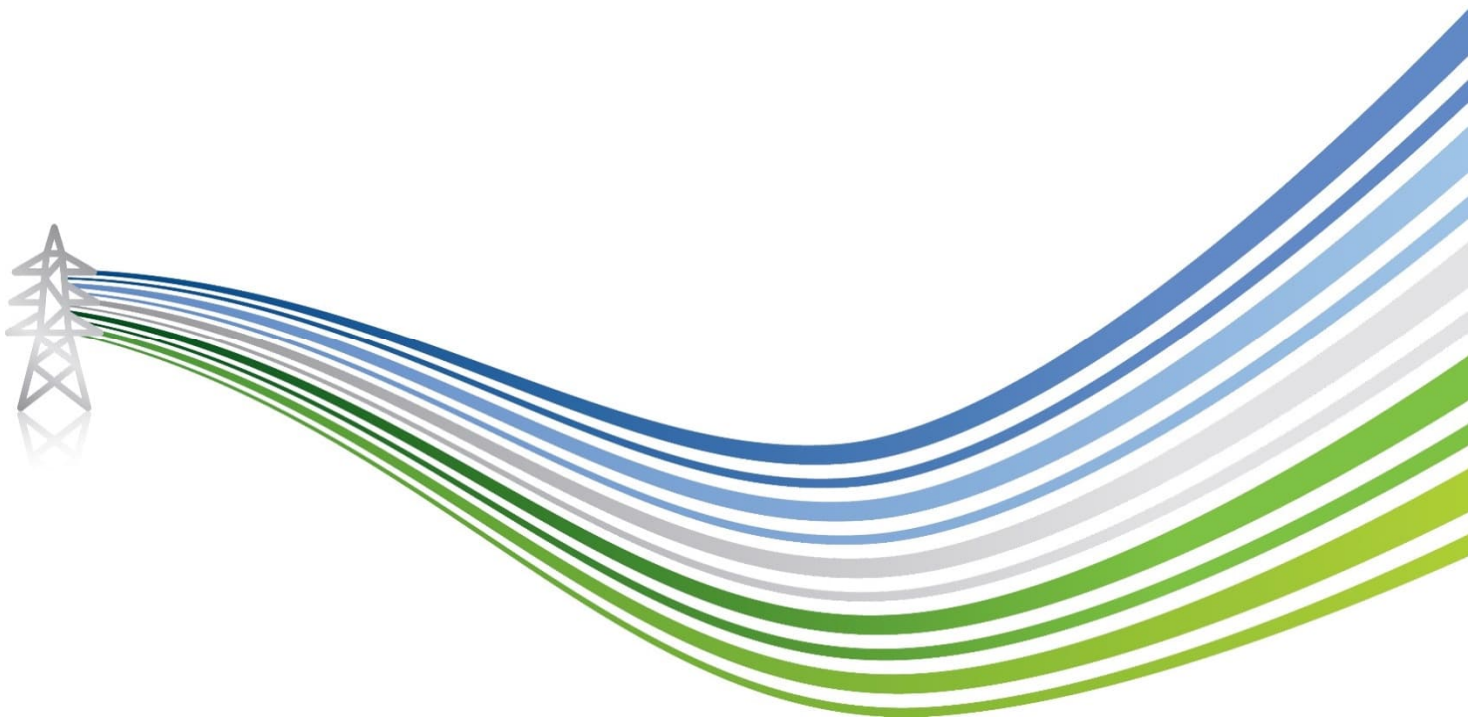
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV Project Supporting Document

MSS EIA Checklist Annex 1



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Annex 1

Marine Scotland Science advice on freshwater and diadromous fish and fisheries in relation to onshore wind farm developments.

Revised June 2023

MSS – EIA Checklist

The generic scoping guidelines should ensure that all matters relevant to freshwater and diadromous fish and fisheries have been addressed and presented in the appropriate chapters of the EIA report. Use of the checklist below should ensure that the EIA report contains the following information; the absence of such information **may necessitate requesting additional information** which could delay the process**:**

MSS Standard EIA Report Requirements	Provided in application YES/NO	If YES – please signpost to relevant chapter of EIA Report	If not provided or provided different to MSS advice, please set out reasons.	ECU/MSS use - comments
1. A map outlining the proposed development area and the proposed location of: • the towers/poles; • permanent and temporary access tracks, including watercourse crossings; • buildings including substations; • permanent and temporary construction compounds; • all watercourses; and • contour lines;	Yes	Chapter 3: Project Description Figure 3.1: Site Layout Figure 10.1: Hydrology and Watercourse Crossings		
2. A description and results of the site characterisation surveys for fish (including fully quantitative electrofishing surveys) and water quality including the location of the electrofishing and fish	No		Any works will be carried out in accordance with the Applicant's General Environmental Management Plans (GEMPs) 'Working in or	

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habitat survey sites and water quality sampling sites on the map outlining the proposed turbines and associated infrastructure. **This should be carried out where a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is present and where salmon are a qualifying feature, and in exceptional cases when required in the scoping advice for other reasons. In other cases, developers can assume that fish populations are present;**			Near Water' and 'Watercourse Crossings', thus avoiding pollution of watercourses; and the Applicant's Species Protection Plan (SPP) for otter. Fish habitat suitability surveys have been carried out for relevant watercourse crossings for the project, and fisheries data have been requested from fisheries trust for the Beauly, Nairn, Lossie, Spey, Deveron, Isla and other rivers. The data sets from the trusts provide a longer-term overview of relevant fish stocks as opposed to a 'snapshot' of project-specific electrofishing surveys, which were not considered feasible, with some of the larger watercourses being inaccessible for safety reasons. Information on the above is presented in Chapter 8: Ecology and Chapter 10: Water and Geological Environment. No specific	

