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**MARINE SCOTLAND - LICENSING OPERATIONS TEAM'S
ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT'S IMPLICATIONS FOR
DESIGNATED SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION IN VIEW OF THE
SITES' CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES.**

APPLICATION FOR A MARINE LICENCE UNDER THE MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 AND THE MARINE AND COASTAL ACCESS ACT 2009 FOR UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE CLEARANCE ACTIVITY AND A EUROPEAN PROTECTED SPECIES LICENCE UNDER THE CONSERVATION (NATURAL HABITATS, & C.) REGULATIONS 1994 AND THE CONSERVATION OF OFFSHORE MARINE HABITATS AND SPECIES REGULATIONS 2017 FOR UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE REMOVAL AND DETONATION, USE OF EXPLOSIVE SUBSTANCES AND REMOVAL OF DEBRIS

SITE DETAILS: MORAY WEST OFFSHORE WIND FARM , ARRAY AREA AND EXPORT CABLE AREA– EPS/BS-00010032 & MS-00010033

Name	Assessor or Approver	Date
[Redacted]	Assessor	05/12/2022
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SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

1 Appropriate assessment conclusion

- 1.1 This appropriate assessment (“AA”) concludes that there will be no adverse effect on the site integrity of the Moray Firth SAC and the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC from the Moray Offshore Windfarm (West) Limited (“Moray West”) proposal either in isolation or in combination with other plans or projects, providing that the condition(s) set out in Section 4 are complied with.
- 1.2 Marine Scotland – Licensing Operations Team (“MS-LOT”) considers that the most up to date and best scientific advice available has been used in reaching the conclusion that the Moray West proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the Moray Firth SAC and the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC and is satisfied that no reasonable scientific doubt remains.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is a record of the AA undertaken by MS-LOT in regards to the Moray West proposal to carry out removal and detonation of unexploded ordnance (“UXO”) with the use of explosive substances and the removal of debris associated with the Moray West Offshore Wind Farm and associated Offshore Transmission Infrastructure (“OfTI”) as required under Regulation 48 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 and Regulation 28 of the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (collectively referred to as “the Habitats Regulations”). MS-LOT, as the 'competent authority' under the Habitats Regulations, has to be satisfied that the project will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site (special areas of conservation and special protection areas), either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, before it can grant consent for the project.
- 2.2 NatureScot, operating name of Scottish Natural Heritage, has been consulted.

3 Details of proposed project

- 3.1 Moray West are currently undertaking a geophysical survey campaign to identify the presence of UXO targets under European Protected Species (“EPS”) licence number EPS/BS - 00009879. Once the potential UXO targets (“pUXO”) have been located, these will need to be visually identified and confirmed. To date 9 targets have been identified in the nearshore area (within 3km of the coastline) and visual investigation to confirm this is proposed to

commence on 17th of December 2022 . Survey work is not complete in the Development site however, Moray West has therefore applied for an EPS and marine licence based on a worst case assumption that clearance of a maximum of 30 UXO which will each be required to be detonated by high order detonation. Moray West will confirm the exact number, size and locations with MS-LOT prior to any UXO clearance activities being undertaken.

3.2 The seabed preparation includes clearance of UXO activities and the use of the following:

- Explosives with an operating frequency 2 - 1,000Hz with the main energy between 6 - 21Hz;
- Use of Acoustic Deterrent Devices (“ADD”) with an operating frequency between 10 and 20 kHz.

A Remotely Operated Vehicle (“ROV”) will be used to localise, excavate and identify pUXO targets using electromagnetic sensors. A dredge pump will be used to free the target from the sediment. Any non-UXO targets identified will be examined for being of potential archaeological interest. If the non-UXO target is not of archaeological interest it will be relocated to the vessel or outside of the clearance corridor. If the target is confirmed to be a UXO, a 250m radius exclusion zone will be implemented around the target.

3.3 For the confirmed UXO, the preference is to avoid the target where practicable and micro-site construction work and infrastructure around it, applying a do-nothing scenario which would have no impact on marine mammal species within the vicinity of the Development site . If avoidance is not possible, the target will be subject to Explosive Ordnance Disposal (“EOD”) operations. There are three options for UXO disposal which could be used as part of EOD operations:

- UXO detonation in situ;
- Relocation of the UXO on the seabed and then detonation;
- Recovery of the UXO to the deck of the vessel.

