



**Cyfoeth
Naturiol**
Cymru
**Natural
Resources**
Wales

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

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.

Project Erebus is a proposed floating offshore wind farm located in the Celtic Sea. Previously two marine licences (RML2024 and RML2028) have been issued for seabed sampling in the Project Erebus array area and along the export cable corridor. Due to unforeseen circumstances (contracts and weather delays), the work granted in RML2024 and RML2028 is not likely to be completed within the current ML period. This application proposes to combine the areas in RML2024 and RML2028, keeping the work scope the same but requesting an extension to the expiry date.

The works proposed is 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 the sampling survey for the Project as a whole was first issued to NRW in February 2020, with a NRW response received 13th March 2020. The details below present a slightly updated method statement that incorporates relevant NRW comments.

Sediment Grab samples:

The sediment grab samples will be undertaken from a vessel. It is anticipated that there will be a maximum total of 364 sediment samples across the potential export cable route area.

The total combined volume of sediment samples recovered under this Marine Licence application and RML2024 will not exceed 4,000L (4m³). The density of grab samples will not exceed 50 samples within any one hectare.

At each of the sediment sampling stations, two suitable grab samples will be taken (2 x 0.1m²). 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.

The sediment grab sample works for this application are expected to take approximately 8 weeks. The licence period for RML2024 and RML2028 expire on the 14 Oct 2020, the dates of this application have been selected to match as closely as possible to those for RML2024 and RML2028 with a 4 months extension request (expiry date 15.02.2021).

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; and
- 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 additional cable route area 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.

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.

2. Estimated timing of works

It is proposed the works under this Marine Licence application will carry on from RML2024 and RML2028 expiry dates. Starting from the 15 October 2020, with completion expected within 4 weeks. For contingency and to reduce the likelihood of further Band 1 ML applications we request the licence expiry date to be 4 months from RML2024 and RML2028 expiry dates (15.02.21).

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 (Seren Las) and one for offshore (Seazip Fix). They have the following requirements:

- Nearshore survey (e.g. in water depths <15 m, 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;
- Offshore survey (e.g. in water depths >15 m): 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

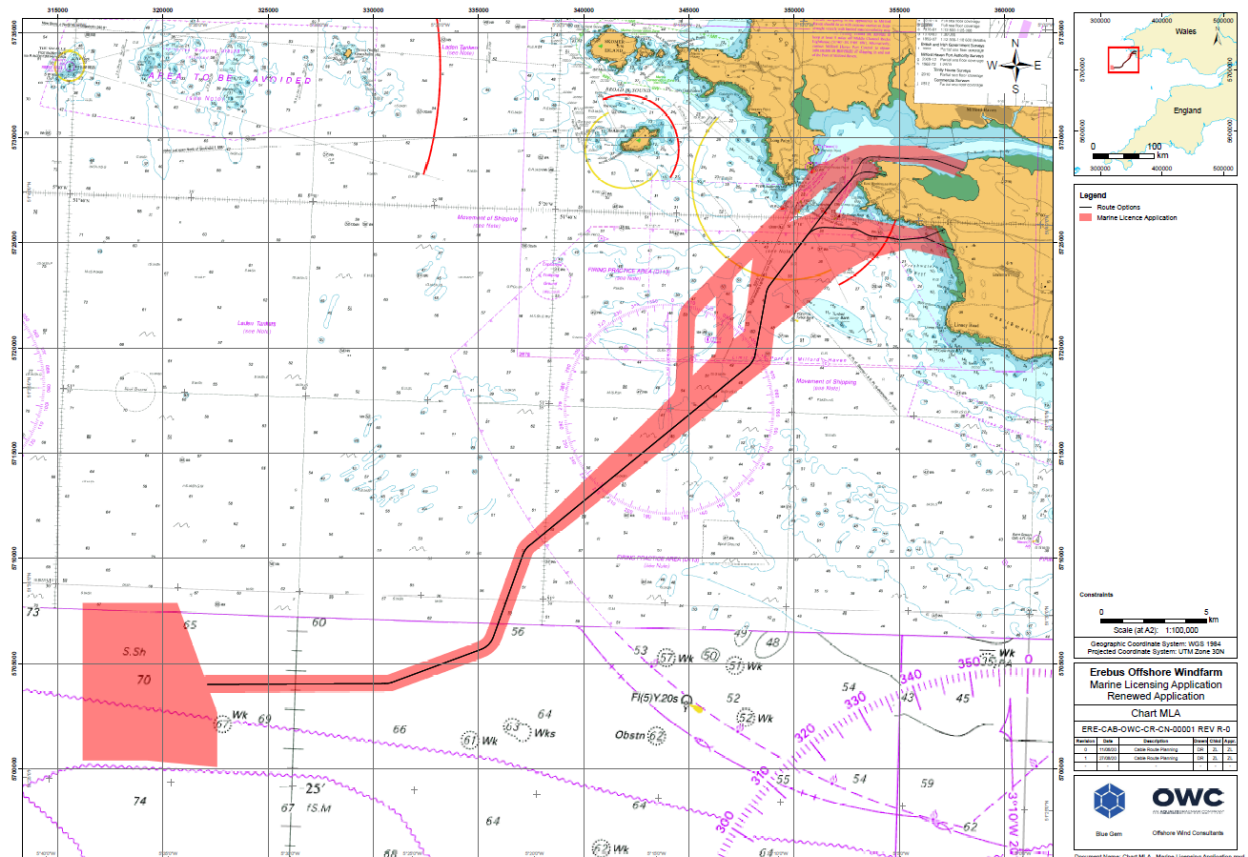
A maximum number of 364 sediment sample grabs will be taken from the proposed area applied for under this Marine Licence application. The total combined volume of sediment sample recovered under this Marine Licence application will not exceed 4,000L (4m³).

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 area:



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 14/08/20. The survey corridor will pass through the Castlemartin Sea Danger Area. The Contractor has designed survey operations to minimise disruption to Castlemartin Firing Range and to provide daily updates to the range.

The project will follow MCAs condition (please find email from MCA submitted with application documents):

1. 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.

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) 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. Shapefiles;
 4. Email correspondence with MCA;
 5. Completed Band 1 Marine Licence application form;

It should be noted that a Seabed Survey License (SSL) from The Crown Estate is has been amended.

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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