



# Method Statement Template

*This template is intended to be used in conjunction with a Band 1 Marine Licence application. Please complete each section below following the guidance provided (max 500 words per section). For any queries relating to this template please contact: [marinelicensing@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk](mailto:marinelicensing@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk)*

## 1. Summary

*Please provide a brief summary of the application including location of the works (coordinates - lat/long, decimal degrees). For activities that cover a large area please provide coordinates of the approximate extent of works.*

The works proposed are sediment grab samples along the (offshore, nearshore and intertidal) potential cable routes, including the wind farm array area of the Erebus Project.

**NOTE: The specification for this survey was issued to NRW in February 2020, with a NRW response received 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020. The details below reflect the method statement updated to incorporate relevant NRW comments.**

### **Sediment Grab samples:**

The sediment grab samples will be undertaken from a vessel. It is anticipated that there will be a sampling station every 1 km along each of the export cable routes and up to 60 stations located across the proposed windfarm survey area (approximately 1 station per 1 km<sup>2</sup> and additional stations located within areas of higher habitat heterogeneity). Sediment sampling station locations within the windfarm survey area will be based on an intelligent stratified random array.

At each of the sediment sampling stations, two suitable grab samples will be taken (2 x 0.1m<sup>2</sup>). One sample will be subject to macrofaunal analyses. The macrofauna samples will be sieved through a 1.0 mm sieve and immediately fixed with a known concentration of buffered formaldehyde solution. The final grab is to be sub-sampled for physico-chemical analysis.

Site visit on foot will be undertaken at the intertidal survey areas, with the use of UAV if required. The main soft- and hard-substrate biotopes of the proposed landing sites will be taken and all sampling points will be recorded using a hand-held GPS.

The sediment grab sample works are expected to take approximately 8 weeks, starting from 1 June 2021.

The primary use for the collected data will be to characterise the site for the purposes of the EIA process.

Secondary uses for the data may include the following:

- Informing physical processes;
- Informing Water and Sediment Quality (WFD); and
- Supporting Benthic Ecology assessment.

Coordinates of the proposed work have been submitted in an excel spreadsheet.

## 2. Scope of works

Please provide a full description of all proposed works including:

- Sequence of works (mobilisation, marine works, site remediation (if required))
- Estimated timing of works (duration, working hours, day/night, plus contingency)
- Plant, machinery or vessel required
- Estimated quantities (removals, deposits, construction materials)

### 1. Sequence of works

A geophysical survey of the cable routes will be undertaken before sediment samples are taken. Final sediment sampling locations shall be agreed prior to commencement of the work. The key objective will be to ensure that all of the potential surface sediment types identified during the geophysical survey are sampled adequately, and therefore locations along the cable route may not have to be every 1 km. Analysis and reporting will be in accordance with standard European OSPAR specifications or recognised industry standards.

Care will be taken during location selection to ensure that the sample site is free from obstructions and prior to the grab deployment the sampling area must be ground truthed using a drop-down camera (DDV). A minimum of 5 images should be taken of the seabed at each station. An image of the recovered sample is additionally required.

Site visit on foot will be undertaken at the intertidal survey areas, with the use of UAV if required. The main soft- and hard-substrate biotopes of the proposed landing sites will be taken and all sampling points will be recorded using a hand-held GPS.

### 2. Estimated timing of works

It is proposed the works will start from the 1 June 2020, with an 8-week duration. A further 2 months contingency has also been included within the timescale.

Working hours inshore will be 12 hour periods. Working hours offshore will be continuous 24 hour periods for intervals of at least 14 days between port calls.

### 3. Plant, machinery or vessel required

Two vessels will be required; one for inshore and one for offshore. They are currently being contracted but will require the following;

- For nearshore survey (e.g. in water depths <15m, dependent on exact vessel specification) a shallow draft vessel (of maximum 2 m draft fully loaded to ensure that sufficient survey overlap with the inter-tidal data can be achieved) capable of continuous survey for 12 hour periods;
- For offshore survey (e.g. in water depths >15m) a vessel capable of survey in open seas for continuous 24 hour periods for intervals of at least 14 days between port calls. As a minimum the vessel shall be powered by twin propellers, or a single propeller with variable pitch and bow thruster(s).

Seabed sampling equipment:

Drop Down Camera/ROV; Day grab or Van veen; Mini Hamon grab (back up in case coarse sediment encountered);

Associated sub sampling equipment:

- Biological auto sieve;
- Necessary chemicals;
- Sub-sampling consumables;
- Filtration system for chlorophyll sub-sample.

5 litre Niskin water sampler, or similar;

Multi-parameter CTD with dissolved oxygen, turbidity and Ph as additional sensors;

USBL positioning system (to be used on all sampling and camera equipment).