3.4 Disposal of the confirmed UXO target includes the use of the following methods in order of preference:

- Low order deflagration, a cone shall penetrate the UXO and burn the explosive material;
- High order detonation, a charge shall be placed next to the target to dispose of the explosive material.

Preference will always be given to low order deflagration and high order detonation will be considered where deflagration is not possible.

- 3.5 The proposed activities are scheduled from 25 December 2022 to 31 March 2023 and marine mammals could be temporarily disturbed for up to 30 days assuming one day is required for each UXO clearance.

4 Consultation

- 4.1 NatureScot was consulted on 20 October 2022 and responded with its advice on 18 November 2022. Further advice from NatureScot was received on 16 December 2022

5 Main points raised during consultation

- 5.1 NatureScot advised that the Moray West proposal would have a likely significant effect on the bottlenose dolphin qualifying interest of the Moray Firth SAC and the harbour seal qualifying interest of the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC, and that an AA was required.
- 5.2 NatureScot advised that the correct species have been identified and that all activities capable of disturbing the species have been included but highlighted that a residual risk of permanent auditory injury to harbour porpoise remained, over and above the mitigation strategy should high order UXO clearance be used, and advised that the EPS licence should reflect this.
- 5.3 NatureScot advised that the use of scare charges as a proxy soft start should not be used for marine mammal mitigation and that the ADD systems should be active for a maximum of 60 minutes. NatureScot also advise that a third Marine Mammal Observer should be employed where there is a limited view of the mitigation zone. Nature Scot also recommended that the EPS licence reflect the disturbance risk based on Temporary Threshold Shift rather than being based on Endpoint Detection and Response methodology.
- 5.4 Moray West submitted an updated EPS application form with the updated disturbance risk based on TTS, detail of the final pUXO locations within 3km of the Moray Coast, contractor methodology for low order deflagration and updated the MMMP to address the comments raised by NatureScot. NatureScot reviewed the updated information and responded that it was content with the information provided but advised that mitigation measures should be implemented based on the high order clearance method due to the lack of in-situ data and experience for the deflagration methods. Moray West provided a final UXO clearance European Protected Species Risk

Assessment and an updated UXO Clearance Environmental Report, both dated 19 December 2022 with the updated MMMP and contractor methodology.

SECTION 2: INFORMATION ON EUROPEAN SITES

6 Background information and qualifying interests for the relevant European site(s)

6.1 This section provides links to the NatureScot SiteLink website (“SiteLink”) where the background information on the site(s) being considered in this assessment is available. The qualifying interests for the site(s) are listed as are the conservation objectives.

Table 1 Name of European site(s) affected and relevant link(s) to SiteLink

<p><u>Moray Firth SAC</u> https://sitelink.nature.scot/site/8327</p> <p><u>Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC</u> SiteLink (nature.scot)</p>

Table 2 Qualifying interests

<p>Moray Firth SAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bottlenose Dolphin (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>)• Subtidal sandbanks <p>Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coastal dune heathland - Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (Calluno-Ulicetea) - (<i>Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (Calluno-Ulicetea)</i>)• Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco- Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)• Dunes with juniper thickets – <i>Coastal dunes with Juniperus spp</i>• Lime-deficient dune heathland with crowberry - <i>Decalcified fixed dunes with Empetrun nigrum*</i>• Shifting dunes (<i>Embryonic shifting dunes</i>)• Estuaries• Dune <i>grassland (Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation)</i> (“grey dunes”)• Humid dune slacks• Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)
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- Intertidal mudflats and sandflats (*Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide.*)
- Common seal (*Phoca vitulina*)
- Reefs
- Glasswort and other annuals colonising mud and sand (*Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand)
- Subtidal sandbanks
- Shifting dunes with marram

Table 3 Conservation objectives

Moray Firth SAC

1. To ensure that the qualifying features of Moray Firth SAC are in favourable condition and make an appropriate contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status.
2. To ensure that the integrity of Moray Firth SAC is maintained or restored in the context of environmental changes by meeting objectives 2a, 2b and 2c for each qualifying feature:

For subtidal sandbanks

- 2a. Extent and distribution of the habitat within the site.
- 2b. Structure and function of the habitat and the supporting environment on which it relies.
- 2c. Distribution and viability of typical species of the habitat.

