

1 Introduction

Project background

- 1.1 Oikos Storage Ltd (Oikos) operates a fuel and liquid bulk harbour facility on Canvey Island in Essex as shown on Figures 1.1 and 1.2 (the Oikos Facility).
- 1.2 The Oikos Facility has been used for marine-fed fuel and associated product storage for over 80 years. It is a key component of the UK's energy infrastructure and is a long-established part of the economy and environment of Canvey Island.
- 1.3 The harbour facility, which covers approximately 27.5 hectares, is located on land that is in the freehold ownership of the Port of London Authority (PLA) and leased on a long-term basis by Oikos.
- 1.4 Vessels from across the world berth at either of the facility's two operational jetties. Their cargo – consisting of various fuel, oil and petroleum based products – is transferred from the berthed vessels by Marine Loading Arms (MLA) and pipelines which run along the jetties into a series of specially constructed storage tanks contained within four protected compound areas. The Facility currently has a total useable storage capacity of approximately 270,000m³.
- 1.5 The products are distributed from the site either via underground pipeline or by road tanker to various inland locations including other distribution terminals, airports and road fuel filling stations.

Project overview

- 1.6 Oikos is seeking to strengthen and consolidate the harbour facility's operational capability and resilience through the provision of, in summary:
 - additional marine loading infrastructure on two of its jetties - Jetty 1 and Jetty 2 - to enable additional volumes of products to be embarked and disembarked at the facility;
 - a capital dredge to create a deeper berth pocket to service Jetty 2;
 - various new product storage tanks on areas within the southern sector of the facility which has been partly cleared of aged storage infrastructure – giving the facility an additional capacity of around 325,000m³ of usable operational product storage;
 - enhanced facilities to enable the export of product from the site;
 - various ancillary and supporting infrastructure works; and
 - landscaping proposals and off-site ecological mitigation, enhancements and improvements.

- 1.7 A project website www.oikos.co.uk/omssd provides additional background information and further details of the OMSSD project. A description of the works being proposed is included in Chapter 3 of this document.

The NSIP process

- 1.8 The proposed project, which is known as the Oikos Marine & South Side Development (OMSSD) project, is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). This is because the amount of additional product that the Oikos Facility will be capable of handling as a result of the OMSSD exceeds specified capacity thresholds set down in the Planning Act 2008 (as amended)¹, and which of itself underlines the national significance of the project. This means, however, that rather than seek planning permission for the project under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), Oikos will be applying for what is known as a Development Consent Order (DCO) under the Planning Act 2008 (as amended). A DCO is effectively an “all-embracing” statutory Order which, when issued by the Secretary of State, authorises a given development in terms of planning permission but also a number of other required approvals and consents - all of which are drawn together into the single DCO process.
- 1.9 Oikos is now preparing its application for a DCO which it intends to submit to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) during 2021. The Inspectorate will appoint an Inspector or a Panel of Inspectors, both known as the Examining Authority, who will consider the application and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport as to whether, or not, development consent should be granted for the OMSSD.
- 1.10 The NSIP process includes six key stages, namely, the pre-application stage, the statutory consultation stage, the application preparation and submission stage, the application validation stage, the examination stage and the decision making stage. This report is part of the statutory consultation stage.

The need for Environmental Impact Assessment

- 1.11 As part of the application process, the OMSSD project will require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This is because the project falls within a description of development set down in Schedule 1 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the EIA Regulations)². Regulation 14(1) of the EIA Regulations states that - *“An application for an order granting development consent for EIA development must be accompanied by an environmental statement”*.

¹ Planning Act 2008

² Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended), Sch. 1

- 1.12 As a consequence, when it is submitted, the DCO application for the OMSSD project will be accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) which will provide an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the development.
- 1.13 Environmental impact assessment is a systematic process which assesses a project's likely significant effects on the environment to enable decision makers to determine applications for consent with the full knowledge of the likely significant environmental effects that may result from a project's development. It also provides the opportunity for the public and relevant consultation bodies to engage with applicants during the pre-application stage and to participate in the decision-making process. This allows for potential environmental effects to be identified early in the application process and where possible for design changes to be made to avoid any effects or to provide mitigation measures which will reduce or indeed remove any potential significant environmental effects.
- 1.14 For NSIPs, the EIA process is undertaken in two principal stages:
- (i) consultation on the preliminary environmental information. This is part of the statutory consultation process, the principal written element of which is this Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR); and
 - (ii) the preparation of the final ES, which will accompany the application for the DCO.
- 1.15 In April 2020, Oikos submitted a request for a Scoping Opinion from the Secretary of State for Transport as to the scope of information that should be included in the OMSSD ES. The Scoping Opinion was received in May 2020 and can be found on the National Infrastructure Planning website.
- 1.16 The comments received in the Scoping Opinion have been taken into account in the preparation of this PEIR. Further information on the EIA process is found in Chapter 6 of this document.

