Launching Nemo – National Grid launch £600 million subsea cable between the UK and Belgium

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National Grid and Elia launch £600 million Nemo Link to deliver a more flexible energy system for UK and Belgian consumers (Wednesday 5th December).

Nemo Link, which stretches 80 miles from Herdersbrug on the Belgian coast to Richborough in Kent, is a joint venture between National Grid and Belgian transmission system operator Elia. It is the UK's first subsea power cable to Belgium and will enable the trade of electricity between the UK and Belgium when it becomes operational in early 2019.

National Grid Chief Executive John Pettigrew believes interconnectors are a key tool in delivering a cleaner and smarter energy system for UK consumers:

He said: "Nemo Link will bring great benefits to consumers in the UK and Belgium by offering both countries access to a broader energy mix and providing opportunities to expand into other electricity markets.

"This new connection will also provide significant social benefits. By connecting the UK and Belgian electricity markets, we will ensure customers have access to different sources of generation and lower priced electricity. This will mean that customers pay less for their energy.

"Over the next five years National Grid will be investing more than £2 billion in new interconnectors to Europe and our significant commitment is driven by the value that interconnectors like Nemo Link can bring to customers at both ends of the cable."

More than 1,400 engineers and project specialists have worked on the project since construction began in 2015. Once live the 1000 megawatt cable will provide access to enough energy to power one million homes.

Business and Energy Secretary Greg Clark said:

"Nemo Link is the UK's first interconnector since 2011, increasing our electricity capacity from these power cables by a quarter and further enhancing security of supply for us and Belgium.

"Not only will this interconnector help us to accommodate more renewable energy on our grid and provide cheaper, greener energy for consumers as part of our modern Industrial Strategy, it will also see continued and close cooperation on energy across borders with our European partners."

Elia Chief Executive Chris Peeters said:

“Today marks the inauguration of the first interconnector between Belgium and the United Kingdom. This massive project is a first for Belgium, both technically and strategically. This new interconnector - along with the soon to be completed ALEGrO connection with Germany – will enable us to significantly boost our energy exchange capacity and to position our infrastructure at the very heart of a future integrated European electricity system”.

Nemo Link is National Grid’s third interconnector to Europe following the success of IFA (Interconnexion France Angleterre), a 2000 megawatt interconnector which connects the UK to France, and BritNed which joins the UK to the Netherlands with 1000 megawatts capacity.

The company also has two more under construction, North Sea Link which will connect the UK and Norway and IFA 2 which will provide a second link to France. Both will add 1400 and 1000 megawatts of capacity respectively.

Last month the company announced it had been given financial approval for the construction of the 1400 megawatt Viking Link which will connect the UK with Denmark.

During the construction of Nemo Link engineers found more than 1,200 unexploded objects including mines and WW2 bombs. Over 30 of these were detonated by Royal Navy divers.

Finds also included a 17th century cannon off the UK coast which was found loaded and ready for battle. The cannon is currently being restored by experts at Wessex Archaeology.

Ends

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Notes for editors

Photo by National Grid

Nemo Link facts

- Nemo Link is a 140km (80 Mile) interconnector between the UK and Belgium
- It has cost £600 million and is a joint venture between National Grid and Elia (Belgian Transmission System Operator)
- In total 3.5 million working hours have been spent on the project
- 1,400 engineers have worked on the construction since 2015.
- It will provide enough energy to power one million homes

During construction engineers found:

- 1,200 potential explosives identified;
- Following closer analysis, 34 unexploded ordnances required detonation offshore;
- Detonations carried out by teams from the Royal Navy and the Belgian navy
- An 18th Century canon, which was loaded and ready for battle;
- The shipwreck of a 14th Century French warship

Construction

- Siemens supplied and installed the converter stations and all associated equipment;
- The HVDC cable was supplied and installed by Sumitomo Electric.

Notes to Editors:

National Grid is pivotal to the energy systems in the UK and the north eastern United States. We aim to serve customers well and efficiently, supporting the

communities in which we operate and making possible the energy systems of the future.

National Grid in the UK:

- We own and operate the electricity transmission network in England and Wales, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. We also operate, but do not own, the Scottish networks. Our networks comprise approximately 7,200 kilometres (4,474 miles) of overhead line, 1,500 kilometres (932 miles) of underground cable and 342 substations.
- We own and operate the gas National Transmission System in Great Britain, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. Our network comprises approximately 7,660 kilometres (4,760 miles) of high-pressure pipe and 618 above-ground installations.
- As Great Britain's System Operator (SO) we make sure gas and electricity is transported safely and efficiently from where it is produced to where it is consumed. From April 2019, Electricity System Operator (ESO) is a new standalone business within National Grid, legally separate from all other parts of the National Grid Group. This will provide the right environment to deliver a balanced and impartial ESO that can realise real benefits for consumers as we transition to a more decentralised, decarbonised electricity system.

- Other UK activities mainly relate to businesses operating in competitive markets outside of our core regulated businesses; including interconnectors, gas metering activities and a liquefied natural gas (LNG) importation terminal – all of which are now part of National Grid Ventures. National Grid Property is responsible for the management, clean-up and disposal of surplus sites in the UK. Most of these are former gas works.

Find out more about the energy challenge and how National Grid is helping find solutions to some of the challenges we face at https://www.nationalgrid.com/group/news

National Grid undertakes no obligation to update any of the information contained in this release, which speaks only as at the date of this release, unless required by law or regulation.