

Revised timetable for the Fehmarnbelt coast-to-coast project

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1. Background

On the basis of new guidelines for the EIA process, the Danish Minister for Transport, in his letter of 16 March 2011, requested Femern A/S to incorporate the necessary production sites and raw materials recovery in the EIA report. At the same time, the company was asked to review the time-related and financial consequences thereof.

The following brief reviews the revised time schedule for the coast-to-coast project.

The planned opening of the Fehmarnbelt Fixed Link remains unchanged relative to the brief of 25 November 2010, i.e. the opening will take place at the end of 2020. Due to the requirement to prepare an overall environmental assessment of the project, including production facilities and raw materials recovery, the plan approval process will be starting later.

The time schedule was prepared on the basis of an immersed tunnel, cf. the company's recommendation of 25 November 2010. The final selection of the preferred technical solution will be made with the official German approval of the company's application and the passage of the Construction Act by the Danish Parliament.

It is the company's opinion that the opening at the end of 2020 is possible if the activities are planned and implemented according to the company's time schedule.

The time schedule is based on certain assumptions, including that the tender may be prepared during the planning phase and concurrently with the plan approval process, which was made possible by the adoption of Document 149 of 23 June 2011.

The duration of the construction phase of six and a half years remains unchanged.

For the sake of good order, it should be noted that the current time schedule does not include possible delays arising from complaints or appeals in connection with the plan approval process in both countries.

2. Review of key milestones and processes in the planning phase

The key processes and milestones in the revised time schedule for the coast-to-coast project are set out below, cf. appendix 1.

Planning/design

Based on the conceptual designs prepared for a cable-stayed bridge and an immersed tunnel, respectively, the company drew up a recommendation for selection of the preferred technical solution for plan approval. The recommendation was based on an overall trade-off between the two projects' technical execution risks and consequences for navigational safety as well as the higher risk that a bridge would run into environmental legal problems. The conceptual design of the preferred solution (an immersed tunnel) will be further developed on the basis of the recommendation. It is assumed that the coming EIA report and other necessary environmental assessments will not change the selection of technical solution.

Environmental investigations

The environmental investigations were largely completed by the end of 2010. Exceptions are the supplementary investigations concerning raw materials recovery at Kriegers Flak and Rønne Banke and any supplementary investigations concerning production facilities and the bored tunnel solution. The environmental investigations concerning raw materials recovery are assumed to be completed and reported by the end of 2011.

Plan approval

The EIA hearings in Denmark and the Baltic countries (cf. the ESPOO Convention) are assumed to commence on 1 October 2012, in parallel with the submission of an application for project approval to the German authorities, of which the German EIA report is part.

It is assumed that the Danish Construction Act will be tabled as soon as the conclusion of the Danish EIA process is in place and that it will be passed by the end of 2013.

It is assumed that the project approval application (including the EIA report) will be sent to the German authorities for consideration between 1 May 2012 and 1 August 2012. One month has been set aside to incorporate any comments from the German authorities. Submission of the final application is planned for 1 October 2012. Since the German authorities assume that the plan approval process will take 18 months, the German approval should be in place by 1 April 2014.

Completing the plan approvals in Denmark and Germany within this time framework will be a significant challenge and it will place heavy demands on the Danish and German authorities' involvement in the process, including avoiding time delays in connection with the approval of EIA reports in the two countries.

A particular time challenge relates to the official German requirement that all application documents, including background reports, must be available in German.

The tender process

The pre-qualification process is planned to begin on 1 June 2012, while the tender process is expected to commence on 1 November 2012. The overall process is expected to last 20 months in total so that contracts can be signed in June 2014.

The time schedule for the tender process assumes that tenders will be conducted by means of a so-called Competitive Dialogue.

However, moving the tender process forward creates a greater risk that the tender documents will have to be adjusted more extensively than would otherwise have been the case during the process because the tender process will take place in parallel with the plan approval process in the two countries.

Summary of the planning phase – risk factors

Femern A/S has planned the work with a view to opening the Fehmarnbelt Fixed Link in 2020. The time schedule is based on a number of assumptions, some of which are beyond the company's control. The company is continuously working to minimise the time-related risks in order to be able to keep to the time schedule. The most important assumptions in terms of the time schedule include the following:

- The selection of an immersed tunnel as the preferred technical solution will not be changed by the ongoing environmental impact assessments (EIA, Natura 2000, etc.).
- An application for project approval in Germany will be submitted no later than 1 October 2012 and the subsequent plan approval process will last no more than 18 months.
- The Construction Act will be passed by the Danish Parliament by the end of 2013 at the latest.
- There will be no significant impact on prioritised species or habitat types in the Fehmarnbelt areas designated as Natura 2000 sites. If there is an impact on prioritised species and habitat types, this means that the EU Commission will have to be heard before the project can be approved, which is estimated to take around 12 months.
- Any appeals in Germany and/or Denmark will not have a delaying effect.
- Contracts will be signed by 1 July 2014 at the latest.

