

## MS-LOT European Protected Species Case Handling Report

**Licence Number:** 00010816

**Licensing Officer:** [Redacted]

<b>Site</b>	Green Volt Offshore Wind Farm Export Cable Corridor
<b>Company</b>	Green Volt Offshore Windfarm Ltd  12 Alva Street Edinburgh  United Kingdom EH2 4QG
<b>Applicant</b>	[Redacted]
<b>Brief Description of Project</b>	geotechnical and geophysical surveys associated with the Green Volt Offshore Wind Farm
<b>Associated Licences</b>	

<b>Species</b>	harbour porpoise ( <i>Phocoena phocoena</i> );bottlenose dolphin ( <i>Tursiops truncatus</i> );minke whale ( <i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i> );Risso's dolphin ( <i>Grampus griseus</i> );white sided dolphin ( <i>Lagenorhynchus acutus</i> );white-beaked dolphin ( <i>Lagenorhynchus albirostris</i> );humpback whale ( <i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i> )
<b>Inshore/Offshore</b>	Inshore

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<b>TEST 1</b>	<b>Purpose of licence</b>
	Imperative reasons of overriding public interest (including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment)
<b>Comments</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is a specific need being addressed? The surveys are essential in the progression of the Green Volt Project and the project will be unable to go ahead without understanding the seabed characteristics. The Green Volt project is addressing the need for energy generation in Scotland. The project will contribute to reducing emissions whilst promoting the development of the Scottish floating offshore wind supply chain in readiness for delivery of the large total capacity planned for the ScotWind projects in the 2030s.</li> <li>• What benefit does the activity provide or what need does it address – social, economic, environmental, health and safety etc? (they should give some details) Social, economic and environmental. Should the Green Volt project go ahead, the project will lead in scaling up the supply chain industry, providing opportunities to work on floating wind technology. The project will contribute to the Scottish and UK commitments to Net Zero, as well as contribute to providing energy security for the UK.</li> <li>• Why is the activity essential? The surveys are essential in the progression of the Green Volt Project and are required to map out the seabed conditions to enable the refinement of the design envelope, as well as the micro siting of infrastructure before construction can begin.</li> <li>• What public interest is served? Climate change is a risk to the health and safety of Scottish and UK citizens. The project will contribute to the decarbonisation of the oil and gas industry within Scotland which, in turn, will positively contribute to both national and international policies, meeting the need for energy generation and combatting climate change. If Green Volt do not undertake their geophysical and geotechnical surveys, the project will not go ahead.</li> <li>• Is the activity in relation to any government targets or policies? The Scottish and UK commitments to Net Zero by 2045 and 2050. Deliver a substantial contribution of new low carbon electricity to the Scottish North Sea Oil &amp; Gas sector before 2030.</li></ul>	
<b>Test 1 satisfied?</b>	YES

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<b>TEST 2</b>	<b>Satisfactory alternatives</b>
<b>Comments</b>	
<p>Option 1 – do nothing approach. The surveys are essential in establishing the seabed characteristics to refine the design envelope of the Green Volt Project. If the surveys do not go ahead, the project cannot go ahead.</p> <p>Option 2- alternative location. There is no alternative to the location of these surveys, as the location of the infrastructure to be installed is dictated by the location of the Option Agreement with Crown Estate Scotland, the government-designated INTOG Areas of Search, and the Offshore ECC and Windfarm Site already given S36 consent and marine licences by Scottish Ministers. Surveying only a smaller area within the proposed survey site is not a feasible option as full coverage is required to determine the most suitable potential locations of project infrastructure.</p> <p>Option 3 – alternative timings. The surveys are weather dependent and must take place between June to October to achieve viable weather conditions. They cannot be carried out during the winter months.</p> <p>Option 4 – reduce the survey period. Carrying out the surveys over multiple visits could increase disturbance. The survey period also has a contingency period in place to account for weather delays.</p> <p>Option 5 – alternative equipment. Alternative equipment would not be as effective as the equipment to be used it for the specific purposes of the geophysical surveys.</p>	
<b>Test 2 satisfied?</b>	YES

<b>TEST 3</b>	<b>Favourable conservation status</b>
<b>Comments</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposal is not capable of having an adverse impact on advice on the FCS of the EPS involved.</li> <li>• A basking shark licence for disturbance or injury is not required.</li> <li>• The survey is capable of affecting the minke whale, burrowed mud and shelf deep features of the Southern Trench NCMPA but the effects are insignificant due to the localised nature of the activity, short duration and the fact the activity takes place outside the key area for these features.</li> <li>• The proposed surveys are unlikely to cause a significant effect on the bottlenose dolphins feature of the Moray Firth SAC and no likely significant effects upon the remaining qualifying features of the Moray Firth SAC.</li> </ul>	
<b>Test 3 satisfied?</b>	YES

**Date application received:** 04/05/2024

**Consultation start date:** 14/05/2024

**Consultation end date:** 11/06/2024

**Notes**

Date	Text	Created By
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**Awaiting Information**

Start date	End date	Duration (days)	Waiting for	Waiting on Information From
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**Licence issue date:**

**Date report due:** 15/11/2024

## **MS-LOT European Protected Species Case Handling Report**

**Licence start date:**

**Licence end date:** 15/10/2024

National Marine Plan considerations:

The decision is: In accordance and no further action required

Comments: Policy Gen 13 Noise has been considered for the proposed geotechnical surveys. NatureScot were consulted and advised that the activities are not capable of having an adverse impact on the favourable conservation status of the EPS concerned and that all species have been correctly identified. Mitigation is also in place to minimise any impact to EPS. Details of the surveys have also been provided to the Marine Noise Registry.

Reviewed and signed by:

Signed: .....

[Redacted]

Date: 17/06/2024