

The HIPpest project on the street

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A curious renewable energy / transmission project has dinged the European radar at *IJGlobal*... but while it's always nice to write about a new deal being rolled out, this one has an uncomfortably similar scent to a project of a few years back.

Let me just drag your memory back to the £3 billion [Atlantic Superconnection](#) that we reported in August 2017 had reached a critical stage in the process with key advisers in place – PwC, AECOM, Red Penguin, Powersure and Kvika Bank – and a plan to power a lot of the UK with green Icelandic energy.

This ambitious 1.2GW high-voltage direct current (HVDC) power connection was to involve laying two 1,500km HVDC cables between Iceland and the north east of England.

The team was led by Atlantic Superconnection founder Edi Truell, a big name in the Big Apple where (most recently) he established Duke Street Capital Debt Management. He was working with well-known UK energy specialist Fiona Reilly and oceanography expert Matthew Truell.

The HVDC cable was to be supplied with energy from existing hydro and geothermal sources in Iceland, including upgrades to existing power facilities and the local grid. As to energy losses they were limited to less than 10% as it was to travel on direct current cables.

Sadly, sources tell me that this project is “dormant” but I fear that’s being generous... let’s go for “coma, no brain activity”.

A rose by any other name...

So this morning, it was with anticipation of good news on the Atlantic Superconnection front that I opened an email... only to read that Hecate Independent Power was launching the HIP Atlantic Project – which sounds pretty groovy in a 1970s kind of way.

Now what we have here is not a recreation of the old Iceland-UK transmission project, but it does seem to tick an awful lot of the same boxes.

HIP involves the installation of 10GW of fixed and floating wind turbines in the North Atlantic connected to the UK by high-capacity, HVDC submarine power transmission cables.

Given that this involves building wind farms off the coast of Iceland – unlike the earlier project that was to be fuelled by existing Icelandic hydro/geothermal, alongside expanding operational generating assets – it has the price tag to match.

At this stage they estimate the total cost for HIP Atlantic Project at a cool £21 billion (\$30bn). Well that ain't chump change, but there's a lot of moving parts in this plan when compared to the £3 billion (kind of) predecessor.

HIP has lodged 4x connection applications with National Grid Company for an initial 4GW of grid connections to the UK's

400kV electricity transmission system across 4 connection sites.

Each wind farm (pod as they like to call them) will be in a different North Atlantic location, with each pod consisting 1GW of wind turbines and its own dedicated cable link to the UK. Full dispatch of the HIP offshore wind pods will be under the exclusive control of the UK electricity system operator... making HIP Atlantic the UK's first captive wind farm in overseas territorial waters.

HIP Atlantic's initial 2GW of generating capacity – from the south and east coasts of Iceland – is planned for commission in early 2025... which dovetails neatly with the UK's de-commission of its last coal-fired power plants as well as the last of its original generation of commercial nuclear power plants.

Crucially, the HIP Atlantic HVDC transmission cables will never connect to the Icelandic transmission system – solely connected to the UK, dispatched by National Grid.

Further, HIP's offshore wind pods will all be installed in a different meteorological catchment area from current North Sea and Irish Sea wind farms where all the UK's resource are, which is a clever way of hedging your bets for when/where the wind blows.

HIP chair Sir Tony Baldry says: "HIP Atlantic fulfils the prime minister's vision of attracting investment and job creation in the North of England as part of this country's ambitious policy to make Britain the world leader in offshore wind energy. We will stretch the zone of British-operated wind generation outside of our traditional territorial waters, pushing the boundaries of existing cable technology to generate over 1,000km from our grid landfall points throughout England."

HIP comprises Hecate Wind (a wholly-owned subsidiary of Hecate Holdings, the North American renewable energy developer and majority owner of Hecate Energy) and Independent Power Corporation, the UK-based developer of conventional power plants.

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