### 4. Estimated quantities

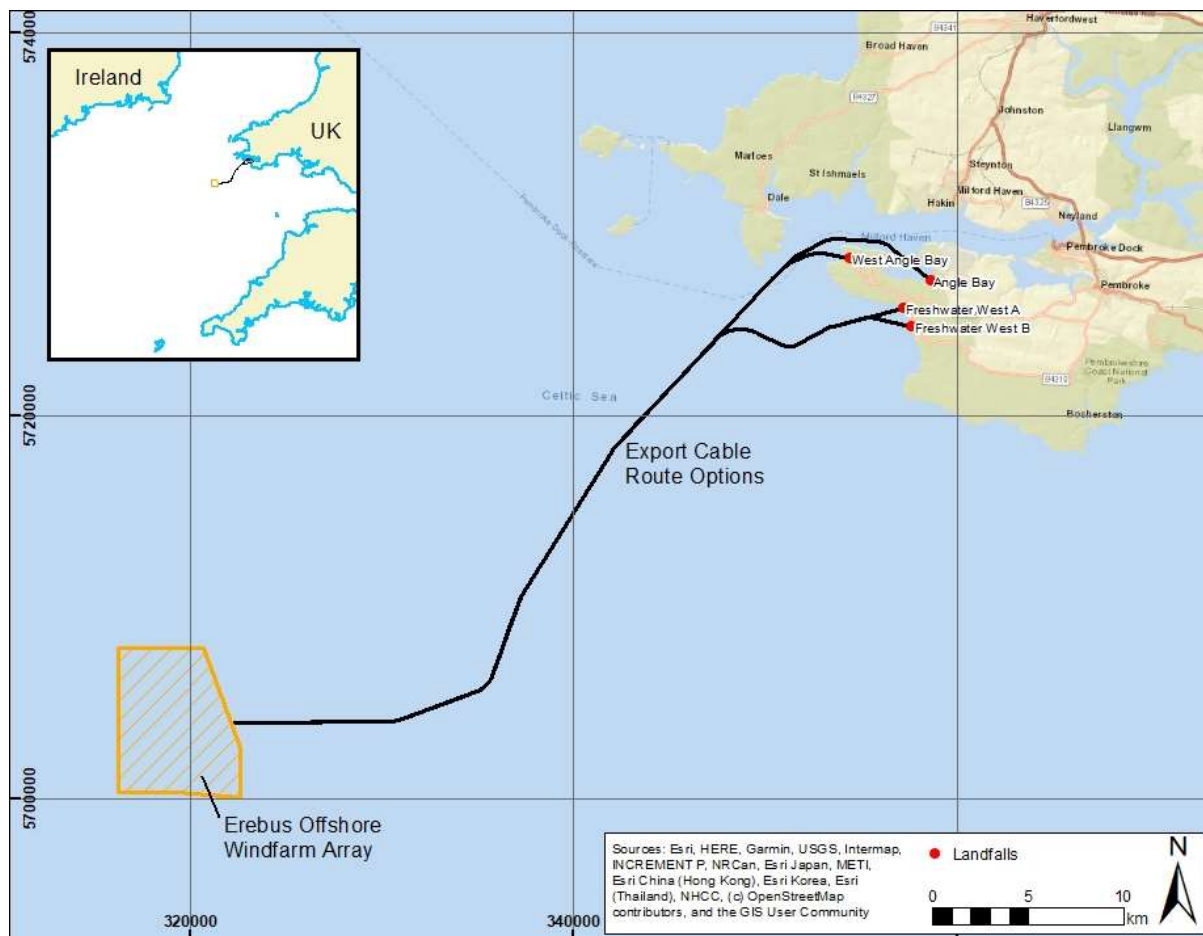
The total sample volume across all samples will not exceed 4 cubic metres.

### 3. Access and working areas

Please provide details of access to the site and working areas. This should include:

- Attached map of the access/egress route and working areas (annotated aerial image and/or OS map)
- Predicted plant/vehicle movements
- Storage areas for plant, equipment and materials (if required)
- Risks to navigation

Below is the proposed survey route:



Simply Blue Energy has undertaken early consultation with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in relation to survey activity in proximity to MoD activities in the area, with the most recent meeting held on 16/12/19. The survey corridor will pass through the Castlemartin Sea Danger Area for approximately 20 km. The appointed Contractor will be required to design survey operations to minimise disruption to Castlemartin Firing Range.

1. The MCA have also been issued the survey specification and have responded that they have no issues, subject to local notification must be issued to marine users - including HM Coastguard, fisherman's organisations, neighbouring port authorities and other local stakeholders - to ensure that they are made fully aware of the activity (see attached response).

The project-specific Fisheries Liaison Officer will notify fishermen in the area. Whilst surveying, the vessel crew and survey team will, at all times, be mindful of any fishing interests, particularly fixed gear and where appropriate, put in place measures to minimise and/or avoid interaction.