Purpose of this Preliminary Environmental Information Report

- 1.17 As part of the NSIP pre-application process, Oikos is required, under the provisions of the Planning Act 2008, to undertake a formal statutory consultation with amongst others, local authorities, statutory regulators, stakeholders and the local community³. The statutory consultation will take place in Spring 2021 and further details are provided at the end of this chapter. A Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) has been prepared setting out how Oikos intends to consult with the local community for this stage of the preparation of the DCO application, which includes consultation on this report. The SoCC has been approved by Castle Point Borough Council and Essex County Council and can be viewed on the OMSSD project website.

³ Sections 42 and 47 of Planning Act 2008

- 1.18 This PEIR – some twenty-two chapters, appendices, figures and an accompanying non-technical summary – provides the preliminary environmental information assembled to date in relation to the various elements of the OMSSD project which may have a significant environmental effect, as identified in the Scoping Opinion in May 2020.
- 1.19 The EIA Regulations do not prescribe a format for a PEIR nor do they define the level of information to be provided. The Regulations do, however, define “preliminary environmental information” (PEI) as:
- “information referred to in regulation 14(2) which—*
- (a) has been compiled by the applicant; and*
- (b) is reasonably required for the consultation bodies to develop an informed view of the likely significant environmental effects of the development (and of any associated development).”⁴*
- 1.20 In preparing this PEIR, account has been taken of the guidance and information found in the PINS Advice Note 7⁵ and guidance provided by PINS on the NSIP pre-application process⁶. In so doing, this has enabled Oikos to ensure that this PEIR provides sufficient preliminary information as to the likely significant environmental effects of the OMSSD project. At the same time, the assembled preliminary information has enabled Oikos to make an informed, albeit initial assessment, of the project.
- 1.21 All comments received as part of the statutory consultation process will be considered and taken into account when finalising the ES and DCO application.

The Structure of this Preliminary Environmental Information Report

- 1.22 As noted above, the information provided in this PEIR consists of a preliminary assessment, topic by topic, of the likely significant environmental effects of the OMSSD project. This preliminary assessment is based on the design work and consequent assessment undertaken to date by Oikos and its consultant team, comments received from various parties as part of this pre-application process, comments and advice provided in the Scoping Opinion and subsequent meetings with key statutory consultees and the Planning Inspectorate (PINS).
- 1.23 Following this introductory chapter, this PEIR is structured in the following way:

⁴ Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended), Regulation 12(2)

⁵ The Planning Inspectorate (June 2020), Advice Note 7 – EIA: Process, Preliminary Environmental Information and Environmental Statements (Version 7)

⁶ Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (March 2015) Planning Act 2008: Guidance on the pre-application process

- **Chapter 2: Site and Surroundings** – describes the site of the proposed development and its surroundings.
 - **Chapter 3: The OMSSD Project** – describes the components of the OMSSD project and provides indicative details of the proposed site preparation works, project construction and project operation.
 - **Chapter 4: Need and Alternatives** – provides a preliminary explanation of the need for the OMSSD project and describes the reasonable alternatives that have been studied.
 - **Chapter 5: Legislative and Policy Context** – sets out the overarching policy context of relevance to the OMSSD project. This overarching policy context is supplemented by descriptions of topic specific policy context within the subsequent environmental assessment topic chapters - chapters 7 to 21.
 - **Chapter 6: EIA Process** – provides general information on environmental issues, the EIA process and the process followed in the preparation of this PEIR.
 - **Chapters 7 to 21** provide the preliminary information on likely significant effects of the OMSSD project on an individual topic by topic basis in the following order:
 - Chapter 7 – Terrestrial Ecology;
 - Chapter 8 – The Water Environment;
 - Chapter 9 – Marine Ecology;
 - Chapter 10 – Commercial and Recreational Navigation;
 - Chapter 11 – Traffic and Transport;
 - Chapter 12 – Air Quality;
 - Chapter 13 – Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change;
 - Chapter 14 – Noise and Vibration;
 - Chapter 15 – Ground Conditions;
 - Chapter 16 – Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage;
 - Chapter 17 – Landscape and Visual;
 - Chapter 18 – Lighting;
 - Chapter 19 – Historic Environment;
 - Chapter 20 – Socio-economic, and
 - Chapter 21 – Safety.
 - **Chapter 22: Cumulative and in-combination effects** - explains the process being followed in respect of the consideration of cumulative and in-combination effects.
- 1.24 The above chapters of the PEIR are supported by figures and detailed preliminary appendices as necessary.
- 1.25 The PEIR consists of three volumes, as follows:
- (i) Volume 1 – This is the principal PEIR volume which provides the findings of the preliminary assessment in a single document (this document);

- (ii) Volume 2 – This volume comprises the preliminary appendices to the chapters which provide further background and detail on the information contained within Volume 1; and
 - (iii) Volume 3 – A volume of plans and figures referred to in the chapters contained within Volume 1.
- 1.26 **Non-technical Summary** – Oikos has also produced a non-technical summary of the PEIR and which includes a summary of the preliminary assessment work. This is available in the form of a Consultation Booklet.
- 1.27 The information presented in this PEIR will be further developed both as a result of the continuing investigations and assessment work being undertaken by the Oikos consultant team who have produced the various topic issue chapters and as a result of comments and representations received as part of the statutory consultation process. All of these representations and comments will be taken fully into account as the final version of the ES is completed and will form part of the DCO application.

