

MOYLE RETURN CABLES PROJECT

Project update

Both Moyle cables (referred to as the North Cable and the South Cable) have been manufactured and passed quality assurance tests. The North Cable was laid between Northern Ireland and Scotland from 4th to 13th August

2015. The South Cable is now in transit from the Nexans factory in Halden, Norway. It is expected that this cable will be laid during October 2015. Burial of the North Cable has commenced and is ongoing both near shore and offshore.

Cable burial offshore in deep water is achieved through cutting a trench in the seabed and placing the cable within it. It is achieved using a post-lay burial tool (named CAPJET) developed by Nexans. The CAPJET loosely connects with the cable, and uses it as a guide for where the trench must be dug. It uses a high pressure water-jet system to create the trench.

Burial nearshore, in water less than 22m deep, is achieved by using a hand trenching tool and divers. In areas where trenching is not possible, rock dumping and rock placement are carried out to ensure the protection of the cable. Rock placement works will be carried out by a split barge, with a rock coaster and works boat supporting the rock placement activities. The trenching work and rock placement activities are expected to be completed for the north cable by the end of October. However, any operations involving any boats and particularly divers are unable to be undertaken in adverse weather conditions. Moyle Interconnector Ltd, and principal contractor Nexans, prioritise safety in any project they undertake.

Before commencing the rock placement, survey work started near the Scottish landfall on 9th September 2015 and continued near to the Northern Irish landfall over the following weekend. The barge is towed between the coaster and rock placement locations by two tugs. The rock protection will provide 0.6m of cover to the cable, and will extend approximately 220m from the shore near the Scottish landfall (200m from the shore near the Northern Ireland landfall). The rock used in the protection works will have a size of 1-8 inches.

The rock coaster anchors close to the rock placement site (approximately 500m to the north of the cable at the Scottish side and approximately 500m to the south of the cable on the Northern Irish side).

During September the fallpipe vessel arrived on site to install rock protection in waters from a depth of 10m to approximately 20m, directly offshore of the cable landfalls and continuing the shallow-water protection. The cable has been laid alongside the existing rock berm in these waters, and this additional rock protection will also be laid alongside the existing berms.

During October the rock coaster is due to anchor close to the rock placement site close to the Scottish landfall, where protection work will take place. The survey vessel will make a further survey of the rock placement area during and after the works are completed.

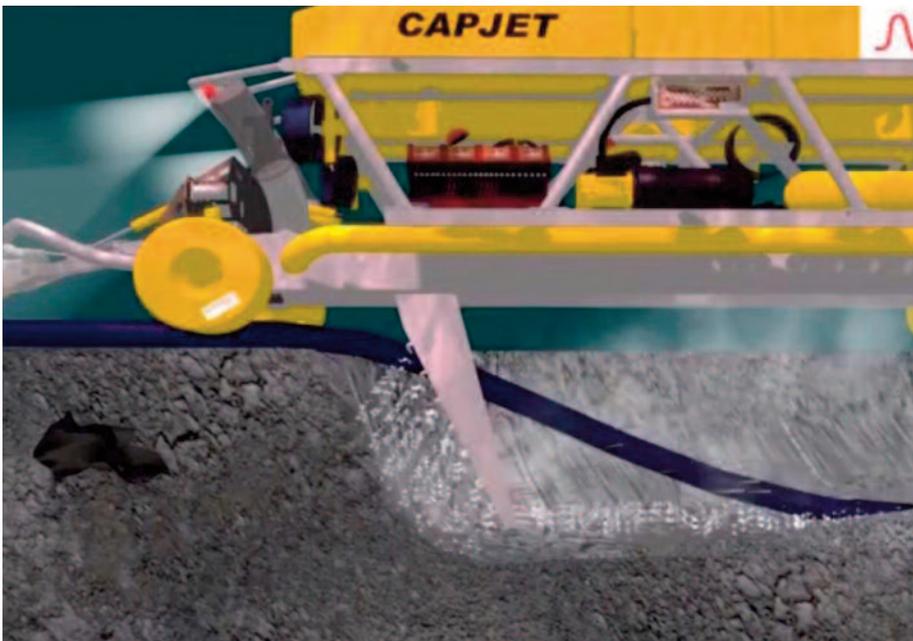


Figure 1: Nexans CAPJET.



Figure 2: Split barge at Portmuck

Figure 3: Transition joint bay



Work on the protection of the first (north) cable is due to be completed by mid-October 2015. The laying of the south cable is also scheduled for mid-October. All protection work on this cable is due to be completed by January 2016 (weather conditions permitting).

During these offshore activities guard vessels have been stationed as appropriate along the cable route during installation and burial to ensure the safety of marine users. These vessels are being supplied by the Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF) and the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO).

The onshore cable works for the transition joint have also commenced both in Scotland and Northern Ireland. A small pit with a flat surface is required for the transition joint to be made. In order for this to be achieved an outage on the existing cable was required. This was provided over the weekend of the 26th/27th September and the pit was successfully excavated. Tents will shortly be erected to protect the jointing process.

The project team have specified testing requirements and continue to work closely with the various stakeholders in the project.

A lot of activity was required in preparation of the start of the cable laying offshore with a large number of documents requiring approval and method and work statements needing agreed with third parties for installation works. The Moyle project management team, Nexans and supporting organisations all committed substantial resources to achieve the necessary approvals, particularly in light of the fact the availability of the cable-laying vessel was brought forward. We would like to put on record our thanks to the various statutory agencies for their support throughout the approvals process.

Visit to Skagerrak: 2nd August 2015

The repair vessel Skagerrak arrived in Belfast on the weekend of 1st – 2nd August, with the crew arriving on the evening of Friday 31st July for briefing and mobilisation. Mutual Energy arranged a visit to the vessel for its staff and some key stakeholders including DETI, SONI and the Utility Regulator – this took place on the evening of Saturday 2nd July. Guests enjoyed a tour of the vessel and a briefing from Nexans staff and were able to see the north cable, ready to be laid.



Stephen Hemphill and Mick McGuckin on the Skagerrak in Belfast.



Nexans offshore manager briefs stakeholders during vessel visit.

For further project updates, see the project website: www.mutual-energy.com