

CASE STUDY FACT SHEET

SÖDRA MIDSJÖBANKEN OFFSHORE WINDFARM FROM THE AFFECTED PARTY POINT OF VIEW

1. BACKGROUND

The worldwide demand for energy supply is constantly growing. Requirements set by policymakers and increasing awareness of the society, obligates countries to deliver energy from clean sources. Energy obtained from renewable sources obey the establishments of the Paris Agreement.

Construction of the wind farms located in the offshore areas is cost-efficient, due to specific characteristics related to higher number of days with wind, in comparison to the onshore areas. Consequently, the Baltic Sea is a subject of interest for the potential development of the offshore wind farms.

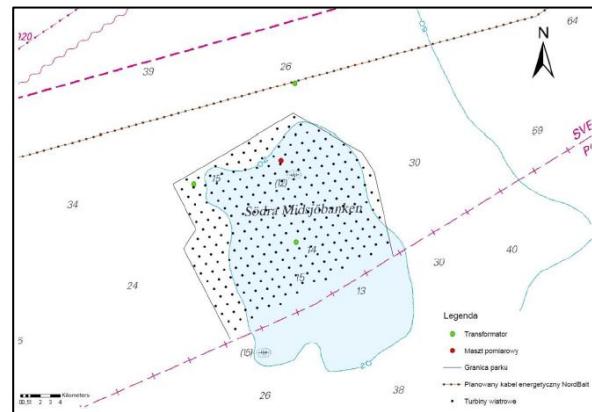
2. ESPOO CONVENTION PROCEDURE

- **Field of application
(article 2)**

Construction of the wind farm is characterized as an activity that is likely to cause a significant adverse transboundary impact in accordance with appendix I of the Espoo Convention. Therefore Sweden conducted transboundary EIA procedure for the project of the offshore wind farm Södra Midsjöbanken. Moreover planned activity is located in close distance to the border of the Republic of Poland.

- **Notification
(article 3)**

In 2011 Sweden notified Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Poland, Lithuania and the Russian Federation about planned project regarding the construction of an offshore windfarm in the Baltic Sea Region – Södra



1. Location of the project. Source: Wind farm project Södra Midsjöbanken. Consultation document. 16.05.2011 E.ON

Midsjöbanken, in accordance with article 3 of the Espoo Convention.

- **Project description**

Offshore wind farm is planned to be situated in the South Baltic Sea on the Middle Bank called Södra Midsjöbanken, within the Swedish Exclusive Economic Zone in close neighborhood of the Polish EEZ border.

The project initially consisted of 300 wind turbines with the total capacity up to 1000 MW, with annual producing capability almost 3 TWh of energy. Covering the area of approx. 320 square kilometers. Wind turbines were planned to be placed 800-950 m from each other, under right angle to the prevailing wind direction, with 1100-1300 m distance between the rows. Three or four transmission stations would be located in the area of the wind park. The total height of the project would be 200 m a.s.l.

- **Scoping**

Information provided by Sweden was a subject to the opinions of the three regional environmental protection authorities, three maritime offices and national marine fisheries research institute. Based on the opinions provided by those authorities Poland decided to participate in the transboundary procedure, and submitted the statements on the scope of the environmental documentation, as requested by the Swedish Party. Poland responded within specified time for the response.

- **Public participation on scoping stage
(article 3 paragraph 8)**

Documents provided by Swedish Party were displayed for a public view. Information about notification, received documents and stage of the procedure was published by regional authorities and on the website of the Public Information Bulletin. The Polish public could submit comments or remarks to the scope of the EIA documentation for 21 day period.

- **Information regarding the environment
(article 3 paragraph 6)**

Sweden requested from each of the Affected Parties an additional information regarding fishery data in the area of the Middle Bank called Södra Midsjöbanken, in order to prepare substantive EIA documentation with examination of transboundary impacts.

- **EIA documentation (1st)
(article 4)**

In 2015 Poland has received the information about the change of the application regarding the project together with prepared EIA documentation. EIA documentation was provided in Polish to ensure effective public participation.

Transboundary consultations

art. 4 and art. 5 of the Espoo Convention

- **Consultations with environmental authorities**

Three regional environmental protection authorities, three maritime offices and national marine fisheries research institute in Poland were asked to provide the statement regarding EIA documentation.

- **Public participation**

Documents provided by Swedish Party were displayed for a public view. As previously mentioned, the same rights were given to the public to provide any comments or remarks.

- **EIA documentation (2nd)**

In 2017 Sweden informed about another change to the application of the project, hence forwarded additional information regarding the impact of the activity on the environment.

The design of the project has changed due to comments received during EIA proceeding.

- **Consultations with environmental authorities**

As previously, regional environmental protection authorities, maritime offices and national marine fisheries research institute in Poland were asked to provide the statement to the revised EIA documentation.

- **Public participation**

Documents provided by Swedish Party were displayed for a public view. As previously mentioned, the same rights were given to the public.

- **EIA documentation (3rd)**

In 2018 Sweden informed that due to comments received from the concerned Parties project was a subject to a change in order to limit negative environmental impact to a minimum. Poland received final information regarding the mitigation of the impact of the activity on the environment and explanations to the statements previously submitted.