Transboundary Effects

- 1.28 The site of the OMSSD project lies within the Borough of Castle Point and within the county of Essex.
- 1.29 In September 2020, the Planning Inspectorate undertook a First Transboundary Screening⁷ exercise on behalf of the Secretary of State under Regulation 32 of the EIA Regulations, based on the information contained in the Scoping Report. This exercise concluded that, on the information available at that time, the OMSSD project was not likely to have a significant effect on the environment of another state in the European Economic Area (EEA).
- 1.30 In considering the work undertaken since the Scoping Report, including the preliminary assessment in this PEIR, it is considered that this conclusion remains valid, namely that the OMSSD project is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment of a state within the EEA. This matter will be considered further in the preparation of the OMSSD ES.

The Project Team

- 1.31 Oikos has commissioned Adams Hendry Consulting Limited to co-ordinate the preparation of the documentation associated with the OMSSD project. Details of the expert consultant team who have been appointed to undertake the relevant specialist topic-based assessments are provided below in Table 1.1.

⁷ Planning Inspectorate (15th September 2020) Transboundary Screening undertaken by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State (SoS) for the purposes of Regulation 32 of The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

Table 1.1: OMSSD Project Relevant Experts

Topic	Relevant Expert
Site and Surroundings	Adams Hendry Consulting Ltd
Project Description	Oikos Storage Ltd / Adams Hendry Consulting Ltd
Need and Alternatives	Oikos Storage Ltd / Adams Hendry Consulting Ltd
Policy context	Adams Hendry Consulting Ltd
EIA Process	Adams Hendry Consulting Ltd
Terrestrial Ecology	Waterman Infrastructure & Environment
Air Quality / Greenhouse Gas	Air Quality Consultants
Ground Conditions	Ramboll UK Ltd
Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage	Ramboll UK Ltd
Noise and Vibration	Ramboll UK Ltd
Traffic and Transport	David Tucker Associates
Marine Ecology, Water Environment and Navigation	ABPmer
Landscape and Visual	fabrik Landscape Consultants
Lighting	Designs for Lighting
Historic Environment	Cotswold Archaeology
Socio-Economic	Adams Hendry Consulting Ltd
Safety	Oikos Storage Ltd

- 1.32 All members of the above project team are suitably experienced in respect of the topics covered.

Statutory and Public Consultation

- 1.33 A six week statutory and public consultation period will commence on Tuesday 6th April 2021 and will end at 11.59pm on Tuesday 18th May 2021. All comments are welcomed and indeed encouraged and will be taken into account as work progresses to finalise the DCO application. It should be noted, however, that whilst every effort will be made, it may not be possible to take into account comments received after the end of the consultation period.
- 1.34 Due to the on-going Covid-19 pandemic, Oikos is adopting a digital/virtual approach to consultation and engagement, using a range of online mechanisms. This will allow statutory consultation bodies, landowners and the local community to access all of the information that is being provided as part of this pre-application process whilst all providing opportunities feedback and comment, but without having to meet in person. The online consultation and

engagement will be supplemented by non-digital methods for those who do not have access to the internet.

1.35 The consultation includes:

- holding four online virtual webinars during the six week consultation period;
- providing information on the project consultation website including the ability to make comments;
- a virtual exhibition room which can be accessed via the project website; and
- telephone surgeries through an appointment booking system.

1.36 Further information as to how Oikos is undertaking the statutory and public consultation required under the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) is contained in the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) which is available on the project consultation website.

Document Availability

1.37 This PEIR can be downloaded from the project consultation website www.oikos.co.uk/omssd/consultation which also contains information as to how hard copies of the PEIR can be obtained. A Non-Technical Summary of the PEIR is available in the form of a Consultation Booklet, which is also available to download from the project website.

1.38 A printed copy of the PEIR can be requested by post, email or telephone:

- Post: OIKOS FREEPOST (must be written in capitals and no stamp is required)
- Email: oikos@communityrelations.co.uk
- Telephone: freephone 0800 206 2583

A charge of up to £300 will be made for printed copies.

1.39 Comments on the PEIR can be made in writing via the project website or by using either the postal or email contact addresses shown above.