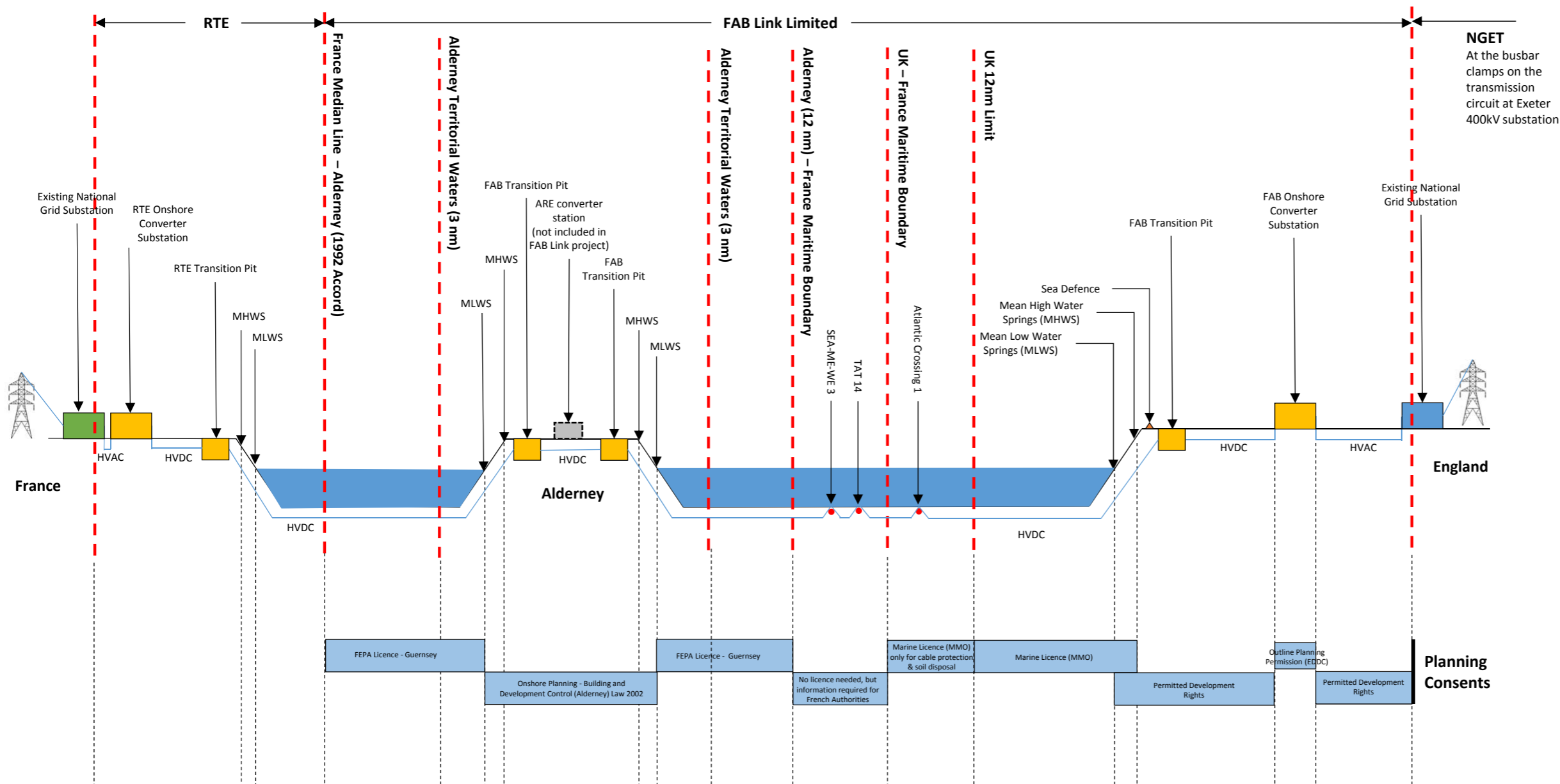
RPS (2015) France-Alderney-Britain (FAB) Interconnector: HVDC Converter Station Site Selection Process Report (2nd Edition) August 2015.

RPS (2016a) France-Alderney-Britain (FAB) Interconnector: Landfall Selection Process Report.

RPS (2016b) France-Alderney-Britain (FAB) Interconnector: Cable Corridor Selection Process Report.

Transmission Investment (2016) UK Connection Point Selection Report.

Schematic overview of Planning Consents and Property Rights for the FAB Link Interconnector Project



Version 1.4, 19th Nov 2015

Schematic – not to scale

Legend

NGET
At the busbar clamps on the transmission circuit at Exeter 400kV substation

Rev	Description	Date	Initial	Checked



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Client **FAB Link Ltd.**
Project **UK Cable Route Environmental Risk Assessment**
Title **Schematic Overview of FAB Link Interconnector**

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