For bottlenose dolphin

- 2a. The population of bottlenose dolphin is a viable component of the site.
- 2b. The distribution of bottlenose dolphin throughout the site is maintained by avoiding significant disturbance.
- 2c. The supporting habitats and processes relevant to bottlenose dolphin and the availability of prey for bottlenose dolphin are maintained.

Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC

For common seal and otter

To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species (listed below) or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and

To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:

- Population of the species a viable component of the site
- Distribution of the species within site
- Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
- Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
- No significant disturbance of the species

For qualifying habitats

- To avoid deterioration of the qualifying habitats thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to achieving favourable conservation status for each of the qualifying features; and
- To ensure for the qualifying habitats that the following are maintained in the long term:
 - Extent of the habitat on site
 - Distribution of the habitat within site
 - Structure and function of the habitat
 - Processes supporting the habitat
 - Distribution of typical species of the habitat
 - Viability of typical species as components of the habitat
 - No significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat

SECTION 3: ASSESSMENT IN RELATION TO REGULATION 48 OF THE CONSERVATION (NATURAL HABITATS, &C.) REGULATIONS 1994

7 Requirement for appropriate assessment

7.1 *Is the project directly connected with or necessary to the conservation management of the site(s)?*

The project is not directly connected with or necessary to the conservation management of the sites.

7.2 *Is the project likely to have a significant effect on the qualifying interest(s)?*

In its response dated 18 November 2022, NatureScot advised the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the bottlenose dolphin qualifying interest

of the Moray Firth SAC and the harbour seal qualifying interest of the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC due to UXO clearance works.

MS-LOT agrees with NatureScot's advice and has undertaken an AA for the Moray Firth SAC and Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC.

8 Appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

8.1 Moray Firth SAC

NatureScot stated that the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on bottlenose dolphin which are a qualifying feature of the Moray Firth SAC due to potential for disturbance from UXO clearance activities.

NatureScot advised that disturbance will be minimal as it will be temporally limited to one clearance per day but that the use of high-order detonation may result in PTS for bottlenose dolphin. However NatureScot concluded that the activity will have no adverse effect on site integrity provided the MMMP, updated with its advice in its consultation response, is implemented.

NatureScot further clarified its comments on 16 December 2022 and agreed with the assessment by Moray West that the use of the deflagration clearance method may reduce the risk of PTS to negligible. However NatureScot recommended that the mitigation developed on the high order predictions should be used for all UXO clearance activities.

NatureScot concluded that its advice on the favourable conservation status of designated sites in its original response dated 18 November 2022 has not changed and that the activity will have no adverse effect on the favourable conservation status or site integrity of the Moray Firth SAC.

8.2 Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC

NatureScot stated that the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on harbour seal which are a qualifying feature of the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC due to potential for disturbance from UXO clearance activities.

NatureScot advised that disturbance will be minimal as it will be temporally limited to one clearance per day, and that if the proposed mitigation measures detailed within the MMMP (Appendix B of the UXO Clearance Environmental Report dated 28 November 2022 and the UXO Clearance European Protected Species – Risk Assessment dated 30 November 2022) is adhered to there will

be no adverse effect on site integrity of the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC.

MS-LOT concur with the view of NatureScot and concludes that there will be no adverse effect on the site integrity of the Moray Firth SAC and the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC from the proposal in isolation provided the conditions in section 4 are adhered to.

9 In combination assessment

9.1 MS-LOT has carried out an in combination assessment to ascertain whether the Moray West proposal will have a cumulative effect with other plans or projects which, in combination, would have the potential to affect the qualifying interests of the Moray Firth SAC and the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC.

9.2 The following projects currently have an active marine licence, section 36 consent or European protected species licence and associated AA which identified a likely significant effect on the qualifying interests of the Moray Firth SAC and the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC.

9.3 Aberdeen Bay Offshore Wind Farm

Installation and operation of a European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre consisting of 11 turbines, inter-array and export cables located 2 to 4.5km east of Blackdog, Aberdeenshire. Construction commenced in November 2017 beginning with foundations and cabling. All construction works have been completed for this project which is in the operational stage, which is scheduled to continue until 2032.