## 4. Environmental mitigation

*Please list appropriate mitigation measures to minimise impacts on the marine environment these may include:*

- *Pollution prevention and control procedure (guidance available at: <http://www.netregs.org.uk/media/1304/gpp-5-works-and-maintenance-in-or-near-water.pdf>)*
- *Spill response kits*
- *Minimise plant traffic*
- *Designated access and egress routes*
- *Storage of materials (fuel, chemicals, construction waste)*
- *Biosecurity (guidance available at <http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A1294630.pdf>)*

*Note: To assist you, the following mitigation statements will be used as conditions within the licence. By signing this method statement you will be agreeing to adhere to these restrictions. If you are unable to do this, the application will not qualify as Band 1.*

- ✓ All equipment, temporary structures, access tracks, waste and/or debris associated with the works will be removed on completion of the works.
- ✓ Bunding, storage facilities and spill kits will be employed to contain and prevent the release of fuel, oils and chemicals associated with the plant, refuelling and construction equipment into the marine environment.
- ✓ Plant, vehicles and machinery will not be refuelled on the foreshore.
- ✓ Coatings and treatments will be suitable for use in the marine environment and are used in accordance with best environmental practice.
- ✓ All equipment, materials, machinery and PPE used will be in a clean condition prior to their arrival on site, and upon removal from site, to minimise risk of introducing non-native species into the marine environment.
- ✓ In the event of removal of any sensitive species or habitat designated by NRW under Schedule 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, no further removals will occur at that location or within 20m of that location.

**Please list your bespoke mitigations here:**

- Vessel marine crew shall have assigned emergency duties and muster points stipulated on the vessel's muster list. Safety inductions of all onboarding crew shall be undertaken not more than 24-hours after arrival onboard.
- The vessel(s) shall have appropriate fully certified safety equipment to comply with SOLAS codes or equivalent, including adequate marine lifesaving equipment and personal protective equipment, and shall have trained personnel onboard who are familiar with its use.
- All vessel(s) working areas shall be kept clean and clear of trip hazards and flammable materials.

- No waste shall be discharged from the vessels offshore with all waste disposed shore side in accordance with Client and statutory requirements.
- The Contractor shall propose a suitable operational port nearby to the work area that allows for safe and efficient survey operations, 24-hour vessel port access and suitable facilities for safe loading/unloading of personnel, equipment and supplies.
- A dedicated person for watching and monitoring vessel traffic will be present on the bridge at all times.
- Dropped objects procedure, at a minimum, shall include reporting and notification procedures to comply with statutory requirements.

Care shall be taken during location selection to ensure that the sample site is free from obstructions and prior to the grab deployment the sampling area will be ground truthed using a drop-down camera (DDV). This may form part of the habitat assessment survey (below). A minimum of 5 images will be taken of the seabed at each station. An image of the recovered sample will also be undertaken.

#### **Habitat assessment survey:**

The export routes (offshore and nearshore) as well as the proposed windfarm area are to be assessed for the presence of potentially important and environmental sensitive habitats such as:

- Annex I habitats of the EU Habitats Directive (1992), as implemented by the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) which supersedes the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations (2007 (as amended)) as endorsed by the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009);
- Habitats of Principal Importance (as designated under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act (2016));
- Any evidence of the threatened and/or declining species and habitats listed by OSPAR (2008); and
- Species on the IUCN Global Red List of threatened species (IUCN, 2019).

Key elements from the NRW guidance documents will be incorporated into the final survey specification:

- Natural Resources Wales. (2019). **GN030d** Benthic habitat assessment guidance for marine developments and activities: A guide to characterising and monitoring *Sabellaria* reefs. Natural Resources Wales, Bangor; and
- Natural Resources Wales. 2019. **GN030c** Benthic habitat assessment guidance for marine developments and activities: A guide to characterising and monitoring horse mussel *Modiolus modiolus* reefs. Natural Resources Wales, Bangor.

Any potentially sensitive habitats identified during the survey will be investigated using high-resolution video or stills photography and the extent of any habitats or features identified will be mapped. All sediment types identified by the geophysical data acquisition will be ground-truthed during the habitat assessment survey. In addition, any potential features of cultural/heritage importance (e.g. wrecks) will be investigated.

## 5. Additional Information

*Please list any additional information that may help with the application:*

- *Consents/permissions required*
  - *List of plans or drawings attached to method statement*
  - *Emergency procedures*
  - *Contact details*
1. Chart to show location of project;
  2. Excel spreadsheet containing the area co-ordinates;
  3. Email correspondence with The Crown Estate;
    - a. A Seabed Survey Licence (SSL) is required from TCE (this has been submitted).
  4. Email correspondence with MCA;
  5. Email correspondence with NRW;
  6. Completed Band 1 Marine Licence application form;

### **Emergency Procedures**

Vessel marine crew shall have assigned emergency duties and muster points stipulated on the vessel's muster list. Safety inductions of all onboarding crew shall be undertaken not more than 24-hours after arrival onboard. Regular muster drills shall be undertaken during operations and in port. Safety drills shall be programmed to ensure practice in a variety of potential emergency response procedures.

### **Contact details:**

#### Applicant

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## 6. Customer details

**Signature:** 

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