

Public

Ref: FOI/25/012

National Energy System Operator

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Dear requester

Request for Information

Thank you for your request for information which we received on 14 April. We have considered this request under the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).

Request

You asked us:

*I would be grateful if you could supply the following information.
What part does NESO play in international discussions about an offshore grid in the North Sea? There is much work being done by our European counterparts across the North Sea (Expert Paper III – Offshore TSO Collaboration April 2025 titled “Joint Planning in Europe’s Northern Seas”, prepared by the Offshore TSO Collaboration (OTC)). One of the conclusions is that international collaboration is a necessity.*

Our response

The FOIA and EIR apply to recorded information held by NESO at the time that a request is submitted and we are not required to create new information in order to respond to these requests. It was unclear to us which recorded information you were requesting under the FOIA and/or EIR. We asked the relevant team, however, to describe NESO’s role in international discussions and the OTC and we believe that this answers your query.

The description that they provided is as follows:

Great Britain is connected by ten interconnectors to Northern Ireland, Ireland, and continental Europe. As the system operator for the electricity network, we work closely with neighbouring system operators to manage reliability and security of the electricity network. The UK government is the primary interlocutor with the neighbouring European countries. In our advisory role, NESO works with DESNZ and Ofgem in managing these international relationships. Since summer 2024, NESO has been a member of the OTC – a loose collaboration of interested TSOs formed following the 2022 North Sea Summit. The OTC is focused on fostering collaboration between neighbours. The benefit to Great Britain in NESO's participation is that we can use the insights gained by the OTC as soft constraints within future SEP modelling. The collaborative expert papers take into account already approved projects (the prerogative of Ofgem) and then look at modelling for future needs – while not endorsing any particular project. NESO's engagement and relationships with European neighbours are subject to the terms of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

Advice and assistance

If the above description does not fully answer your question and you would like to clarify which recorded information you require, we will conduct searches of our records in accordance with the FOIA and/or EIR. You do not need to explain the reason for your request, but sometimes more information about the purpose of your request can help us identify relevant information. You may wish to specify the format or type of record.

We would also like to make you aware that the documents from the OTC are hosted by the Belgian Transmission System Operator (TSO), Elia. Please see their website (English language pages): [Elia: Belgian's Electricity System Operator](https://www.elia.be/en) if you have not already accessed this information.

Next steps

You can ask us to review our response. If you want us to carry out a review, please let us know within 40 working days and quote the reference number at the top of this letter.

If you are still dissatisfied after our internal review, you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). You should make complaints to the ICO within six weeks of receiving the outcome of an internal review. The easiest way to lodge a complaint is through their website: www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints. Alternatively they can be contacted at: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, SK9 5AF.

Thank you for your interest in the work of the National Energy System Operator (NESO).

Regards,

The Information Rights Team

National Energy System Operator (NESO)