



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA  
MINISTRY OF CLIMATE

Daiga Avdejanova  
The Environment State Bureau of the  
Republic of Latvia  
pasts@vpvb.gov.lv

Our ref 13.02.2025 6-3/25/16-2

Notification in accordance with Article 3 of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) regarding the submarine cable between Estonia and Latvia

Dear Daiga Avdejanova,

As the Party of origin, Estonia is hereby sending a notification in accordance with Article 3 of the Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) of the project planned by the developer Elering AS (hereinafter *the developer*) to construct the submarine cable of fourth electricity connection between Estonia and Latvia.

Description of the project

The developer, the operator of Estonia's electricity transmission network, considers it necessary to establish a fourth electricity connection between the Estonian and Latvian transmission networks. According to a preliminary assessment, the need for additional technical capacity is up to 1000 MW.

The submarine cable consists of up to three alternating current cables. Each cable comprises three phase cables and an optical cable, with a total diameter of approximately 20 cm. The cable will be embedded in the seabed sediments at a depth of about 1–1,5 meters. The total length of the submarine cable corridor is approximately 100 km kilometres.

A summary of the application for a superficies licence submitted by the developer is enclosed to the letter, the maps of the alternative routes of the cable corridor are also shown in the application.

Considering the location and length of the submarine cable corridor, the planned activity may have transboundary environmental impact on the quality of seawater (the spread of suspended solids, the presence of toxic heavy metals in sediments and the associated risk of pollution) and on Natura 2000 network areas. Therefore, as the decision-maker responsible for development consent, the Consumer Protection and Technical Regulatory Authority has requested that the Ministry of Climate notifies potentially affected parties.

According to the initiation decision of the environmental impact assessment (EIA), several studies are planned to carry out during the EIA (for example geological and geotechnical seabed studies, seabed biota studies, mapping of habitat types, studies of fisheries, seals and other marine mammals, impact assessment on protected natural sites and Natura 2000 network areas etc.).

Related to the planned project, it is necessary additionally also to provide the following information. The establishment of the fourth electricity connection between Estonia and Latvia via Saaremaa island requires the construction of 330-kilovolt power lines on Saaremaa and their strong integration with the mainland's 330-kilovolt transmission network. Therefore, on February 15 2024, the Government of the Republic initiated the National Designated Spatial Plan (NDSP) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Estonia-Latvia fourth electricity connection at developer's request. Since the NDSP process will evaluate different route corridors, there are four possible submarine cable corridor options for the Estonia-Latvia fourth electricity connection. Currently, the location of the cable route has not yet been determined as a result of the NSDP.

#### Environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedure

On 8 May 2024, the developer submitted an application for superficies licence to the Consumer Protection and Technical Regulatory Authority to install a high-voltage alternating current transmission line in the marine area. As per the Building Code, a superficies licence is the right to encumber a delimited part of a public water body with a construction work that is permanently connected to the bottom of the water body and are not permanently connected to the shore. The developer is applying for the superficies licence valid for 50 years. The main document of the supplemented application is enclosed in Annex 1 (only application for alternative 1, since there are four different applications for four alternative locations). A translated summary in English of the superficies licence application is enclosed in Annex 2 (with the figures of four alternative locations of the cable corridor).

According to the Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Management System Act (hereinafter *the Act*), the decision-maker will determine whether to initiate an EIA based on the application for the development consent. The Consumer Protection and Technical Regulatory Authority initiated the procedure for superficies licence along with an EIA on 23 December 2024. The decision (in Estonian) is enclosed in Annex 3.

As stipulated by the Act, following the initiation of the EIA, the leading expert or an expert group under the supervision of the leading expert will prepare an EIA programme (scoping document). The decision-maker will organize its public display and public hearing. After considering the opinions received during this process, the developer will submit the EIA programme to the decision-maker for verification of compliance with the requirements.

Subsequently, based on the EIA programme declared compliant, the EIA report will be prepared. The EIA report stage involves procedures similar to those in the programme stage.

When making a decision to grant or refuse to grant development consent, the decision-maker will take the results of the EIA and the environmental measures outlined in the EIA report into account. This also includes, where relevant, the results of transboundary consultations.

If the affected Party intends to participate in the EIA procedure, the draft of the EIA programme and EIA report will be forwarded to the affected state. Consultations are commenced regarding the environmental impact resulting from the proposed activity and environmental measures to be taken.

## Answer to the notification

Kindly send the answer to this notification to the Ministry of Climate (info@kliimaministerium.ee) by 14 April 2025 and:

- acknowledge the receipt of the notification;
- indicate whether your country intends to participate in the EIA procedure of submarine electricity cable project;
- provide possible comments concerning the scope for the assessment of the environmental impacts of the project affecting your country.

Contacts information:

- Developer: Elering AS – Ms. Viktoria Muske-Vidjajev, viktoriamuskevidjajev@elering.ee
- Decision-maker: Consumer Protection and Technical Regulatory Authority – Ms. Adeele Vesingi, adeele.vesingi@ttja.ee
- Transboundary EIA procedure: Ministry of Climate – Mrs. Ülle Luiks, ulle.luiks@kliimaministerium.ee

Sincerely Yours,

(signed electronically)

Hanna Vahter

Acting as the Point of Contact for the Espoo Convention

Enclosures:

1. Annex 1 – main document of the application
2. Annex 2 – translated summary of the application
3. Annex 3 – decision of the initiation of the procedure
4. Annex 4 – map of the alternative locations of the cable corridor

For information: Elering AS, Consumer Protection and Technical Regulatory Authority

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