Further information regarding the development can be found [here](#).

9.4 Aberdeen Harbour Expansion Project

Aberdeen Harbour Board are developing a new harbour facility at Nigg Bay, Aberdeen, approximately 0.8km south of the existing harbour in Aberdeen City centre. The proposal includes construction of two breakwaters, quaysides and associated infrastructure as well as a large-scale capital dredge and sea deposit operation. Works commenced in late 2016 and are ongoing.. New licences were granted in June 2020. Construction includes establishing of north and south breakwaters, construction of closed and open quays; and construction of a revetment south of the west quay. Explosives may be used to blast localised areas of bedrock, in accordance with an updated methodology, construction environment management document and only

when the blast management plan has been approved. Dredged material suitable for land reclamation will be used for the construction of closed and open quays. A maximum of 4,702,737 wet tonnes of unsuitable material will be deposited at the Aberdeen deposit site, including what was deposited under the previous licence. Dredging will include the North Quay, East Quay, West Quay, Entrance Channel, South East Pier and South Breakwater Trenches, with a maximum of 6,120,000 wet tonnes dredged, including what has been dredged under the previous licence.

Further information regarding the project can be found [here](#).

9.5 Ardersier Port Development

The Ardersier Port Development is located at the former McDermott Fabrication Yard, which lies approximately 7.5 km to the west of Nairn, 3 km northeast of the village of Ardersier and is bounded by the Moray Firth to the north. The site extends to 307 hectares in total (including marine and terrestrial aspects) and features an existing harbour which is protected by a naturally occurring sand and shingle spit known locally as Whiteness Head. The works involve port entrance/inner channel dredging, quay wall construction/realignment and quayside (berthing) dredgings and are scheduled to start in 2019 taking up to 5 years to complete. A dredge of 2,300,000m³ of sand will be required to deepen the port entrance to -6.5m chart datum. A cutter suction dredger will be used. An area of the inner channel will be dredged to -3m chart datum by either plough dredging, backhoe dredger or land based equipment. Once dredging has been completed, the new 464m sheet pile wall will be constructed alongside the existing quayside.

Further Information regarding the development can be found [here](#).

9.6 Beatrice Offshore Windfarm

Ongoing geophysical surveys associated with Operations and Maintenance activity at the site of Beatrice Offshore Windfarm transmission infrastructure and turbine sub structures, located in the Outer Moray Firth approximately 13.5 km from the Caithness coastline, off the North East of Scotland.

Further information regarding the development can be found [here](#).

9.7 Beatrice Offshore Windfarm - Geophysical surveys, benthic surveys and visual inspections

The works involve geophysical surveys at the site of Beatrice Offshore Windfarm transmission infrastructure and turbine sub structures, located in the Outer Moray Firth approximately 13.5 km from the Caithness coastline, off the North East of Scotland and comprised of 84 fixed wind turbines, two offshore transformer modules, inter-array cables and two subsea export cables. The survey operations are scheduled to be undertaken between June 2020 and December 2023. There will be numerous survey campaigns within this period, with a total duration of 365 days.

9.8 BEAR Scotland - Bridge Maintenance Works - Kessock Bridge, Inverness-shire

This licence covers routine maintenance activities to be carried out on the bridge over a period of 5 years. All works will be highly localised and take place within the immediate vicinity of the bridge. With the exception of scour repairs and fender replacement, all maintenance activities will take place above MHWS. In most cases, activity duration is likely to be less than three months and for several activities, duration will be less than a few weeks. The exception being the painting of the superstructure which will take approximately 4 years to complete.

Further information regarding the project can be found [here](#).

9.9 Cromarty Community Development Trust – Cromarty

The works are to replace the concrete on the slipway. If funding allows, the slipway may also be extended by 20m to a total length of 60m while the width will be extended from 5.5m to 12m. The extension will either be built using blockwork or backfilled piles.

More information regarding the project can be found [here](#).