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			requirement for water quality surveys are therefore included in the EIA Report.	
3. An outline of the potential impacts on fish populations and water quality within and downstream of the proposed development area	Yes	Chapter 8: Ecology Chapter 10: Water and Geological Environment		
4. Any potential cumulative impacts on the water quality and fish populations associated with adjacent (operational and consented) developments including wind farms, hydro schemes, aquaculture and mining;	Yes	Where sufficient relevant information is available from other projects, these will be considered for cumulative impacts on fish population in Chapter 8: Ecology and water quality in Chapter 10: Water and Geological Environment		
5. Any proposed site-specific mitigation measures as outlined in MD-SEDD generic scoping guidelines and the joint publication "Good Practice during Wind Farm Construction" (https://www.nature.scot/guidance-good-practice-during-wind-farm-construction);	No		No site-specific mitigation required in addition to the Applicant's GEMPs documents; specifically 'Working in or Near Water' and 'Watercourse Crossings'. A site-specific Construction Environmental Management Plan will be developed detailing measures to manage, control and monitor the potential effects of noise, pollution and personnel / vehicular movements and	

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			outline version being presented within the EIA Report. An Environmental Clerk of Works (EnvCoW) would be appointed to provide monitoring of construction activities relating to the installation of infrastructure such as: • Ensuring that work near (a/the) water body does not create physical barriers to fish movement • If necessary, changing work practices or construction methods to avoid excessive noise and illumination (especially at night) and impacts on water quality • Avoiding working within the water body and limiting the length of bank working area where possible.	
6. Full details of proposed monitoring programmes using guidelines issued by MD-SEDD and accompanied by a map outlining the proposed sampling and control sites in addition to the location of all turbines and associated infrastructure.	No		Where there are tracks crossing watercourses and in-channel works are proposed for culverts then a pre-construction fish monitoring survey (electrofishing) will be done for any watercourses	

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At least 12 months of baseline pre-construction data should be included. The monitoring programme can be secured using suitable wording in a condition.			where the EIA surveys indicated that the watercourse was suitable for fish. For any watercourses being culverted and not surveyed in the EIA for fish suitability, the contractor will carry out a fish habitat suitability survey and then electrofish if the fish habitat suitability survey indicates it's warranted. None of the access tracks cross SACs directly. Any works will be carried out in accordance with the Applicant's GEMPs 'Working in or Near Water' and 'Watercourse Crossings' avoiding pollution of watercourses.	
7. A decommissioning and restoration plan outlining proposed mitigation/monitoring for water quality and fish populations. This can be secured using suitable wording in a condition.	No		A Decommissioning Plan is not applicable to the Proposed Development as it would not have a fixed operational life and therefore effects associated with the construction phase are considered to be representative of worst-case decommissioning effects.	

Developers should specifically discuss and assess potential impacts and appropriate mitigation measures associated with the following:	Provided in application YES/NO	If YES – please signpost to relevant chapter of EIA Report	If not provided or provided different to MSS advice, please set out reasons.	ECU/MSS use - comments
1. Any designated area (e.g. SAC), for which fish is a qualifying feature, within and/or downstream of the proposed development area.	Yes	Chapter 8: Ecology Chapter 10: Water and Geological Environment	Please note that the detail of impacts on SACs and Ramsar sites for which fish are qualifying features is discussed in the Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) which accompanies the application. Brief reference is made to these sites in the EIA Report.	
2. The presence of a large density of watercourses;	Yes	Chapter 10: Water and Geological Environment	Watercourse density is not discussed directly, however the EIA Report describes the baseline surface water hydrology and considers potential impacts on surface watercourses from the Proposed Development. It also includes a range a good industry practices, and embedded measures including mitigation by design, standoff distances, and the Applicant's GEMPs.	
3. The presence of large areas of deep peat deposits;	Yes	Chapter 10: Water and Geological Environment.		

Developers should specifically discuss and assess potential impacts and appropriate mitigation measures associated with the following:	Provided in application YES/NO	If YES – please signpost to relevant chapter of EIA Report	If not provided or provided different to MSS advice, please set out reasons.	ECU/MSS use - comments
		A Peat Survey Report and Peat Management Plan have been prepared which present results on the distribution of peat across the route and how it will be appropriately managed and re-instated on site.		
4. Known acidification problems and/or other existing pressures on fish populations in the area; and	Yes	Chapter 8: Ecology	Acidification is not discussed per se but existing pressures for fish populations in SACs and Ramsar sites are considered in the HRA and this is cross referenced in the EIA Report. The design has sought to avoid areas where silt deposition through construction would increase pressures on fish and the habitats that support them; and mitigation to reduce and avoid pollution is also in place. It is not considered that operation would pose a risk to fish as maintenance of wayleaves would be focused on maintaining areas already cleared in construction (and mitigated for in construction).	

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			Chapter 10: Water and Geological Environment describes potential effects on water quality from erosion and deposition and pollution incidents, providing measures to offset these effects, including impacts from forestry felling and associated potential effects.	
5. Proposed felling operations.	Yes	Impacts from proposed forestry felling on water quantity are assessed in Chapter 10: Water and Geological Environment. Impacts associated with proposed felling operations on fish are assessed in Chapter 8: Ecology.		