

Aberdeen Offshore Wind Farm (AOWF): Fourth meeting of the EOWDC Scientific Research and Monitoring Panel

Meeting date: 7th July 2016
Venue: Marine Laboratory, Victoria Road, Aberdeen

Participants: Ian Davies (Marine Scotland Science) (Chair)
Roger May (Marine Scotland Licensing and Operations Team)
Catarina Aires (MS-LOT)
Helen Jameson (Aberdeen Offshore Wind Farm Limited)
Jesper Kyed Larsen (Aberdeen Offshore Wind Farm Limited)
Erica Knott (Scottish Natural Heritage)
Aly McCluskie (RSPB Scotland)
Alexander Downie (Scottish Environment Protection Agency) (by phone)
Karen Hall (Joint Nature Conservation Committee)
Fiona Read (Whale & Dolphin Conservation)
Morag McCorkindale (Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group) (first hour)
Annie Breden (The Crown Estate)

Apologies Stuart Gibb (University of the Highlands and Islands)
Mark Christie (MS-LOT)
Catriona Gall (SNH)

1. Background to meeting:

This meeting constitutes the fourth meeting of the EOWDC Scientific Research and Monitoring Panel, as comprised of individuals/organisational representatives deemed required by the Scottish Ministers. The Agenda for this meeting was drafted and circulated by AOWFL.

The main aim for the meeting was to agree the evaluative framework to be used to prioritise research themes, and conduct a scoring and weighting exercise to deliver the final list of prioritised research themes. Discussion regarding the mechanism to call for proposals was also discussed.

2. Status of actions from last meeting:

Actions		
FGDS Ltd	Generate final reporting for the prioritisation exercise	Complete – final report circulated with MoM from Meeting #4
AOWFL	Issue final MoM, appending the above report	Complete
AOWFL	Set up doodle poll for Meeting #4 and circulate link. Meeting date to be fixed by COB 10 th June to allow for summer holidays and changing commitments	Complete
All	Participate in the doodle poll by the required date	Complete
AOWFL	Circulate a request for sub-topics under each of the research themes	Complete
All	Put forward suggestions for sub-topics (maximum of three under each theme) in advance of Meeting #4, final list to be agreed during the meeting	Complete, final list prepared for discussion today
AOWFL	To investigate stipulations within the EU grant agreement and AOWFL internal processes which may influence project choices	Ongoing, however investigations so far suggest no significant constraints
AOWFL	Attempt to define programme and process to the point of contract placement for chosen research projects, and beyond to project implementation and operation	Initial programme has been circulated for discussion today
AOWFL	Draft a briefing for applicants to be reviewed by Panel members in advance of Meeting #4	Draft document has been circulated for comment
All	Review draft briefing for applicants circulated by AOWFL	Ongoing
AOWFL/MS-LOT	AOWFL will circulate the current distribution list for Panel correspondence and MS-LOT	Ongoing

	will follow up with respective parties to confirm whether they wish to remain on the distribution list	
AOWFL	Recirculate ToR	Complete
All	Provide any comments on the ToR in advance of Meeting #4	Complete, final changes will be made in line with most recent comments, then document finalised

3. Discussion:

3.1 Update on Legal Challenge (MS-LOT)

No further legal update since Meeting #3

3.2 Update on Project Rochdale Envelope and Programme (AOWFL)

No further updates on programme and project design since the last meeting. To summarise:

Programme:

- The project expects a Final Investment Decision (FID) in summer 2016
- Procurement and engineering work are ongoing
- Onshore construction may start as early as the end of 2016 with site clearance/preparation works
- Offshore construction may begin as early as Q3 2017
- Grid connection is programmed for 1st April 2018

Technical elements:

- One wind turbine generator type
- Single foundation concept remains a jacket structure with suction anchor foundations, however the design now features three legs as opposed to four
- 66kV inter-array and export cables will be deployed
- Installation will be completed in a single phase

The question of whether the funding for the R&M programme was at risk following the EU referendum. AOWFL confirmed that this is not the case as budget has been ring-fenced for this purpose.

3.3 Scientific Panel Terms of Reference (ToR)

Minor changes have been requested following latest circulation. Once these are integrated Members agree that this will constitute the final version.