9.10 Global Energy Group – Nigg East Quay

The project is to construction of an expanded lay down area with a 0.88ha perimeter sheet piled wall to retain locally dredged sediment. The quay wall will be constructed predominantly with the use of a vibrating hammer to drive both sheet and king piles.

More information regarding the project can be found [here](#).

9.11 Global Energy Nigg Ltd - Removal of Two Dolphin Moorings - Nigg Energy Park Cromarty Firth

Global Energy Nigg Ltd propose to remove two mooring dolphins proximal to the south quayside at Nigg Energy Park, Cromarty Firth. The mooring dolphins will be dismantled and removed to allow unobstructed and safe passage to and from the south quayside.

Further information regarding the project can be found [here](#).

9.12 Hywind Scotland Pilot Park

Five 6MW turbines have been installed approximately 25km off the coast at Peterhead, North East Scotland, just outside the 12 nautical mile territorial water limit. The project will be expected to produce up to 135GWh per year of electricity.

More information regarding the project can be found [here](#).

9.13 Moray East Offshore Wind Farm and Transmission Infrastructure

The wind farm is operational with 72 WTGs with a maximum generating capacity of up to 1,116MW and 2 offshore substation platforms and associated transmission infrastructure. The proposals are located on the Smith Bank in the outer Moray Firth (approximately 22km from the Caithness coastline).

More information regarding the development can be found [here](#).

9.14 Neart na Gaoithe Offshore Wind Farm (revised design)

Construction and operation of a wind farm located 15.5km east of Fife Ness in the Firth of Forth. Consent has been granted for up to 54 wind turbines with piled jacket foundations. The operational lifespan of the project is expected to be 50 years. The project is currently under construction.

Further information regarding this project can be found [here](#).

9.15 Neart na Gaoithe Transmission Infrastructure (revised design)

Construction and operation offshore transmission infrastructure associated with the wind farm which is located 15.5km east of Fife Ness in the Firth of Forth. Consent has been granted for up to two offshore sub stations and one meteorological mast may be constructed along with two offshore export cables. These will connect to the landfall point at Thorntonloch, south of

Torness Power Station in East Lothian. The project is currently under construction.

Further information regarding this project can be found [here](#).

9.16 Peterhead Port Authority - Revetment Works, Alexandra Parade, Peterhead

The works are part of a larger project to strengthen the existing, circa 330 m long, sea defence revetment at Alexandra Parade, Peterhead. The project will be completed in two phases between April 2020 and December 2022. The project includes re-profiling of the existing revetment, formation of a toe trench and placement of various sizes of rock armour and pre-cast concrete units within the toe trench to create a toe mound. Re-profiling of the existing rock armour revetment will be undertaken by removing existing concrete elements and rock armour. Remaining sections of the concrete pitched revetment will then be broken up to improve porosity using an excavator mounted rock breaker. A rock embankment will be constructed using 1-3 tonne rockfill to overlay the existing revetment. Pre-cast concrete armour base units (Xbloc units) will then be placed in the newly developed toe trench and overlaid with 10 T rock armour to create a toe mound. Xbloc units will be placed on the rock embankment slope, extending from the toe structure to the crest of the revetment.

Further information regarding this project can be found [here](#).

9.17 Seagreen Wind Energy Limited - Geophysical Surveys - Seagreen 1A Cable Route

Seagreen proposes to install a further export cable to enable the subsequent build out of the Seagreen Alpha and Bravo Offshore Wind Farms. This export cable is to be known as Seagreen 1A and will make landfall at Cockenzie in the Firth of Forth. Seagreen propose to undertake geophysical surveys of the planned Seagreen 1A cable route. This will include the use of multi-beam echo sounder, side-scan sonar, sub-bottom profiler, magnetometer, sparker boomer and ultra-short base line. The total survey area covers approximately 548 square kilometres.

Further information regarding this project can be found [here](#).

9.18 Dredging Operations

There are a number of dredging operations which were identified as having a likely significant effect on the Moray Firth SAC also affected by the Moray West proposal. The table below summarises these projects. No dredging operations were identified as having a likely significant effect on the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC.

Table 4: Dredging operations identified as having a likely significant effect on the Moray Firth SAC also affected by the Moray West proposal.

