Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

Marine Directorate Licensing Operations Team
Marine Laboratory
375 Victoria Road
Aberdeen
AB11 9DB

Mr Jack Henry
SSEN Transmission
10 Henderson Road
Inverness
IV1 1SN

17/02/2025

To whom it may concern.

Re: Marine Licence Variation Request for Marine Licence MS-00008738.

Please consider this document and the enclosed application as commercially sensitive and subject to the controls placed on the sharing of information of relevance to national security.

Background

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks - Transmission (SSEN Transmission), the trading name for Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc ('the Applicant') hold a licence under the Electricity Act 1989 for the transmissions of electricity in the north of Scotland. In February 2021, the Applicant gained consent for the construction of the subsea element of the Western Isles High Voltage Directional Current (HVDC) Link ('the Project') through a Marine Licence (MS-00008738) issued under Part 4 of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010.

The Project is part of the wider Western Isles HVDC link project which encompasses a new subsea transmission link between Arnish Point (Stornoway) on the Isles of Lewis, and Dundonnell on the Scottish mainland, land cables on both the island of Lewis and mainland, along with HVDC converter stations.

The original Marine Licence application was supported by the following documents, which are included with this application for infomation:

- Western Isles Connection Project Environmental Appraisal (Xodus Document Number A-100336S00-REPT-004); and
- LT14 Western Isles HVDC Link - Post Application Support Pockmark Cable Routing (Xodus Document Number: A-10336-S04-TECH-002).

The key components of the Project include:

- Installation of two HVDC cables and one fibre optic cable as a single bundle of 82 km in length;
- Landfall works, including the installation of ducts and Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) at both landfalls;
- Cable burial via ploughing, mechanical cutting or water jetting to a target depth of lowering between 0.6 and 1.5 m; and
- Installation of cable protection, including up to 40 concrete mattresses, 1.5 km of cast iron shells and up to 162,874 tonnes of rock armour.

In order to enable the delivery of the project in line with the countries 2030 commitments we would request that the variation is determined by the end of July 2025, SSEN Transmission is committed to working collaboratively with MD_Lot and will make resource and information available in a timely manner to enable this timeline.

Marine Licence Variation Request

Following the development and refinement of Project specifications and design, the Applicant is seeking a variation to the existing Marine Licence incorporation several modifications and amendments to the design envelope consider by the original MEA.

The following Project Design Refinements outline the proposed changes being sought by the Applicant:

- Extension of the Marine Licence end date;
- Removal and disposal of marine debris via subsea crane and Remote Operated Vehicles (ROVs), in addition to PLGR.
- Drilling and backfilling of up to 14 nearshore boreholes (6 plus 1 contingency at each landfall).
- Refinement of northern feather star aggregations mitigation (Condition 3.2.11 and 3.37 of the Marine Licence).
- Increased cable protection requirements at specific cable crossings.
- Increase in transmission capacity.
- Increase in cable voltage.
- Minor amendment to the Project cable corridor boundary at the approach to the Dundonnell landfall.

Further details of the Project Design Refinement and proposed changes are presented within Table 2 of the MEA Addendum [A-100336-S05-A-REPT-004].

In addition to the Project Design Refinements outlined above, the Applicant is also seeking to incorporate the ability to discharge the Marine Licence conditions at the following discrete stages:

- Nearshore geotechnical boreholes;
- PLGR;
- Landfall installation (including HDD); and
- Cable installation and protection (including route and seabed preparation).

The phased discharge of the Marine Licence conditions is purely administrative and procedural in nature, and hence does not reflect a change in the consented Project design or to the findings of the original MEA.

Enclosed Documentation

The following documents have been submitted alongside the Marine Licence Variation request:

- Western Isles HVDC Link MEA Addendum [A-100336-S05-A-REPT-004];
    a. Appendix A: Western Isles HVDC Link Gap Analysis Report [A-100336-S05-A-REPT-002];
    b. Appendix B: Western Isles Link Electromagnetic Field and Compass Deviation Study [A-100336-S07-Y-TECH-001];
    c. Appendix C: Western Isles HVDC Link Amended Project Cable Corridor Coordinates.
    d. Western Isles Connection Project Environmental Appraisal (Xodus Document Number A-100336S00-REPT-004); and
    e. LT14 Western Isles HVDC Link - Post Application Support Pockmark Cable Routing (Xodus Document Number: A-10336-S04-TECH-002).

I trust that the information enclosed is sufficient to enable MD-LOT to process the proposed Marine Licence variation request. If MD-LOT require any further information or seek any clarifications on the Marine Licence variation request or the information enclosed, please do not hesitate to contact me using the contact details provide below.

Yours faithfully,
Redacted

Marine Consents Manager
SSEN Transmission
Email: jack.henry@sse.com
Redacted

CC: Peter Watson (Lead Marine Consents Manager, SSEN Transmission)