3.4 Agreement of Sub-Topics under Research Themes

AOWFL presented a list of topics put forward by Members for discussion. The final list for inclusion as part of the Information for Applicants document is as follows:

Research Theme	Sub-topics
Birds	Methods and techniques to measure or model seabird collision rates
	Methods and techniques to measure or model seabirds disturbance or displacement
	Behaviour of birds in and around offshore wind farms
Marine Mammals	Studies of broad scale abundance and distribution of marine mammals
	Methods of measuring absolute abundance
	Behaviour of marine mammals in and around offshore wind farms
Fish	Audiology of eel and lamprey
	Distribution and movements of salmon and sea trout
	Mapping of herring spawning activity
Socio-economics	Changing public perceptions of offshore wind throughout the lifetime of a project - from pre-construction to operation
	Methods of assessing socio-economic impacts
	Maximising local benefits from offshore wind and increasing local content
Coastal Processes	Sediment monitoring practices and procedures – coastal morphology and beach structures
	Studies of coastal hydrography
Colonisation	Non-native species – pathways of introduction and/or treatment options
	Methods of survey for non-native species
Benthos	Changes to seabed communities in proximity to offshore wind farm substructures
Water Quality	Novel methods for cleaning of transition pieces/foundations
	Methods for preventing environmental contamination during delivery and operation of offshore wind farms

The Panel agree that the above list is intended as a guide to applicants in order to tailor proposals to the requirements of the EOWDC and this particular programme, however should not preclude the acceptance of studies in other areas if these are considered of sufficient value.

3.5 Calling for Proposals

3.5.1 Programme

A high level programme to placement of contracts was discussed. AOWFL are targeting end July 2016 as a start date for the Expressions of Interest round.

The aim will be to place contracts by the close of 2016 to allow as much time as possible for pre-construction data collection should this be required. AOWFL noted that if one full year pre-construction data collection is required, this is only likely to be realistic if the focus is turbine

installation, which is expected to take place in Q2 2018. Cable and foundation installation are expected to begin in Q3 and Q4 2017 respectively, therefore one full year of data collection in relation to these components would not be possible. To try and mitigate loss of valuable data collection time, commissioning of projects with significant data collection requirements will be prioritised.

Members agreed to extend the timescales for the EoI Round from two weeks to four and reduce that for Detailed Proposals to four weeks from six.

It is noted that, given the time of year it is likely that most Panel Members will have annual leave booked during the evaluation of proposals process. AOWFL requested that all Members provide an alternative contact from their organisation in such instances, if one has not already been provided.

A meeting date for Meeting #5 shall be set by AOWFL during the EoI evaluation period to ensure this data is fixed sufficiently in advance. Given the uncertainty regarding timing of the EoI round at the current time, Members are requested to select two possible dates from those put forward by AOWFL. All Members are to respond to the doodle poll in the usual manner.

3.6 Documentation

AOWFL requested comments on the Information for Applicants document circulated prior to this meeting. An EoI template will also be produced to aid applicants and reduce the burden on AOWFL and the Panel of reviewing multiple proposals. For the same reason, the template will include word limits.

AOWFL will circulate an updated version of the above prior to the opening date.

3.7 Publication and Administration

It is expected that the EoI round will be publicised via the EOWDC website, potentially also via the Marine Scotland website, and via a number of research forums. Exact details and co-ordination will be progressed by AOWFL.

Once the call goes public, Panel Members will assist in spreading the word via their own professional networks.

AOWFL has set up a central email address for applicants to make submissions. Following the closing date, AOWFL will circulate a spreadsheet with details of accepted EoI's to the Panel for review in advance of Meeting #5.

3.8 Contracting of an External Support

AOWFL tabled the proposal to contract an external Programme Manager of sufficient experience to manage the programme itself once established. Costs associated with this would be covered by the funding budget. No objections were raised from Panel Members. Another

suggestion supported by Members would be to engage a statistician to review detailed proposals to ensure they are fit for purpose and sufficiently robust.

Actions	
AOWFL	Issue Meeting #4 MoM
AOWFL	Issue updated Information for Applicants and a EoI template for proposals, including word limits
AOWFL	Set up doodle poll for Meeting #5 and circulate link.
All	Participate in the doodle poll by the requested date and put forward two possible dates for Meeting #5
AOWFL/All	Organise publication of the EoI round, assisted by Panel Members who will utilise their networks to spread word
MS-LOT	To confirm whether Marine Scotland can publish details on their website, and if so co-ordinate with AOWFL in doing so
AOWFL	To revisit the programme to contract placement and keep Panel Members informed of changes
AOWFL	To investigate engagement of an external Programme Manager