Location of Dredge	Licensee	Amount of Dredge Material	Dredge Spoil Deposit Area	Dates of Licence	Designated Site
Aberdeen Harbour	Aberdeen Harbour Board	295,000 wet tonnes	Aberdeen deposit site	13.3.22 to 12.3.23	Moray Firth SAC
Angus Harbour	Angus Council	20640 wet tonnes per year	Arbroath deposit site	13.7.22 to 12.7.24	Moray Firth SAC
Montrose Harbour	Montrose Port Authority	246,000 wet tonnes	Arbroath deposit site	24.9.21 to 23.9.22	Moray Firth SAC and River South Esk SAC
Banff Harbour	Aberdeenshire Council	10,000 wet tonnes	Deposit site still to be confirmed	10.12.22 to 9.12.23	Moray Firth SAC
Buckie Harbour	Moray Council	16,665 wet tonnes per year for 3 years	Buckie deposit site CR040	16.3.21 to 15.3.24	Moray Firth SAC
Burghead Harbour	Moray Council	30,800 wet tonnes per year for 3 years	Burghead deposit site CR030	16.3.21 to 15.3.24	Moray Firth SAC
Cullen Harbour	Moray Council	10,000 wet tonnes over a three year period	Buckie deposit site CR040	2.7.20 to 2.6.23	Moray Firth SAC
Findochty Harbour	Moray Council	10,000 wet tonnes over	Buckie deposit	7.2.20 to 6.2.23	Moray Firth SAC

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		a three year period	site CR040		
Hopeman Harbour	Moray Council	10,000 wet tonnes over a three year period	Burghead deposit site CR030	7.2.20 to 6.2.23	Moray Firth SAC
Portknockie Harbour	Moray Council	10,000 wet tonnes over a three year period	Buckie deposit site CR040	3.2.20 to 2.2.23	Moray Firth SAC
Port of Inverness	Port of Inverness (Affric Ltd.)	Dredge and deposit of 9,750 wet tonnes of material from River Ness channel, South Citadel quay, Central Longman quay and River ness approaches over 3 years.	Cromarty Deposit site CR027	1.7.22 to 30.6.25	Moray Firth SAC
Port of Kirkcaldy	Forth Ports Limited	63,000 wet tonnes over 3 years	Kirkcaldy deposit site	22.12.21 to 21.12.24	
Port of Leith	Forth Ports Limited	130,000 wet tonnes per year	Narrow deep B designated site	03.12.21 to 02.12.24	
Boddam Harbour	Scottish & Southern Energy Ltd.	8000 wet tonnes per annum	Buchan Ness deposit site	1.10.21 to 30.9.24	Moray Firth SAC

9.19 Assessment of in combination effects on the Moray Firth SAC and the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC designated sites

9.20 The Aberdeen Bay, Beatrice, Moray East and Hywind offshore wind farms are currently in the operational phase, therefore it is unlikely that there will be any in combination effects with the Moray West proposal.

9.21 There is the potential for in combination effects with the remaining developments and projects however due to the short duration of the Moray West proposal, any temporal overlaps will be small. Additionally, providing the developments and projects are undertaken in line with the conditions of their respective AAs, MS-LOT concludes that there will be no adverse impact on the site integrity of the Moray Firth SAC and the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC from in combination effects.

10 MS-LOT Conclusion

10.1 MS-LOT concludes that providing the conditions listed in Section 4 are adhered to, there will be no adverse effect on the site integrity of the Moray Firth SAC and the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC from the Moray West proposal either in isolation or in combination with other projects.

SECTION 4: CONDITIONS

11 Requirement for conditions

11.1 The following conditions are required to ensure the activity will not adversely affect the site integrity of the Moray Firth SAC and the Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC.

11.2 The Licensee must ensure that all licensed activities are carried out in strict accordance with the mitigation and working methods and timescales(s) proposed in the application and detailed in the UXO Clearance Environmental Report and the UXO Clearance European Protected Species – Risk Assessment both dated 19 December 2022.

11.3 The Licensee must ensure that the mitigation measures for high order detonation detailed within the in the MMMP (Appendix B of the UXO Clearance Environmental Report and UXO Clearance European Protected Species – Risk Assessment, both dated 19 December 2022) is implemented for low order deflagration and high order detonation methods.