



Factsheet: Fisheries

The factsheet provides an overview of Sofia Offshore Wind Farm's offshore activity and contacts relevant to the fisheries industry.

Project background

Sofia Offshore Wind Farm is one of four offshore wind projects under construction on Dogger Bank, in the central North Sea.

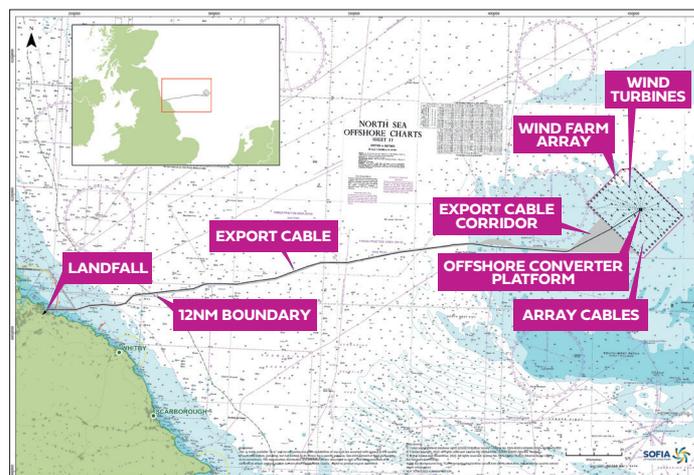
It was developed and consented by the Forewind consortium and was previously known as Dogger Bank Teesside B. The project was awarded consent in 2015 together with Dogger Bank Teesside A, which is now called Dogger Bank C.

The Sofia site is approximately 195 kilometres from the North East coast and its export cables come to shore in Teesside, between Redcar and Marske-by-the-Sea. Sofia's offshore turbine array site has a total area of 593km², with water depths up to 37 metres. Water depths along the export cable corridor between the array site and landfall are up to 82 metres at some points.

Liaison and consultation with the fisheries industry and other offshore stakeholders has been key during the project's development and pre-construction

phases and will continue to be a priority throughout the construction phase, which will ramp up in 2023 and continue through to late 2026.

The majority of the project's pre-construction offshore surveys, including archaeological, benthic, unexploded ordnance (UXO) and ornithological, were completed by late 2022 in readiness for the start of offshore construction in 2023. These included the investigation of 16 archaeological targets and 200 potential UXO targets investigated, with two confirmed and successfully cleared.



2023 offshore works programme

Export cable route (landfall to wind farm)

Landfall HDD offshore works	Q1/Q2
Route preparation and pre-installation survey	Q2/Q3
Cable installation (1st campaign)	Q3
Post installation burial and rock placement	Q3/Q4

Wind farm area

Array cable pre-installation survey	Q1
Array cable boulder clearance and pre-ploughing	Q2
Foundation scour protection	Q3

Approach to co-existence

The project believes that co-existence – the presence of both the commercial fishing industry and the offshore wind farm – can be achieved at the site and along the cable route.

The most sustainable approach to co-existence is to avoid and reduce impacts both to the fishing industry and offshore wind developer and ensure that all parties can work side by side in a positive manner, and with a productive working relationship at all levels of representation.

To help facilitate this, the project has published the Sofia Fisheries Co-existence Plan with principles that apply to the project's full lifecycle - pre-construction, construction, operation and decommissioning. The objectives centre around ensuring the health and safety of Sofia's workforce, contractors and third parties such as fishing vessels while conducting activities relevant to the wind farm. At the same time disturbance to other activities should be minimised as far as reasonably practicable; and accurate timely information about activities should be provided to local fishermen.

The plan is broadly based on the best practice guidance for offshore renewables developments and through engagement with fishermen through the development and pre-construction phases of Sofia.

Disruption payments

Where co-existence is not possible with nearshore potters during surveys and export cable installation, there is a strategy for disruption payments.

These relate to private commercial agreements with individual fishing vessels from the local fishing industry where it is necessary to restrict access to specific areas for particular durations. Where there is a well-established record of static gear being deployed which cannot be relocated, a commercial agreement will be considered. The Sofia Fisheries Liaison Plan details this process which is managed by the appointed Commercial Fisheries Compensation Strategy Specialist, who can be contacted via the FLO (contact details opposite).

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has published guidance on the marking of deployed fishing gear, including how to deal with and retrieve lost gear. Sofia recommends that commercial fishermen operating in the vicinity of the project follow this MMO guidance. Likewise there is a set approach for commercial fishermen to follow in the event of lost, damaged or snagged gear associated with the project. Both the Fisheries Liaison Plan and Fisheries Co-existence Plan can be found on the Sofia website.

Open communications

Sofia will aim for open and continuous communication between the project and the fishing industry throughout all phases of the wind farm and a number of mechanisms have been established to achieve this.

A fisheries liaison officer (FLO) is in place to maintain and facilitate dialogue, while a commercial fisheries working group has been established as a forum for communications.

Fisheries liaison representatives (FLRs) will be onboard construction and survey vessels in the inshore area, along the export cable and within the array area as appropriate to liaise between the project vessels, the Sofia FLO and directly with fishermen at sea.

Notices to Mariners (NtM) will be issued at least 10 working days prior to the commencement of any licenced offshore operations detailing the dates, area of operation, vessel identity, nature of the works and contact details. Anyone wishing to be added to the NtM distribution list should contact the FLO.

Sofia Fisheries Liaison Officer Contact Details

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