

T: +44 (0)300 244 5046
E: ms.marinerenewables@gov.scot

Mr Michael Walker
Seagreen Wind Energy Limited
No.1 Forbury Place,
43 Forbury Road,
Reading,
RG1 3JH

Date: 13 April 2022

Dear Mr. Walker,

Screening Opinion under The Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2007 and The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017

Thank you for the screening opinion request dated 17 January 2022 in regards to the proposed increase to the parameters of the consented but not constructed 36 wind turbine generators (“WTGs”) as well as an increase in steel seabed deposits associated with the Seagreen Alpha and Seagreen Bravo offshore wind farms (“the Proposed Works”). The Proposed Works are part of the installation of the Seagreen Alpha and Bravo offshore wind farms (“the Seagreen Project”) for which marine licences and a Section 36 consent were granted in October 2014.

The construction of the Seagreen Project is an Environmental Impact Assessment (“EIA”) project therefore the Scottish Ministers consider the Proposed Works to fall under paragraph 89 of schedule A2 of the Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2007 (“the 2007 MW Regulations”) and paragraph 3 of schedule 2 of The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (“the 2017 EW Regulations”), on the basis that they constitute a change to schedule A2/schedule 2 works already authorised. Consequently, the Scottish Ministers are obliged to adopt a screening opinion as to whether the Proposed Works are or are not, an EIA project under the 2007 MW Regulations and the 2017 EW Regulations.

Under paragraph 4(1) of schedule 2 of the 2007 MW Regulations and regulation 8(5) of the 2017 EW Regulations, the Scottish Ministers have consulted with the relevant

local planning authorities (Angus Council, Dundee City Council, East Lothian Council, Fife Council and the Scottish Borders Council), NatureScot (operating name of Scottish Natural Heritage), Historic Environment Scotland (“HES”) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (“SEPA”) for their view on whether the Proposed Works are an EIA project. Copies of the consultation responses and the advice received are attached for your review (see Appendix 1).

When making a determination as to whether schedule A2 projects under the 2007 MW Regulations and schedule 2 projects under the 2017 EW Regulations are an EIA project, the Scottish Ministers must take into account the selection criteria set out in schedule 1 of the 2007 MW Regulations and Schedule 3 of the EW Regulations as are relevant to the Proposed Works. In this regard, the Scottish Ministers have considered the following:

Characteristics of the works

The Seagreen Project was awarded Section 36 consent and marine licences for the construction and operation of 150 WTGs, associated inter array cabling and offshore transmission asset infrastructure. At this time, 114 of the 150 consented WTGs are currently under construction (phase 1).

The Proposed Works involve the 36 consented but not constructed WTGs (phase 2). Varied parameters include an increase in maximum rotor diameter from 167 metres (“m”) to 242m, maximum blade chord width from 5.4m to 7.6m, maximum tip height from 209.7m to 285m, minimum tip height (air gap) from 29.8m to 34m and maximum hub height from 126.2m to 165m, as well as an increase in the steel seabed deposits associated with the Offshore Substation Platforms (“OSPs”) from 13,000 tonnes to 22,560 tonnes. No changes to the turbine locations are proposed.

Although there will be an increase in steel seabed deposits, the overall footprint will be unchanged. NatureScot thus advised that this will not have significant adverse environmental effects.

The Proposed Works only relate to the increase in size of the 36 WTGs and consented steel volumes associated with the OSPs. As there are no changes to any other aspects of the Seagreen Project, further onshore works are not required and East Lothian Council confirmed they are content that an EIA is not required as far as impacts on its interests are concerned.

Location of the works

The Proposed Works are to be located approximately 27 kilometres off the coast of Angus in the North Sea and lie within the vicinity of a number of protected sites. The only qualifying features of these sites predicted to be impacted by the Proposed Works are birds. Seagreen Wind Energy Limited (“SWEL”) carried out an updated collision risk modelling as part of the screening opinion request which predicted that collisions for key seabird species would be materially the same or significantly lower than for the Seagreen Project as currently consented. In respect of nature conservation interests, NatureScot agreed with the assessment in the screening

opinion request that the Proposed Works will not cause any material increases to predicted impacts on ornithology from the currently consented Seagreen Project.

In relation to Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (“SLVIA”), NatureScot highlighted that the increase in turbine height would be noticeable from viewpoints at St Cyrus and Braehead of Lunan, where significant effects were identified in the 2012 Seagreen Project Environmental Statement (“the 2012 ES”). However, given the distance from shore and current cumulative scenarios, NatureScot agreed with the assessment in the screening opinion request that the Proposed Works would not materially change the findings of the 2012 ES and therefore considered that a new SLVIA is not required in respect of the Proposed Works. HES was also content that, while there is likely to be some increased visibility in views from coastal heritage assets, the Proposed Works would not give rise to significant impacts on its historic environment interests further to those already identified and assessed within the 2012 ES.

SWEL confirmed that even though the number and location of the aviation lighting would be changing as a result of the increased hub height, the night lighting of the Proposed Works would not be visible from any point of the East Lothian coast, including Bass Rock and thus would not impact the view of Bass Rock from North Berwick. As such, East Lothian Council concluded that EIA will not be required to address this.

Furthermore, the Scottish Borders Council assessed the potential impact on the landscape and visual effects on receptors in its jurisdiction, including the Berwickshire Coast Special Landscape Area and reached the conclusion that with a distance of 60km or more from the Berwickshire coast, the potential impacts on Scottish Borders receptors are unlikely to be significant.

Characteristics of the potential impact

HES noted that SWEL will minimise potential impacts on marine historic environment features through the implementation of a mitigation strategy involving the avoidance of any potential archaeological anomalies or known wrecks, as detailed in a Written Scheme of Investigation/ Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries, and therefore was content that significant impacts on marine historic environment features are unlikely.

The conclusion of the assessment on all environmental receptors undertaken by SWEL and submitted as part of the screening opinion request concluded that the Proposed Works would be unlikely to give rise to any significant adverse environmental effects, alone or in combination with other projects, compared to the Seagreen Project already authorised by the Section 36 consent and marine licences.

Both Angus Council and Fife Council were of the view that the Proposed Works are unlikely to have significant impacts on the environment that are new or materially different to those already assessed for the consented Seagreen Project. Dundee City Council and SEPA had no comments to make in respect of the Proposed Works.

Conclusion

In view of the findings above, the Scottish Ministers are of the opinion that an EIA is not required to be carried out in respect of the Proposed Works under the 2007 MW Regulations or the 2017 EW Regulations.

If you increase, alter or extend the Proposed Works, you are advised to contact Marine Scotland - Licensing Operations Team again to confirm if the screening opinion is still valid.

A copy of the screening opinion has been forwarded to Angus Council, Dundee City Council, East Lothian Council, Fife Council and Scottish Borders Council Planning Departments. The screening opinion has also been made publicly available through the [Marine Scotland Information](#) website.

If you require any further assistance or advice on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Taylor
Marine Scotland - Licensing Operations Team