Mutual Energy, under the leadership of EPC Director Gurpal Ghotra has been working hard to assemble a dedicated project office. Regan Smyth has been contracted to join the team as Project Administrator and a number of framework contracts with specialist suppliers (ranging from offshore experts, cable technical and project management) have also been established to provide MEL with access to the skilled personnel who will be required on a short term and long term basis to assist with the project.

A project office has been set up on the fourth floor of The Arena Building, co-located alongside the rest of the MEL team to ensure continued close collaboration and use of facilities and procedures by the project team. Project governance has been structured to ensure that the project will benefit from the group executive and the management of the existing Moyle asset ensuring all checks and balances are in place and also that the project team are well supported.
Work on the project gets underway

As outlined earlier, the project team is now fully mobilised and work on the project is progressing. Arrangements with the contractor are being implemented and good project structures are being formed and executed in line with plans.

Manufacture of the cables is continuing in accordance with the programme, and copper drawing for the North Cable has been completed with conductor stranding and XLPE insulation extrusion for the cables nearing completion. The type testing is also in progress in parallel. The North cable load out is scheduled for June 2015 with laying due to take place in late July/August 2015.

The pre-construction survey campaign is continuing (offshore and nearshore). Challenges with weather and UXOs have become evident during the survey process and we are continuing to work to define a workable route for both cables.

The consents are progressing in line with the programme. The initial consents required for the survey works were obtained as required and other consents are in progress including continuing detailed discussion with the various authorities. We remain confident of obtaining the required consents on schedule. There are, however, conditions which may be imposed and which we have been discussing with the authorities.

The marine licence, including any conditions, is under constant review and appropriate controls and mitigations are being negotiated with the authorities. These controls include conditions around observing sea bird breeding seasons and marine mammal observer requirements.

Overall the programme for the project remains on target and key dates in the programme should be achieved.

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First conductor layer of Moyle cable prepared for extrusion at the base of the extrusion tower in Nexans factory, Norway.

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The System Operator for Northern Ireland (SONI) has published a study which describes the benefits that could be obtained by restoring the Moyle Interconnector to its original capacity. It does this by calculating the reduction in wholesale electricity prices for the Northern Ireland consumer, and also by analysing consumer surplus.

The results show a substantial benefit in terms of reduced production costs and consumer costs. The modelling indicates that the restoration could result in a reduction of approximately 2-3% in wholesale energy prices, with potential savings to the Northern Ireland consumer amounting to around £14 million per annum. A small reduction in System Operation Costs is also seen, along with a small increase in socio-economic welfare.

The study has been published on the Utility Regulator website and a copy is available on the Moyle return cables project section of the MEL website.

SONI publish study examining benefits of restoring Moyle

Project website goes live

A dedicated website for the Moyle return cables project has been developed, as part of the general MEL website. This will be the first port of call for anyone seeking up to date news about the progress of the project as it develops and will include the latest project updates as well as a photo gallery.

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Update on onshore work

The onshore work in relation to the project is expected to take place in three phases as follows:

PHASE 1: Pre-construction survey (conducted by RPS) – week commencing 18th May 2015.

PHASE 2: Nexans trial excavations with a site specific contractor (not principal contractor) – week commencing 25th May 2015.

PHASE 3: Installation works on appointment of subcontractor (ASAP) – latest start date is 25th June