



Overview of the Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure and Superficies License for the Saare Wind Energy OÜ Offshore Wind Farm Project

The developer Saare Wind Energy OÜ (SWE) wishes to build an offshore wind farm west of the island Saaremaa in the territorial waters of Estonia. The planned offshore wind farm is located in Wind Energy Development Area No. 2, designated by the Estonian Maritime Spatial Plan established in 2022.

The offshore wind farm consists of a maximum of 100 wind turbines with a total capacity of up to 1400 MW and up to two offshore substations, internal cables, and a transmission system up to the point of connection to the general grid for electricity transmission. The turbines' maximum rotor diameter is 280 meters and tip height is 310 meters. The total area of the offshore wind farm is 197.5 km² and the water depth in this area is approximately 20-35 meters.

SWE submitted the superficies license application to the Government of Estonia on 9 April 2015. The environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedure of the superficies license was initiated by the Government of Estonia on 28 May 2020.

The first transboundary involvement of neighbouring countries took place after the initiation of the EIA procedure in July 2020. Sweden, Latvia and Lithuania wished to be involved in the cross-border impact assessment procedure and submitted their proposals for conducting the EIA. The countries shared a common interest in thoroughly assessing the impacts on birdlife, including migratory bird stopovers and feeding grounds, fish, seals and marine habitats, and the need to consider navigation and maritime safety and the cumulation of impacts was also highlighted. The developer and expert group took into account the proposals made by neighbouring countries in the further EIA procedure.

The second cross-border involvement took place during the environmental impact assessment in April 2021, where countries were again able to express their opinions and proposals on the environmental impact assessment and its program. The proposals received in the second stage largely overlapped with the proposals included in the first engagement, which had already been considered in the EIA program. In 2021-2023, comprehensive environmental studies were carried out in the superficies license area, including on birds, fish, bats, seals and marine habitats. In total, at least 20 different studies and modellings were carried out during the EIA. The studies and the EIA did not identify any significant negative environmental impact, including direct transboundary impact, on any of the assessed

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environmental aspects. However, the EIA identified mitigation measures (outlined in Section 7 of the superficies license) and the need for monitoring (fixed in section 8 of the superficies license) to prevent and reduce potential environmental impacts. Regarding cumulative impacts, it was explained that when assessing cumulative impacts, similar projects or other planned projects that lead to the accumulation of similar impacts from several activities can be taken into account, which have reached at least the same assessment stage by the time of the preparation of SWE EIA report, i.e. it is possible to take into account data collected and published in another EIA. There are no offshore wind farms in such an advanced development phase in the vicinity of the SWE area, nor are there such projects in the sea area of Latvia, Lithuania or the Swedish island of Gotland.

The third transboundary engagement took place upon the publication of the EIA report when the EIA report was sent to Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden in August 2023. The countries acknowledged the environmental studies conducted and the implementation of necessary mitigation measures.

Sweden. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency submitted the opinions of Bird Life Sweden and the Swedish Transport Administration. Bird Life Sweden strongly emphasizes that SWE offshore wind farm should be called upon to use techniques that combine weather/radar data and instantaneous shut-down of wind turbines when high-risk conditions occur. The corresponding mitigation measure is also outlined in the EIA report. The Swedish Transport Administration assess that, based on the impact assessment carried out, there will be no direct transboundary impacts due to the construction of the planned wind farm. However, they list potential negative transboundary impacts in relation to birdlife due to cumulative effects, theoretical impacts on fish fauna, bats, and seals, but consider that the proposed mitigation measures presented in the EIA report are sufficient and therefore the proposed activity will not cause negative transboundary impacts.

Lithuania. The State Service for Protected Areas under the Ministry of the Environment pointed out the relatively high species abundance in the planned area, therefore the installation of wind turbine foundations should be carried out in such a way as not to disturb biodiversity during sensitive periods. The State Service considers that the measures envisaged to reduce the impact of the operation of wind turbines are sufficient but proposes to reassess sound propagation during construction and the use of sound mitigation measures. The impact assessment has taken into account the impact of the planned technology on the species in the area and its vicinity. Therefore, no additional noise assessment is considered necessary.

Latvia. The Ministry of the Climate and Energy of the Republic of Latvia highlighted that the project is expected to have a small to significant positive impact on grid capacity and the transition to a climate-neutral economy, benefiting the climate and energy sectors. The State Service emphasized that when implementing the project, attention should be paid to the protection of migratory birds and the implementation of the best technical solutions to mitigate the risk of collisions both during the day and at night, which is also considered in the EIA report. The Nature Conservation Agency welcomed the quality of the EIA studies and documentation and stated that it would not impose additional conditions. The EIA report (approved by the Ministry of Climate on 10 June 2024) can be found on the SWE website [News and materials – Saare Wind Energy](#).

On May 15, 2025 the Estonian government decided to grant Superficies License to SWE based on the same grounds as stated in the application. The order was published in the *Riigi Teataja* on May 21, 2025 <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/323052025002> (in Estonian).

The superficies license allows SWE to proceed with the next stages of development, which are Preparation and Engineering (earliest 2026-2028), followed by the pre-fabrication phase (earliest 2028–2029) and the construction of the offshore wind farm (earliest 2029-2031). The time of construction of the offshore wind farm and transmission of electricity to the grid depends, among other things, on the electricity transmission system to be built by Elering AS (TSO of Estonia).

The offshore wind farm is expected to be operational and supplying electricity to the grid by 2031 at the earliest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Kartau'.

Kuido Kartau

Board member
Saare Wind Energy OÜ