



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF CLIMATE

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Notification in accordance with Article 3 of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) regarding the submarine power cable EstLink 3 in the Gulf of Finland

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 plan by the developer Elering AS (hereinafter *the developer*) to construct a submarine power cable EstLink 3 in the Gulf of Finland.

Description of the project

The developer intends to install a high-voltage submarine power cable EstLink 3 in the Gulf of Finland. To transfer electrical energy via EstLink 3, up to four cables may be required depending on the technology: three electrical cables and one fiber-optic communication line. The planned capacity of the submarine power cable is a maximum of 700 MW at a direct current voltage up to 525 kV. The length of the submarine cable corridor in Estonia is approximately 53 kilometres, and the area of the public water body to be loaded is approximately 212,296 m². The cable will be embedded in the seabed sediments at a depth of about 1–1,5 meters.

A schematic map illustrating the location of the proposed project is enclosed in Annex 1. Considering the location and length of the submarine cable corridor, the planned activity may have a 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). 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.

Environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedure

On 2 February 2024, the developer submitted an application for superficies licence to the Consumer Protection and Technical Regulatory Authority. 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 2. A translated summary of the superficies licence application is enclosed in Annex 3.

According to the Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Management System Act (hereinafter *the Act*), the decision-maker will determine whether to initiate an environmental impact assessment (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 25 July 2024. The decision is enclosed in Annex 4.

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 seek opinions from all relevant authorities regarding the content of the EIA programme and 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 1 November 2024 and:

- acknowledge the receipt of the notification;
- indicate whether your country intends to participate in the submarine power cable EstLink 3 project's EIA procedure;
- provide possible comments concerning the scope for the assessment of the environmental impacts of the project affecting your country.

Bilateral Agreement between Estonia and Finland

In relation to the Agreement between Estonia and Finland on environmental impact assessment in a Transboundary Context, we wish to bring to Finland's attention the 13th meeting of the joint Commission on EIA. During this meeting, the Commission discussed the EIA notification practice between the countries and proposed to continue following the existing practice. However, in justified cases, Finland has the option to decide whether to participate in the specific EIA procedure at the EIA programme stage.

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 – Ms. Lilli Tamm, lilli.tamm@kliimaministeerium.ee

Sincerely Yours,

(signed electronically)

Birgit Parmas

Point of Contact for the Espoo Convention

Enclosures:

1. Annex 1 – map of the proposed activity
2. Annex 2 – main document of the application
3. Annex 3 – translated summary of the application
4. Annex 4 – notice of the initiation of the procedure

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

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