

Apply for a Band 1 marine licence

Project description

Project name

Geophysical Surveys in Welsh Waters

Please provide a brief description of the proposed project, including location.

The Crown Estate is undertaking a variety of marine surveys to support the proposal to unlock valuable new clean energy capacity through floating offshore wind in the Celtic Sea. By investing in these surveys at an early stage and making the data freely available to successful bidders, The Crown Estate is aiming to accelerate the delivery of projects, making it easier for developers to take early decisions and manage risk, while supporting future project level Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) as part of the planning process.

Grab samples will be taken totalling less than 4m³ from one Project Development Area in Welsh Waters during 2024, covering c.350km².

It is planned that the survey operations will be conducted by a dedicated vessel. The proposed start date of operations is April 2024, with all survey work to be completed by October 2024. Vessels will be crewed for 24hour operations with regular crew changes; timings to be established by the survey contractors.

Does the activity have an estimated project cost for marine works over £1 million? If yes, the activity is no longer eligible for a band 1 application and a band 3 application will be required.

No

Applicant details

To whom the licence will be issued. This must be a legal entity such as an individual, registered company/ charity or public body.

Title	Dr
Full name	Rachel Holmes
Company or trading name	The Crown Estates UK Limited
Company Registration Number (if applicable)	05952425
Name of contact or individual (if different)	NA
Position in company	Marine Consents Manager
Address (provide registered company address if applicable)	154 Cowley Road, Oxford - -
Postcode	OX4 1UE
Telephone number	07825 783467
Email address	rachel.holmes@thecrownestate.co.uk

Details of agent, contractor, vehicles and/or vessels used to carry out works

Does the applicant wish to be included in all correspondence?
Yes

Will the works require the use of vessels?
Yes

Will the works require the use of any vehicles?
No

Proposed project details

Licensable period	
Determination of applications will be based on the works taking place during these dates. Please ensure you have included an adequate contingency period. If works are not completed by the requested licence expiry date you may be required to submit a new application. Including a contingency period within your original application does not impact on the licence fee.	
Start date (DD/MM/YYYY)	29/04/2024
Requested licence expiry date (DD/MM/YYYY)	31/10/2024

Please detail the location of the proposed project.
This should be either Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (i.e. SN 12345 67890) or Latitude and Longitude in decimal degrees to 4 decimal places (i.e. Lat 52.1234 Long -4.1234), defining the extent of the project. Please specify which coordinate system has been used and if using GIS co-ordinates, specify which projection has been used.
Surveys will take place in two areas in Welsh waters. Latitude and Longitude coordinates show the survey areas.

Method statement

Are the works within a sensitive area or one of the following activities: boreholes, replacement piles or beach management?
No

Method statement

Please give a brief method statement outlining the proposed project

The Crown Estate intends to commission surveys to facilitate the deployment of floating offshore windfarms in the Celtic Sea. The objective of the surveys is to collect data within two Project Development Areas (PDAs) in the Welsh waters prior to the projects being consented. By investing in these surveys at an early stage and making the data freely available to successful bidders, The Crown Estate aims to accelerate the delivery of offshore windfarm projects, by making it easier for developers to manage risk and informing future project level planning applications.

Up to ten grab samples will be taken at each PDA and each sample will take around 40 minutes. A day grab will be deployed from the survey vessel (Kommandor Iona or Fugro Searcher) by A frame deployed over the side or stern of the vessel. The grab weighing approximately 50kg will be lowered to the seafloor by a remotely operated winch. When the grab frame contacts the seafloor, the pressure is relieved on the grab activating mechanism enabling the grab to close as the wire is winched back in. As the grab closes it captures the sediment in the surface layers of the seafloor. The grab is then winched from the seafloor and recovered to the vessel by winching in the grab cable. Once onboard the grab is lowered onto a sample table and the grab opened to release the sediment to a sample bucket beneath. The sample will then be photographed and logged for analysis of the sediment. The grab and its associated equipment will be washed down and prepared for the next deployment. If the grab failed to achieve a sample a further two attempts will be made at that location before the vessel moves on to the next sample location.

The sampling will take up to three days and is programmed to take place between 29th April and 31st October 2024. The total volume of sediment removed will be <0.5 m3.

Please state the measures to be taken to minimise risk to the marine environment

The sample sites do not coincide with any SACs or MCZs. The nearest designated site is Bristol Channel Approaches SAC which is 7.4 miles from survey area boundary.

Please state the measures to be taken to prevent undue interference to others

Given the relatively short sampling time required, the sampling activity is not expected to create undue interference to others.

Please state the measures to be taken to maintain navigational safety, including marking and lighting of works

Given the relatively short sampling time required, the sampling activity is not expected to impact or pose any specific risk to the safety of navigation.

The Crown Estate have engaged with British, Belgian and French fishing fleets who have all been briefed on the planned survey activities and timelines. With the support of onshore Fishing Industry Representatives from the Cornish Fish Producers Organisation and offshore Fisheries Liaison Officers (FLOs) present onboard each survey vessel, survey locations will be promulgated to all fishing vessels known to operate within the PDA's.

Prior to undertaking any survey work, the survey vessel will undertake reconnaissance of a survey location for the presence of fishing equipment with the support of the onboard FLO. Should fishing gear be present at the survey location, the vessel will move to an alternative site until arrangements can be made for the fishing gear to be moved.

FLO's will actively engage with any vessels engaged in fishing activity while the survey work is underway.

Materials of the project

Description of materials to be deposited seaward of Mean High Water Springs (MHWS)
(Please tick all that apply)

Other (please provide a description of materials):
No materials will be deposited

Delivery method of materials to site

If sea delivery, details of vessels to be used with a chart of proposed route and transshipment area is required. If delivery is by vehicle, the details about the proposed access route are required. Please indicate if you are providing details in a separate file.

NA

Will the works involve removals seaward of MHWS?

No

Description of objects/materials to be removed seaward of MHWS, including quantities to be removed.

NA

Additional information

Please provide the following:

You must include a suitably scaled extract of an Ordnance Survey Map or Admiralty Chart with location of project complete with north arrow and scale

You must include details of correspondence with MCA, Trinity House and The Crown Estate

Correspondence with RCAHWW (B1 removals only)

Please upload these below

- File: Designated Sites.jpg - [Download](#)
- File: Survey Areas.png - [Download](#)
- File: Welsh Water PDA Coordinates.xlsx - [Download](#)
- File: Consultation Responses.docx - [Download](#)

Please list below all supporting documents that have been submitted with this application.

Map of designated sites

Map of survey areas

Survey area coordinates

Consultation responses

Statutory powers

Does the applicant have statutory powers to consent any aspect of the project? e.g. coast protection authority, dredging powers, statutory undertakers

No

Public register

Is there any information contained within or provided in support of this application that you consider should NOT be included on the Public Register on the grounds that its disclosure:

	Yes	No
Would be contrary to the interest of National Security?		X
Would prejudice to an unreasonable degree you, or some other person's commercial interest or those of a third party?		X

Application fee

Please provide the method of payment

Reference number (not BACS remittance no.)
Fee retained from previous licence WPCC14135

Declaration

I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief that the information given in this application form and supporting documentation is true.

WARNING: It is an offence under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, under which this application is made, to fail to disclose information or to provide false or misleading information. This could invalidate any licence granted.

Name Rachel Holmes
Date 26/04/2024
Position in company Marine Consents Manager

If you would like a copy of your completed form, please add your preferred email address below:

rachel.holmes@thecrownestate.co.uk