



To Espoo Point of Contact in

Sweden
Germany

Landskab og Skov
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Notification regarding the preliminary investigations of two offshore windfarms in the Baltic Sea in accordance to Article 3 of the ESPOO Convention

According to Article 3 of the ESPOO Convention, regarding the environment impact assessment across country boundaries, the Ministry of Environment submits a notification on preliminary investigations for future offshore windfarms in the Baltic Sea near the island of Bornholm. The notification is made parallel to a hearing of relevant authorities in Denmark.

Background information

A broad majority of the Danish Parliament has in June 2020 adopted a climate agreement on green transformation of industry and the energy sector. According to the agreement Denmark will initiate the construction of two energy islands: one on the island of Bornholm with a capacity of 2 GW offshore wind, and one in the North Sea with a long term capacity of at least 10 GW offshore wind.

Following this agreement the Danish TSO, Energinet, was in November 2020 imposed to start the preliminary investigations for the two offshore windparks of 2 GW total in the Baltic Sea near the Danish island of Bornholm.

In February 2021 the Danish Parliament furthermore adopted an annex to the June 2020 climate agreement regarding the two energy islands pushing for their establishment. In March 2021 the Danish TSO, Energinet submitted an application to start the preliminary investigations for the two offshore windfarms, see map below (figure 1).

When the preliminary investigations has been finalized, it is the intention to conduct a formal SEA-process, where you will be notified again. The Danish Energy Agency expects the SEA-process to begin later in 2021.

Potential environmental impacts from the preliminary investigations

The preliminary investigations will comprise geotechnical and geophysical surveys as well as environmental investigations in the blue area shown in figure 1. The blue polygons inside the red area are the expected two future offshore windfarms. In the red area – with the exception of the Natura 2000-area - marine environmental preliminary investigations will also be undertaken.

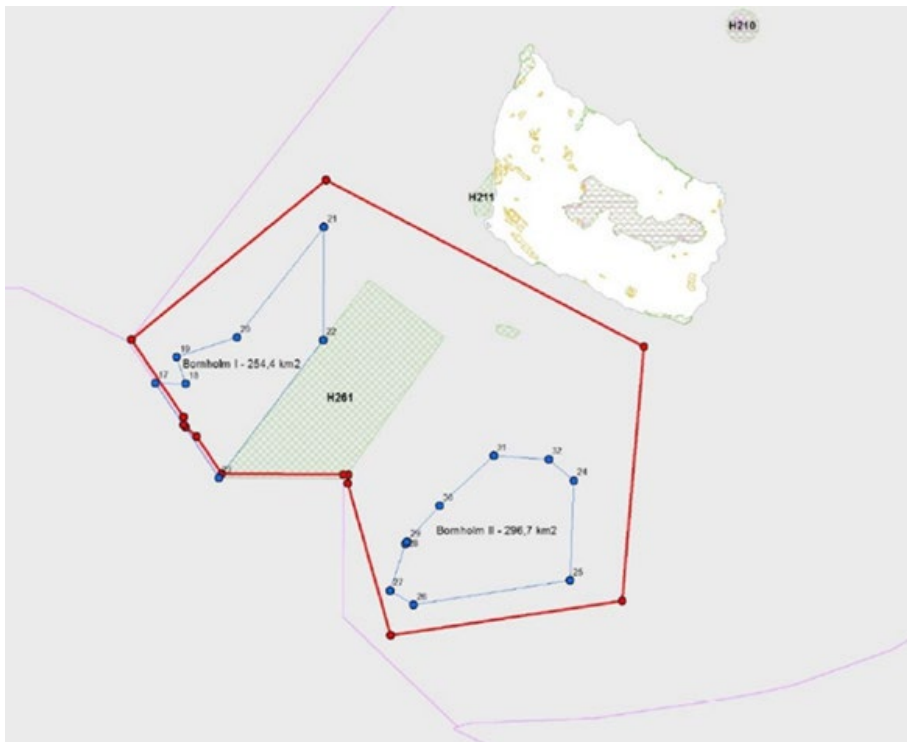


Figure 1: the area for the preliminary investigations for geotechnical and geophysical surveys (blue) shown in relation to the island of Bornholm and the EEZ (faded outline). The area marked H261 is a Natura 2000-area. No preliminary investigations will be permitted in the Natura 2000-area.

The geophysical surveys will consist of seismic surveys using sparkers, which can affect marine mammals and in particular harbor porpoise. As the survey area is located close to Natura 2000-areas (SAC: Special Area of Conservation) designated for the protection of harbor porpoise significant impacts cannot be ruled out and an appropriate assessment has been made to rule out any adverse impacts. The assessment on the potential impacts and mitigation measures to avoid adverse effects on the SAC's has been conducted by University of Aarhus/DCE in the enclosed report.

Based on the report it is the assessment of the Danish Energy Agency that any adverse effects on harbor porpoise and the nearby SAC's designated for the protection of the species can be ruled out, when the mitigation measures outlined in the report is taken into consideration.

The Danish Energy Agency thus expects to be able to grant the permit for the preliminary investigations on the following conditions, which must be strictly observed:

- Use of soft start/ramp up protocol to ensure that no mammals are close the survey ships when the seismic survey sparker operates at full strength (soft start protocol also implemented if the seismic survey is paused more than 5 minutes)
- Use of marine mammal observers to ensure no marine mammals are close to the survey ship

- Requirement that seismic surveys are only conducted in the period from April to October (Seismic surveys are expected to last 15 days for the northern survey area and 18 days for the southern survey area)

Notification

Enclosed this notification letter is the application of March 12 2021 for the preliminary surveys in Danish from the Danish TSO, Energinet, the DCE-report on marine mammals and effects on Natura 2000-areas as well as the draft permit for the preliminary investigations. The detailed conditions in the permit regarding protection of marine mammals is stated in section 11-17 of the permit.

The Danish Energy Agency is in the process of translating the application for the preliminary surveys, the DCE-report and the draft permit into German and will forward them as soon as possible – expected no later than 7th of April 2021.

If you have any comments to the planned activity and the draft permit for the preliminary investigations, you are kindly asked to submit them no later than **5th of May 2021**.

Comments must be send to the Danish Environmental Agency using the e-mail address Espoo@mst.dk marked filenr. **2021-2094**.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards

Sif Zimmermann
Espoo Point of Contact
+45 21 99 57 45
sizi@mst.dk