- **Final conclusion**

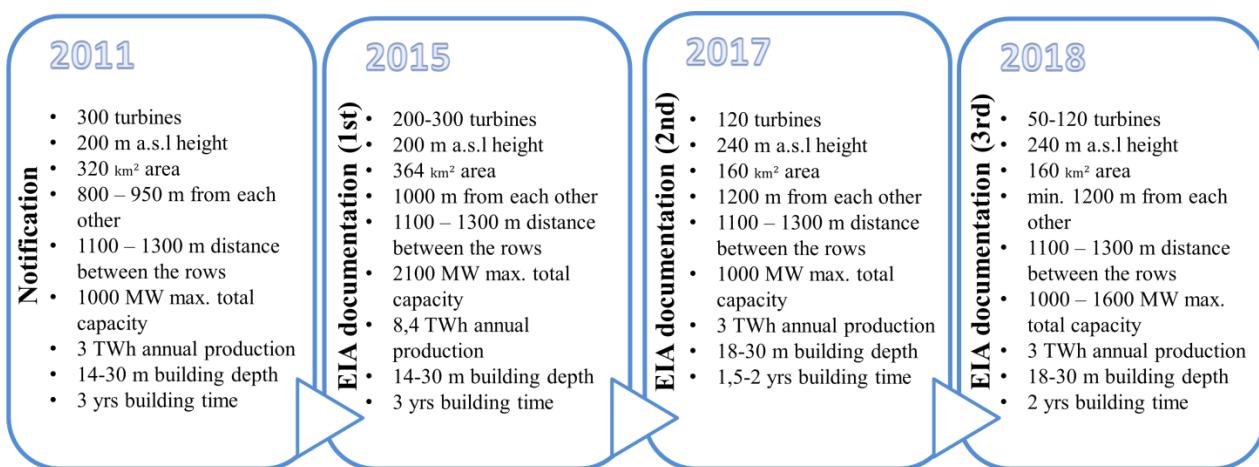
Polish Party based on the final documents received from Sweden and consultations with national authorities, admitted that information about the project and its impact on environment is highly sufficient. Taking into consideration the location of the project Polish Party underlined the specific requirements which should be imposed for the developer in the final decision.

- **Final decision
(article 6)**

Polish Party is expecting information about issued final decision at the moment.

- **Post-project analysis
(article 7)**

For such types of the activities it is important to conduct post-project analysis, especially in offshore areas which due to its peculiarity require scientific research to be conducted. Thus, Polish Party submitted request in accordance with art. 7 of the Espoo Convention to be informed about results of the post-project analysis. Especially with regard to marine mammals and aquatic birds. Moreover, about monitoring with respect to noise, suspended matter and migration of ichthyofaunal.



2. A time frame of the changes to the project design.

Source: own elaboration based on the documents provided by Swedish Party

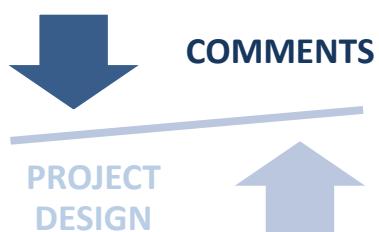
3. ASSESSMENT OF THE PROCEDURE GOOD PRACTISE EXAMPLE

Transboundary procedure for the project started in 2011. Due to comments received from the concerned Parties and some other factors, project was modified several times.

Poland perceives Södra Midsjöbanken project procedure as an perfect example of the cooperation between the Parties with the primary objective in environmental protection.

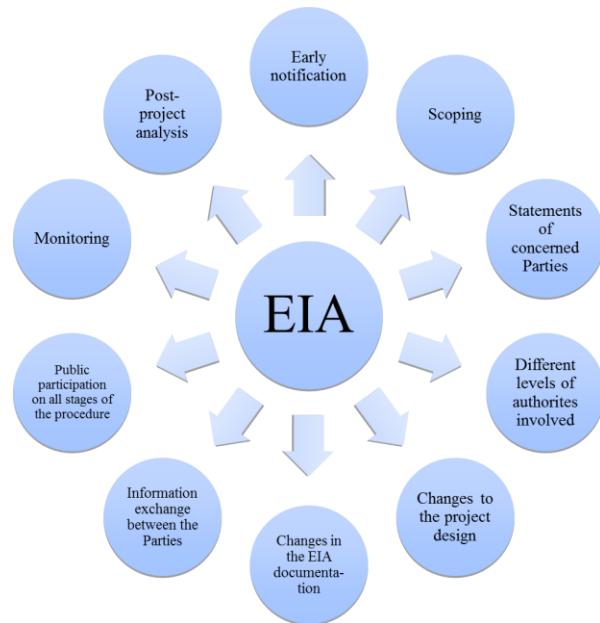
Parties were consulting project design and its impact on the environment for almost 7 years, until the final outcome of consultations will be acceptable for both Parties.

Three changes to the EIA documentation might seem confusing to the concerned Parties, public and authorities, although as the basic tool verifies and confirms that changes proposed by developer aimed at mitigation of impact on the environment.



Graph above perfectly reflects that comments received from the concerned Parties were an important trigger to introduce changes in the project design.

The transboundary procedure for Södra Midsjöbanken wind park proves how essential transboundary environmental impact assessments are. Including how decisive the Espoo Convention is for all the Parties. Continuous information exchange supported collective and successful cooperation between the Parties.



3. Elements of the successful EIA procedure
Source: own elaboration

4. ACKNOWLEDGES

It should be noted that this particular case of the transboundary procedure is showed from the perception point of Poland as the Affected Party. Other, unknown factors could have been crucial for the whole procedure to be conducted this, particular way, hence the outcome and final shape of the project could have been different.

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